

Grooming to Make Your Bloodhound Beautiful!

Discover easy, do-it-yourself dog grooming tips.

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The first thing most people notice about a Bloodhound is all that skin. "I think the Bloodhound must have 20 percent more skin than is required to cover its body," says Bloodhound breeder Susan Hamil. The short, shiny coat almost goes unnoticed, and the Bloodhound is one of only a few dogs whose coat isn't even mentioned in its breed standard. That doesn't mean Bloodhounds don't need grooming, however. On the contrary, all that skin requires a lot of care, especially for Bloodhounds who work out in the field trailing, tracking or just sniffing around for fun.

Hounds have a characteristic smell, because of dirt and bacteria collecting within those prodigious skinfolds and lots of sebaceous glands that secrete oil, helping to make the Bloodhound's coat and skin more weatherproof. "The Bloodhound's skin requires special care because the folds can get yeast and bacteria and that contributes to the houndy odor," Hamil says.

Clean and Dry

Bloodhounds require constant maintenance, says Ed Kilby, a former breeder who has shown, rescued, and worked Bloodhounds since 1959. "People complain they smell but they don't smell if you keep them clean" Kilby says.

When it comes to grooming Bloodhounds, think two words: CLEAN and DRY.

Bathe your Bloodhound at least once a month for non-working hounds, more often for those out in the field getting dirty.

Bloodhounds have sensitive skin. The Stone Guide to Dog Grooming by Ben and Pearl Stone (Howell Book House, 1981) suggests bathing a Bloodhound with a high-quality gentle shampoo made for dogs, and working in shampoo with gentle fingers or a soft nylon bristle brush. Don't forget to scrub those long ears, especially the tips that often drag on the ground when that nose is following a scent trail.

Always dry your Bloodhound thoroughly, especially within skin folds. Moisture can cause irritation and bacteria growth.

Those long ears may help to pick up scent molecules and hold them—helping the Bloodhound to trail for miles—but these too must stay immaculate to prevent yeast infections in the ears, especially in warm weather. Two or three times a week, clean wax and dirt as far as you can see it from under and inside ears using a cotton swab and ear cleaning lotion made for dogs.