

## Grooming Tips for Senior Dogs

**Scheduling several short appointments will lessen the strain on your dog's health.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

**Q.** I recently adopted a 14-year-old Old English Sheepdog. He has issues with his back legs, his sight is fading and his hearing is gone. He needs to be groomed, but I am worried that sending him to the groomer all day will be too much for him. I am already an OES owner so I have a great groomer, but what should I do if this is too strenuous for him?

**A.** Given his age and his health issues, I think a whole day at the groomer's would be too much for this dear old fellow. If you have a great groomer for your other Old English Sheepdog, I am sure he or she would work with you to accommodate this senior canine. Standing on the table and in the tub for one session would be severely taxing on those back legs. Instead, book him for short maintenance visits and do not expect his grooming to be accomplished in one appointment. When the dog gets tired, have the groomer call you to pick him up immediately.

If this shaggy senior came to you with a tangled coat, I would consider dematting out of the question. It would be tortuous for an elderly dog like this. The kindest course is to have him clipped down and start the coat over. If the groomer gets him brushed out and/or trimmed in one visit, schedule another visit for a bath and blow-dry. At home, get him used to being brushed lying down to ease the strain on those back legs. Kudos to you for giving this dog a loving home in his golden years!

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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