

Dog Grooming Tips

Advice from a professional dog groomer.

Professional dog groomer Sue Mercurio makes sure her five Miniature Schnauzers always look snazzy when they step into the show ring at local competitions.

"Certainly there is a lot of brushing, combing, and bathing involved in maintaining a show-quality coat for any dog breed," says Mercurio, owner of Little Paws Canine Grooming. "But equally important is how you care for your dog outside the show ring."

If you show your dog or simply opt for a show look, Mercurio shares some advice for keeping your dog looking its best:

Feed for health and beauty. Work with your veterinarian to select a high-quality dog food that's best for your dog's age, breed, and activity level. Be alert to possible food allergies or sensitivities, which can manifest as skin problems. Avoid table scraps; they can cause diarrhea and stress and encourage fussy eating habits. Stick to healthier treats such as raw baby carrots or green peppers.

Opt for plush toys. Edges on hard toys can break or damage your dog's hair.

Watch where you walk. Walk your dog on the pavement or manicured grass. Avoid woods and heavy brush where its coats might get tangled.

Keep nails trimmed. Sand your dog's nails weekly to keep them smooth and free of jagged edges.