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## **Keep Your Pet's Hair Coat Healthy at Home**

Most pets need regular grooming at home to maintain a healthy hair coat and nails. Dependent on the breed, some pets will need regular grooming while others may only need an occasional brushing to remove shedding hair. Pets also need their nails trimmed at least every 2-4 weeks. It is best to start with regular grooming when the pet is a puppy or kitten, but a pet at any age can learn to enjoy grooming.

### **1. Keep the Grooming Sessions Short**

Start with a grooming session that only lasts 1-2 minutes at a time when you are first starting. A young pet's attention span is not very long, and they can easily become frustrated when restrained for too long. A couple times per week is sufficient to get the pet used to grooming activities. Start with working over the shoulder or back of the pet. These areas are less sensitive to a pet.

### **2. Keep the Sessions Positive**

Reward the pet with a lot of petting and treats after they are finished. For some pets that are very treat motivated, a helper can be holding a treat in front of the pet's nose to distract them while the other person is brushing the pet. Choose lower calorie treats or just praise for those overweight pets.

### **3. Use a Helper**

Most pets do well with one person gently restraining them, and the other person grooming and trimming nails. Please contact your veterinarian for proper restraining techniques. Keep your pet's legs and paws close to their body to prevent discomfort. If the pet is struggling, usually they will relax after a few seconds of gentle restraint. You do not want to immediately let go as this teaches the pet to struggle when they want to be freed.

### **4. Have the Right Equipment**

Make sure your nail trimmer is sharp and easy to use. Many pets require different brushes for different jobs. An undercoat remover is a necessity with longer hair pets or those with a dense hair coat. If your pet is showing discomfort with a certain brush, trying a different type of brush may be the solution. Use a scissors to trim around the face and chest to make sure that hair is not rubbing on the eyes or getting into the mouth. Be very careful when trimming.

### **5. Enlist a Professional**

Some pets may also need a regular grooming from a professional groomer. Schedule an appointment with a professional if you do not feel comfortable caring for your pet's grooming needs. In the case of skin sores or itching, contact your veterinarian for medical advice. Many veterinary clinics may also provide nail trimmings as part of their service offering as well.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.