

10 Steps to Minimize Mess

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You might save money grooming your dog at home, but you still pay a price in a big mess. Before grooming begins, the dog looks scared; afterward, the room looks scary.

What can you expect after grooming your dog? A good-looking pooch and hair - lots of it. Shed hair. Cut hair. Brushed hair. Then you have clipped toenails, fleas, dirty cotton balls from cleaning ears, ear powder and sudsy, dirty water.

If you think grooming one dog is a mess, remember professional groomers can have 20 to 40 clients a day. Here are 10 tips to help keep the mess to a minimum:

1. A quality vacuum is a must for home grooming, especially if you manicure coats requiring a lot of clipping and scissoring. You've got to suck up the hair immediately or it will migrate through the house. And so will any fleas in the hair.
2. Hair pickups are handy for the hair you couldn't get with a vacuum. Several styles are available: adhesive, washable or squeegee. You can also brush hair off clothing with a soft slicker, which is what many professional groomers do before leaving the salon.
3. Use an apron or smock to keep hair off while grooming and keep you dry while bathing the dog. Many types and styles are available for professional groomers; prices range from \$10 to \$30. Make sure the one you purchase is water-repellent, lightweight and machine washable.
4. Have a set of grooming clothes you can wear without worrying about dirt, hair or odor.
5. Use absorbent cotton towels for drying, placing under a soaked dog or making a crate cozy for a damp dog. Towels don't need to be fancy; buy them from thrift stores.
6. A roll of paper towels is helpful for spills and accidents.
7. A lined trash can is handy for disposing of cotton balls and general clean up. Plastic grocery bags make great liners because they are free and you can tie them up and easily dispose of them.
8. A restraint for the grooming table and tub is also helpful because it's safer and keeps the dog in one place. If you bathe your dog in the kitchen sink, utility sink or bathtub, use a rubber mat to prevent slipping. A well-made spray attachment is important because it makes bathing more useful and helps control the mess.
9. Use a disinfectant/deodorant, bucket, sponge and mop to clean up.
10. When finished, machine-wash the towels, clothes and apron with hot water. Never mix dirty, hair-covered grooming items with your regular clothes unless you want them covered in hair.

These tips should keep home grooming from becoming a hair-raising experience - for you and the room.