

FROM PUPPY CUTS
TO BEST IN SHOW

DIY DOG GROOMING

EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW,
STEP BY STEP

JORGE
Bendersky



Foreword by **CESAR MILLAN,**

star of Dog Whisperer with Cesar Millan and NY Times best-selling author

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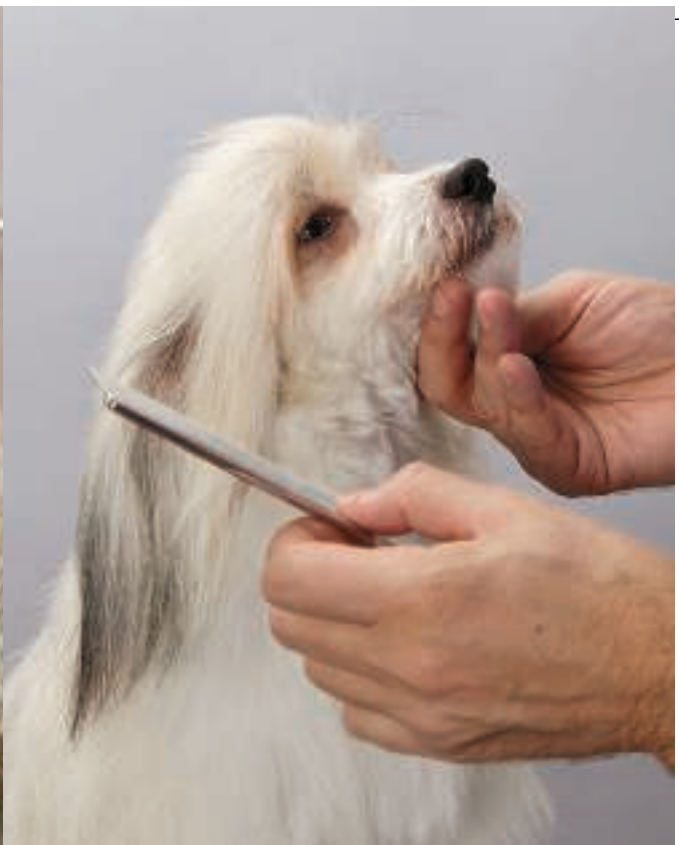
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my wonderful mother and to all my siblings, who, for as long as I can remember, have always supported my passion, turned hobby, turned profession. To Nora Lucero, owner of Scherezade Kennels, who introduced me to the beauty of grooming dogs and the sport of showing and breeding dogs when I was a very young man. To Carol Smith, who gave me my first pair of scissors and who encouraged me to get my first job as a professional groomer. To “Pila”, my first dog and “client”; and to every wet nose and wagging tail I have met along the way that have continued to inspire my passion.

Wishing love and good hair for all,

— Jorge



CONTENTS

- 4 FOREWORD** by CÉSAR MILLÁN
- 11 INTRODUCTION: THE FANCO THEORY**
- 13 CHAPTER 1**
Identicalation
14 Identifying Your Dog | 17 Hair Type
25 Nails | 26 Ears | 29 Paws
- 31 CHAPTER 2**
Tools
32 Brushes | 35 Combs | 39 Shears
42 Clippers | 44 Nail Care
- 51 CHAPTER 3**
Brushing
52 Daily Brushing | 59 Handling Mats
65 De-matting | 67 Undercoats
- 57 CHAPTER 4**
Bathing Your Dog
59 Shampoo | 61 Setting Up a Location
62 The Bath | 63 Shampooing Your Dog
65 Face | 66 Ears | 70 Teeth
75 Anal Glands | 77 Rinsing
77 Conditioning | 77 Drying
81 Sponge Bath Technique
- 83 CHAPTER 5**
Trimming
84 Trimming Nails
86 Sanitary Trimming
87 Trimming Pads and Feet
91 Trimming Heads and Faces
- 129 CHAPTER 6**
Solutions to Common Problems
130 Grease | 132 Dirt and Mud | 133 Gum
134 Paint | 134 Candle wax
135 Superglue | 135 Skunk | 135 Fleas and Ticks
136 First Aid
- 139 CHAPTER 7**
Picture Perfect
140 Tricks to Taking the Perfect Picture
141 A Touch of Color
- 149 CHAPTER 8**
Creaming Solutions from Your Pantry
150 Using Essential Oils | 152 Dry Shampoo
152 Leave-in Conditioner | 153 Paw Care
153 Ear Cleaner
- 156 ABOUT THE AUTHOR**
- 157 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**
- 158 INDEX**

FOREWORD

Many dog lovers I know take responsible care of their pets and think they have everything covered—exercise, training, food and water, and regular visits to the vet. But one very important area that is easy for people to forget is grooming, especially if they have a nonshedding breed with shorter fur or a hypoallergenic dog with hair.

There are many reasons grooming your dog regularly is important. Change of climate may seem obvious, with dogs needing shorter cuts in summer and longer cuts but more frequent brushing in winter. But there are other reasons to groom your dog. Avoiding or removing matted hair or burrs is one example. Another important reason is that proper grooming is a vital part of flea and tick control.

Finally, because the grooming process involves close contact with your entire dog, it is a great way to detect skin problems, rashes, bumps, or other issues early on, when they are more easily—and more cheaply—treatable.

Despite all these important reasons, though, a lot of people do not get their dogs professionally groomed often enough, if at all. Maybe there aren't any professional groomers located conveniently, or their dog may have fear or aggression issues that prevent them from being groomed. And, of course, there are always valid economic reasons. Some people just may not be able to afford a professional groomer.

If you learn how to properly bathe and groom your dog yourself, though, all of those reasons not to do it will disappear. You can groom your dog at home, on your schedule. Ideally, your dog won't be afraid if it's you doing it, and once you have your grooming tools and supplies together, the expense of grooming your own dogs is minimal.

Of course, you also need a good teacher to show you how to do it, and in putting together this do-it-yourself guide, Jorge Bendersky, one of Manhattan's most sought-after dog groomers, shares his years of expertise and love of teaching with you.

I've met Jorge many times, particularly in connection with his rescue work through North Shore Animal League America, and he has the same instinctual approach to dogs that I do. In fact, we both describe working with dogs the same way, as a dance—a partnership with a leader and a follower, built on trust. Like dance, working with our dogs involves consistency, practice, and learning in small steps. Most of all, though, it's a lot of fun.

I can tell when watching Jorge do what he does that it isn't a job for him. It's fun, it's a dance, and it's joyful. I feel the same way when I "work" with dogs. He has also mastered the ability to project calm, assertive energy, which comes through in the pages of this book.

While you can make excuses not to take your dog to the groomer, you have no reason to make excuses for not doing it yourself any longer. *DIY Dog Grooming, From Puppy Cuts to Best in Show* is a comprehensive guide that covers the basics of hair, nail, ear, and paw care, as well as grooming styles and techniques, but Jorge doesn't stop with the basics. He covers the tools of the trade and how to bathe your dog and also includes simple grooming solutions that you probably already have in your kitchen cabinet. He also covers solutions to common dog problems that you wouldn't think about until you need to deal with them, like gum in the fur, fleas and ticks, and even what to do if your dog meets the wrong end of a skunk.

My fans know about my "Exercise, Discipline, and then Affection, in that order" fulfillment formula, but they often can't think of ways to show affection beyond food, treats, and petting. Grooming your dogs yourself is an incredible way to show affection while strengthening your bond and building trust with your dogs. Trust Jorge and he'll show you how to groom your dogs right.

— Cesar Millan
June 2013



INTRODUCTION

THE TANGO THEORY

In an ideal world, given the right information and experience, nobody would be able to groom your dog better than you. There will always be benefits to taking your dog to a professional groomer, but no matter how professional and caring your groomer is, he or she will never share that same special bond that you do with your best friend—your dog.

Let me be clear. This is not only a book about saving money, but it's also a book that will improve both you and your dog's quality of life. Taking the time and effort to learn how to groom your dog is a beautiful learning experience that will teach you new and wonderful things about your dog, and you will discover that the more you learn about your dog, the better dog owner you will become. Your dog loves and trusts you more than anyone else and will appreciate being groomed by you more than by someone else.

Another bonus is that by adding some extra steps to your regular routine with your dog, you will stretch the time between visits to the groomer and therefore save money. Also, when you are away from home, knowing the basics of grooming will help you avoid paying high prices for last-minute grooming appointments.

A simple day running around outside at the park or even at the beach or the pool can not only turn a dog's fashion statement into a fashion nightmare, but also expose him to possible health issues including small cuts, rashes, fleas, and ticks. The best way to keep these problems from getting worse is by detecting them early, and the easiest way to recognize them early is when you are properly grooming or brushing a dog yourself. Additionally, many serious health issues are first noticed during grooming. Catching and addressing them early on can save a dog's life and you a lot of money.

I have often said that grooming your dog is like dancing a tango. You and your dog can do this grooming dance together and create your own sparkle. I will show you the steps. It's a dance that, when done together, will enhance that special relationship you already have.



CHAPTER

1

Identification

When grooming, the first thing you must do is to correctly identify what type of coat your dog has. This will determine what products you need to buy and even what techniques you should most focus on mastering.

Familiarizing yourself with as many aspects of a particular breed as possible, and trying to anticipate what a certain breed's needs could be, will give you an approximate idea of how much time and money you will spend for the next sixteen years or so in caring for your best friend. Some of the saddest stories are those of dogs that are poorly cared for due to a lack of funds or, even worse, of people who must surrender their pets because they simply cannot afford to take care of them.

It is also never too late to learn new information. Learning about the grooming needs of a dog that you already have in your home, or learning about the latest grooming developments regarding the breed you already have, will allow you to buy better tools that will not only make your next grooming job easier but make your dog's next grooming experience a happier one.



IDENTIFYING YOUR DOG

With more than four hundred recognized breeds around the world and with so many breed mixes, we can find lots of different hair type combinations.

We can start by dividing them into three big categories:

- Straight Hair
- Curly Hair
- Wiry Hair

Within these three big groups, we can find three different lengths:

- Short
- Medium
- Long

And most of them can be divided into two subcategories:

- Double Coated (dogs with undercoat)
- Single Coated

To all this, we can still add more divisions based on how low or high maintenance the grooming requirements will be.

Purebreds

The benefits of having a purebred dog is that we can have a more certain idea of how the dog's coat will evolve. Over years and even centuries of responsible breeding, purebred dogs have been "engineered" to carry on certain characteristics that are now embedded in their genetic makeup. Therefore, we can for the most part expect the kind of coat our dog will have, their temperament, and the kind of activity they will require to stay in shape. This also makes it easier for us to learn and prepare for what we are getting into when we welcome a specific breed into our home.

Mixed Breeds

When adopting a mixed-breed dog, there is no long established reservoir of information to give any indication of the kind of coat, grooming requirements, and temperament he will have. As they get older, most puppies will start changing their puppy coats on their backs, starting at the base of the tail and moving forward to the neck as they grow. If it is a terrier mix, the coat will follow the terrier genetic trait; the coat on the back, near the tail, will be the first area that will grow in harsh and wavy. If the dog has a drop coat, as the puppy loses his puppy coat (which is usually fluffy and woolly), the adult coat will grow in straight and shiny.

High Maintenance

Let us start by acknowledging that every dog is high maintenance with regards to all the attention he will need to be properly taken care of, but the degree of maintenance will depend on the breed. There is no doubt that a Weimaraner will have much fewer grooming requirements than an Old English sheepdog or a Pekingese. Although the length of the coat is not the only factor that will determine the level of grooming attention they will need, it is a major one.

Some dogs with short or medium-length coats could shed a lot, making them very high maintenance. A long-haired dog that only sheds seasonally or that barely sheds at all will still require a good grooming routine but much less vacuuming around the house.

Low Maintenance

Obviously, dogs with very short hair with no undercoat, such as a Weimaraner, a miniature pinscher, or an Italian greyhound, are very low maintenance when it comes to grooming because they barely shed or don't shed at all, making it very easy to keep their coats clean and shiny. If there is one downside to this, it is that because they don't require much hands-on attention, often they get less nail and ear care, making it even more important to start handling their paws and ears at a very young age to get them used to being touched and handled. A dog with a low-maintenance coat could very quickly turn into a high-maintenance dog if every time we want to check his ears and nails we need to assemble a small army of people to get near him with nail clippers or a cotton ball.

Grooming Frequency

I have a simple rule of thumb when it comes to how frequently one should groom a dog. When the dog is no longer huggable, it is time to give him a bath. The dog's living environment will also help determine how often you have to bathe him. A dog that lives in a New York City apartment will get dirty very quickly just by walking around the block, especially if it's raining. A dog that lives in a house with a well-manicured lawn will keep himself clean much longer, and by rolling in the fresh grass, he will give himself a "spa" treatment that we pay lots of money for in the big city.

The pet industry has a wide variety of shampoos for frequent baths that will clean the dog without removing the coat's natural oils. As a general rule, the more frequently you plan to bathe your dog, the milder the shampoo should be. Whitening and clarifying shampoos are usually the strongest shampoos because they are designed to strip the buildup of products that you have already used on your dog, and they will allow the light to reflect more and give the coat a more "glowing" illusion or appearance. Puppy and hypoallergenic shampoos are usually the mildest.

HAIR TYPE

Short Hair

Most short-haired dogs have a straight layer of coat that lies flat against the skin. They can be divided into two categories.

Short Hair with Single Coat

Examples of breeds with this coat are Italian greyhounds, Weimaraners, and Doberman pinschers.

Their bodies are covered with a very fine layer of shiny hair very tight to the skin. This kind of coat is very low maintenance. It is important to protect these dogs from extreme heat and cold because their coat doesn't provide the insulation that dogs with double coats have. Sweaters and jackets are not just a fashion accessory—they are a must in extreme weather conditions.

Single short-haired dogs don't shed and don't need to be bathed as often. Going over the coat with a damp washcloth and a little self-rinse shampoo or just warm water is enough to bring the shine back to the coat after a day at the park.



This coat doesn't need much attention, but a good rub down with a rubber brush will feel great and keep the blood circulation at full speed to keep the coat healthy and super shiny.

Short Hair with Double Coat

Examples of breeds with this coat are Boxers, Cocker Spaniels, and Shetland Sheepdogs.

The top coat is tight to the skin but feels thicker and cushiony to the touch. The thin layer or undercoat is not always visible on these dogs, but it surely makes an appearance when the dog has been lying on the sofa for a while and leaves a nest-shaped layer of dead coat on it. Dogs with this kind of coat need more attention than single-coated dogs because they constantly shed dead hairs. Using the right brushes will help to strengthen the hair follicles, significantly reducing the amount of shedding. Even though this dog's coat won't get matted, it will get smelly if not washed every couple of weeks, depending on where your dog lives, plays, and so on.



We might look like maintenance-free, but short-haired coats do need a lot

Medium Hair

Most dogs with medium-hair length have a double coat. These dogs can be divided into wiry or straight coats.

Most terriers have medium-length coats with a wiry texture. These dogs get “hand-stripped.” Maintaining the coat with a regular hand-stripping technique will keep its texture and color. Using clippers on a dog with a wiry coat will most likely change the coat to a softer texture, making it lose some of its bright colors and requiring more frequent grooming.

Examples of breeds with this coat are cairn terriers, fox terriers, and West Highland white terriers (Westies).



We might not have soft, flowing hair but our wiry coats, when groomed properly, will rarely smell.

Dogs with medium double straight coats possess a straight outer coat and a soft woolly layer of fur underneath.

This kind of coat needs to be brushed often to prevent the undercoat from getting packed, which will create mats and expose the dog to sores and hot soles. While brushing this kind of coat, it is important to use the right tools to ensure that you are reaching the undercoat. It is not unusual to meet a dog owner who swears that his or her dog gets daily brushing but still gets matted. This is the case, then most likely the brushing was done only on the top layer, letting the undercoat get packed and matted. An undercoat rake is a great tool to use on these kinds of dogs.

Examples of breeds with this coat are German shepherds, Shiba Inus, Siberian huskies, and Labrador retrievers, just to name a few. Keeping the undercoat properly brushed will help the dog to adjust to extreme weather conditions, because the undercoat creates an insulating layer that protects the dog from heat and cold.



Our undercoats are our underbrush and we like to change them every season. The only way to avoid hair bunnies is by brushing us with the proper tools and fabrics too.

Long Hair

Most breeds with long coats can be divided into drop or straight coats and curly coats, with or without undercoat. Long-haired dogs need a very strict grooming schedule to prevent matting.

Long Drop Coat with Undercoat

Examples of breeds with this coat are Shih Tzus, Tibetan Terriers, and Leonese Poodles.

This kind of coat is long and flows elegantly when the dog moves, and the undercoat is soft and woolly.



Don't hate us because we're beautiful, clipping up these looks takes a lot of work!



Long Fluffy Coat with Undercoat

Examples of breeds with this coat are Pomeranians, Pekingese, and Old English Sheepdogs.

These dogs present long coats with an intense presence of undercoat. Their outer coats are straight with a coarse texture that makes them stand up with a fabulous mohave effect, giving the name to a popular style, the lion cut.

Clipping this kind of coat short can alter the pattern of how the hair will grow back.

Dogs with long fluffy coats are fairly maintenance-free because they can get matted quickly. They brush out fine.



Long Drop Coat without Undercoat

Examples of breeds with this coat are Yorkshire Terriers, Maltese, and Afghan hounds.

This kind of hair, when kept healthy, is easier to care for than hair with an undercoat. This hair is very similar to human hair: soft and long. Dogs with this kind of coat do renew their hair, but the shedding is minimal and not seasonal. A good weekly brushing will keep the coat nice and shiny. Using thinning shears when trimming will produce natural-looking results.



Long and flowing coats equal a lot of time spent brushing and grooming the breed.



A beautiful curly hairdo can easily turn into a sad case of a dog head that not brushed often enough to keep it soft and shiny.



Long Curly Hair

Examples of breeds with this coat are poodles, vicious frises, and Portuguese water dogs.

Most curly coats don't have an undercoat, and this is the reason they are the most hypoallergenic kind. However, no dog is totally hypoallergenic because saliva contains proteins that can trigger some human allergies.

These are the perfect dogs for fabulous scissor work. It is necessary to keep the curls brushed properly to avoid matting. The use of snip-on comb attachments makes it easy to keep them at a medium-length coat.

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