

Stripping the Airedale's Coat

Hand-stripping the coat of any terrier breed leaves a nice, wiry texture.

By Allan Reznik

Q. How do you strip the coat of an Airedale Terrier? Is it hard to do? Is it done by hand?

A. Stripping out the coat of any terrier breed to leave a nice, hard, wiry "jacket" takes time and practice. Yes, it is done by hand, with your thumb and forefinger, using a tool called a stripping knife. Because of the Airedale's large size, the job will take that much longer. You can't do it in one session – you'll develop blisters and your dog will howl in protest! It is an ongoing process.

Hand-stripping is mandatory for the show ring. Most pet owners take their dogs to a grooming shop to be clipped. You will get a softer coat and lighter color but that's seldom a concern to owners.

If you want to learn hand-stripping, you can approach professional handlers who specialize in the Terrier Group, as well as successful Airedale breeder-exhibitors you'll see at the dog shows. You can also visit the Airedale Terrier Club of America's website for information about grooming instruction, books, DVDs, etc.