

## Dog Grooming

More Grooming Tips  
A Good Idea?  
Frise  
Stop the Static Shock  
Grooming for Seniors

Keep grooming low-key for your senior dog.

Summer Shave:  
Fluffing up a Bichon  
What To Do About Tear Stains

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

**Q.** My Toy Poodle, Maxine, is almost 16 years old and has some major health issues (collapsing trachea, enlarged heart, and asthma). She needs regular grooming but I'm afraid of the stress it puts on her. Am I endangering her by taking her to a pet grooming salon?

**A.** There is no denying that a visit to the groomer can be risky for a geriatric dog. In our salon, we always explain this to pet owners and in some instances, have them sign a release form acknowledging their pet's condition and the risk involved.

Of course, the comfort and safety of the pet should be the groomer's first consideration. That said, there are some things you and your groomer can do to lessen the stress when Maxine goes for her day of beauty: Find a pet groomer who has experience with elderly dogs who may be arthritic, have trouble standing, have skin growths, problems with incontinence, or who get just plain cranky about being handled. It's difficult work that takes lots of patience and skill. Make sure your pet groomer knows about Maxine's medical issues and how they are being treated by your veterinarian.

Because of Maxine's tracheal problems, ask the groomer to use a harness rather than a grooming noose on her whether she is on the grooming table or in the tub.

Make sure the groomer will handle your pet with the utmost care and patience, washing her with a low-pressure spray in the tub and not using a high-velocity forced-air dryer that could spur a panic attack. Maxine should be toweled, then gently fluff-dried.

Schedule her appointment first thing in the morning and be available to come and pick her up as soon as the job is complete. Old dogs, puppies, and other pets with health issues should not be kept in the salon all day long.

Consider using a mobile groomer. Having a salon on wheels pull into your driveway and groom Maxine right at home might lessen the stress for both of you.

Don't expect miracles. A short trim that's easy to maintain is the best style for your furry senior citizen. At this point in her life, dematting her coat is too difficult for both dog and groomer. Sometimes elderly dogs have dental problems and clipping the face close can be painful and stressful for them. Don't fret if Maxine does not look as perfect as she did in her prime.

Make her feel pretty. When she is clean and comfortable with a colorful bow on her collar and a spritz of doggie cologne to make her smell luscious, be sure to tell her she is still your beautiful little girl.