

Groom Your English Cocker Spaniel

Grooming the English Cocker Spaniel revolves around coat, ear, and muzzle care.

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The English Cocker Spaniel may be easier to groom than its American cousin, the Cocker Spaniel, but don't ignore this breed's grooming needs! The English Cocker Spaniel's ears and muzzle need attention, and the feathering on its underside can mat without regular brushing, resulting in skin irritation and parasite problems, especially for dogs who spend time in the field. "In terms of looks, the English Cocker Spaniel should be groomed more like an English Springer Spaniel than like an American Cocker Spaniel," says Kate Romanski, secretary of the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America.

In case your groomer isn't sure how to groom this rare breed, bring along a pamphlet published by the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America and available from the club for \$1. Send payment in a stamped #10 envelope to: ECSCA, P.O. Box 252, Hales Corners, WI 53130.

Even if you do take your dog to a professional groomer, English Cocker Spaniels require regular maintenance between grooming visits. "It seems I'm always brushing, combing, pulling out the long hair," says ECSCA rescue chairperson Marcia Wallace. "Even if you keep them shaved down, you still have to take care of their ears, and besides, when you shave them down, they lose their charm. They look like Beagles."

To help you along, here are a few more tips, courtesy of Romanski and Wallace: "The darker the color, the more hair there will be," Romanski says. Black English Cocker Spaniels require more trimming than the lighter-colored. "If you don't keep them trimmed, they eventually begin to look like ragamuffins," Romanski adds.

"People always call me with the impression that these dogs don't shed. It's simply not true," Wallace says. Brush every few days to keep shedding to a minimum.

Keep English Cocker ears clean and dry to prevent infection, something these floppy-eared dogs can be prone to developing. "The job is easier if you keep the inside of their ears neatly shaved," Wallace says.

The slightly droopy English Cocker muzzle must also be kept clean. "Give that muzzle a good wipe-down every now and then with a cleansing pad, or they can collect food in the skin folds and get smelly," Wallace says.