

Brushing Your Short-Haired Dog

The right brushing technique makes grooming your dog a positive experience.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. I have a 5 ½-month-old rescue puppy. I used to have a Husky, but this puppy has very short fur and is completely different. What is the best type of brush to use on her? I want her to get used to being brushed, so I don't want to choose the wrong brush and make it a bad experience.

A. Yes, I must agree with you — when it comes to brushing, the Husky is definitely in a class by itself! Congratulations on your new pup and good for you for seeking out the best grooming tool for her coat and her comfort.

If her short coat is double, like that of a Lab or a Pug, use a “gentle slicker” to remove the fuzzy undercoat that can build up. Its wire bristles are straight and more pliable than a regular slicker brush, which has curved bristles to penetrate longer, deeper coats. You still need to be careful not to dig the bristles too deeply into her skin, causing irritation. If you cause discomfort to your dog while brushing, she may resist being groomed so you are right in wanting to make it a pleasant experience. Some groomers also use a natural bristle brush on coats like this. I sometimes use a flea comb to get rid of undercoat fuzz. Follow up with a head-to-tail rubdown with a rubber curry brush to get rid of any remaining shed hair.

If, on the other hand, your dog has a smooth coat like a Bulldog or Boxer, the rubber curry alone will do the trick. After bathing her, towel-dry your dog thoroughly, then use your own hand-held hair dryer to blow out dead hair, making sure it's on a warm setting and is not too hot. If it's a nice day, take the pup outside once she is dry and give her a good rub with the curry brush while the breeze blows those shed hairs away. This should make the grooming experience even more enjoyable for your new rescue!

Kathy Salzberg, NCMG, is a Certified Master Groomer and writer who has been grooming pets since 1976. With her daughter Missi, she owns The Village Groomer in Walpole, Mass. She has also written extensively on pet care for several consumer magazines and authored three books on dogs and careers with pets. Kathy lives with her pets on Cape Cod.

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