

Bobbye Land's Essential Dog Grooming Tools

What professional groomer Bobbye Land uses to transform appealing pets, canine masterpieces and happy dogs.

1. Chamois cloth: I get mine from automotive supply stores where they are a fraction of the price you'll pay at a pet-supply store. They are great for cleaning up spills and messes besides being cost- and time-effective for bathing. I have found that the synthetics work just as well as the more expensive "natural" ones (We keep one wet, in a zipper plastic bag, in the fridge for quick cool downs.)
2. Slicker brush: I prefer the type that has a curved back and straight wire bristles, other people swear by a flat back and curved bristles. Use it on your own hand before you use it on your dog. If it scratches, choose a different brand or style!
3. Metal comb: Most pet stores sell pretty shaped and colored plastic and rubber combs that look great in a tack box...but usually won't do the job they were created for. A standard comb made from metal with graduated teeth (wider spaced teeth tapering to more narrowly spaced) will do the job every time.
4. Cordless clippers: After you've gotten tripped up in the cord of regular clippers a few times, causing you to lose your concentration (or ruin your finishing touches) you'll reach for the cordless one, too, especially for fine-tuning.
5. Quick-Fix Kit: Includes styptic powder or silver nitrate sticks, and a baby-food jar of hydrogen peroxide for nail trimming mishaps (the larger mouthed jar allows you to dip the dog's foot into the liquid).
6. For splitting mats, I use a letter opener shaped like a credit card with a blade in the corner beneath a sharp point. The "tooth" goes through almost any type of hair and allows you to pull through the mat making it easier to brush through.
7. My special bath elixir for removing doggy odors: 1 cup lemon dish wash detergent, 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup hydrogen peroxide. Mix well and keep in a tightly covered container. Use as you would any shampoo...leaving it on the coat for 10 minutes helps eliminate odors more effectively.
8. Hook or suction cup attachment on the tub to keep a dog in place during bathing.
9. #40 A-5 blade: Take it off the clippers and use the cutting edge as a rake to pull out dead hair and overgrown undercoat fluff. Great for hand-stripping back-coats on spaniels and setters
10. Over-the-door shoe holder: Not a tool, but I think it's essential for grooming. The compartments are great for holding rolled up chamois cloths, grooming equipment and hair-care products, and keep them cleaner than sitting on a shelf. If you don't have a door near your grooming station, just hang it from hooks on the wall.

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