

Gently Groom Your Borzoi

Use a light hand when grooming the sensitive Borzoi.

Jean M. Fogle

Whether flat, wavy, or curly, the Borzoi's silky coat completes the breed's regal beauty.

The double coat includes a downy undercoat for protection from the elements and a harder-textured overcoat that protects the undercoat. But that doesn't mean twice the amount of grooming.

This breed is pretty low-maintenance when it comes to grooming, says Lou Avant, DVM, who shares her home with nine Borzoi. "All nine of my dogs are brushed once a week. If they aren't showing, they are bathed once a month."

Silky coats tend to shed dirt more easily than some other coat types, helping to cut down on the grooming needed.

A thorough brushing once a week keeps most Borzoi stay neat. When shedding season starts, more frequent grooming helps manage loose hair. Because the silky coat can mat, get in the habit of feeling your Borzoi all over every day. This will help you find any mats that might be forming and remove them before they get bigger.

Use a pin brush to gently brush the coat, working from front to back. A metal comb works best for behind the ears and the feathering on the legs. Carefully comb out any mats. Remember the double coat, and brush so both coats are included. Don't pull hair without holding the end nearest the skin — Borzoi have sensitive skin.

Many owners also trim the hair between the pads of the Borzoi's feet. Brushing teeth and clipping nails round out a good grooming routine.

Because Borzoi are sensitive dogs, grooming needs to start early. "I encourage my puppy owners to start brushing the puppies immediately, so the puppies are accustomed to being groomed," says Bonnie Nichols, a Borzoi breeder. The goal is to make grooming a pleasurable experience, so an early start and gentle hand are essential.