

Grooming Dogs in Cold Weather

Colder temperatures mean dog owners should change their grooming routine during winter months.

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A dog's winter coat can hide trouble, such as lumps, bumps or sores, which is another good reason to keep brushing regularly. As you brush, feel and look carefully for signs of illness. Call your veterinarian if you see anything suspect.

Since my dog is indoors, can I skip trimming his nails?

No. If your dog is indoors more frequently in the winter, the nails may need extra trimming because it's not outside running and romping to wear them down. Check weekly, and once you hear that "click-click" on the bare floor, you'll know it's time to trim.

How can I protect my dog's feet?

No doubt winter weather is tough on paws. You can minimize problems such as cracked pads, irritation, infections from snow, salt, mud, rain, low temperature, and gravel simply by wiping the feet dry after every outing. Keep a towel handy by the door, and make feet wiping routine.

Be especially watchful for snow or mud balls between the pads. Also, thorough wiping reduces but does not eliminate muddy paw prints in the house.

Another option is using a cloth or rubber booties. Some dogs accept these items gracefully; others try to chew them off.

What about fleas?

Most owners welcome cold weather because it signals the end of the flea season. However, fleas can still hang on for months in a warm pet bed or doghouse. Don't let your defense down just because it's winter, especially if you live in a mild climate. Keep up your flea-control program all year.