

## Grooming a Portuguese Water Dog

**A Portuguese Water Dog should be brushed regularly and taken to a groomer every six weeks.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

Q. How long should I wait to have my Portuguese Water Dog groomed? Does he really need to be groomed every two months like our dog groomer told me?

A. Yes, this wonderful dog does require frequent grooming. We like to see our Portie clients every six weeks, so your groomer is by no means rushing you to come in too often. Eight weeks will work only if you do regular brushing and combing at home, two or three times a week.

In their colorful and heroic past when they worked with fisherman along the coast of Portugal, their coats were trimmed to a resemble a short blanket, about an inch in length, or in a Lion Clip. The "jacket" over their ribcage and chest left fuller to protect them from cold water but the rear shaved down close. The end of their curved erect tail was left full, their own personal signal flag as well as a handy rudder in the water. Their muzzle is still clipped short and their ears clipped and rounded to the leather as befits their utilitarian past. Almost extinct in the 1960's, Portuguese Water Dogs are now gaining great popularity as fun-loving family dogs that do not shed. They come in two coat types: curly and wavy.

The crisp curly type holds a sculpted trim like a Poodle coat while the wavy version falls more loosely and has more sheen. Although some groomers style them on the full side, I like them in a shorter trim that better suits their active lifestyle.

At home, get your dog used to brushing by using a curved-bristle slicker over his entire body, making sure to penetrate all the way to the skin, then checking your work with a wide-toothed steel comb to make sure you have gotten rid of mats and tangles. A de-tangling spray may aid in this process. Be careful not to slicker-burn the dog's skin by using too heavy a hand when brushing.

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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