

## Tips for Grooming Your Dog with Electric Clippers

**Clipping more than once will help produce a smoother, more even coat for your dog.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

Q. What is the best way to groom a dog with electric clippers? What part of the body should you begin with?

A. When clipping a dog's coat, start at the front end, behind the neck, and clip with the grain of the hair – in the direction the hair grows. If you clip against the grain, you'll take off more hair and may end up with an uneven haircut or patches of coat much shorter than you intended.

Typically groomers will clip more than once. We first cut before the bath, and then finish by going over the coat once or twice more with the clippers to produce a smooth, finished look with no clipper marks. Touch up the finished product with scissors, to make the feet look neat and tidy, and to trim and shape the ears and tail.

You don't need to use a lot of pressure when clipping. As my late husband and teacher, David, used to remind me, "The clipper is an artist's tool, not a weapon." If your blades are sharp, you will simply guide the clipper along the pet's body. Be careful not to shave too closely around the anus, genitals, and underbelly and do change your blades as soon as they feel hot to the touch, to prevent "clipper burn," a painful irritation of a pet's more sensitive areas. And avoiding using "skip tooth" blades – those with wider teeth – on areas where you might catch a skin fold or on thin areas of the dog's legs where you could accidentally cut a tendon. Be very careful on the edges of the ears as well.

The best groomers produce a dog with a consistently smooth-clipped area while using their scissors to shape and neaten longer areas of the coat, making their four-legged masterpiece complete!

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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