

Dog's Short Coat Could Mean Fewer Groomer Trips

Keeping a Yorkshire Terrier in a shorter coat could make life easier on both dog and owner.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. I have a 10-year-old Yorkshire Terrier whose coat grows very fast. I take her to the groomer about every five weeks, but she should go more often. Do you recommend a short haircut for Yorkies or a longer cut?

A. As far as coat length goes, I recommend whatever the owner of the Yorkshire Terrier prefers. Not many pet owners today choose to keep their Yorkies in the long, flowing AKC breed standard that you see happily prancing around the ring at Westminster. Their beautiful silken coats are high-maintenance in terms of care, including daily brushing and combing, and weekly bathing.

Show Yorkies lead a sheltered life. They don't go out in the rain or snow and they are usually not allowed to romp in the grass. Indoors, hardwood, tile, or linoleum floors are preferable to carpeting which can break or damage their splendid tresses. If they are allowed out to play, their coats are usually "wrapped", sectioned off in portions that look like little bundles and encased in rice paper, usually containing diluted conditioner or coat oil to keep the hair tangle-free. Their topknots are artfully tied up in elastic bands wrapped in wax paper to keep the hair from breaking. Think of them as pint-sized supermodels.

Many of our clients opt for a puppy cut or teddy bear trim. The dog's back can be clipped short with a #4 or #5 blade, or left longer with one of the new #3 $\frac{3}{4}$ blades that leave about a half-inch of hair, or a snap-on comb attached to the clipper blade. The legs can be clipped with a #1 $\frac{1}{2}$ or #2 snap-on comb, touched up with scissors after a bath, and blow-dried. Trimmed round to resemble a West Highland White Terrier, the face is adorably framed. Thinning shears remove stray hairs near the corners of the eyes, and the top third of the ear can be shaved and scissored to a neat point. Some groomers like to trim them like a Schnauzer, their faces styled sharply with eyebrows and a beard, but I prefer a more traditional look with their beautiful eyes shining brightly for all to see. Pet trims on Yorkies require far less upkeep at home but you should still give your Yorkie a good comb-out once or twice a week.

At age 10, your little princess must be healthy and well-fed to still be growing such a profuse coat. I think you have her on a good schedule if she sees her groomer every five weeks. You just need to put her in a shorter trim to make life easier on both of you.