

## Show Grooming by Dog Coat Type

### Dog Handlers and seasoned experts share their grooming tips.

**Corded Coats** Barbe Pessina's career in dogs began in 1974 with the acquisition of her first German Shepherd Dog. She started in obedience competition, which led to her interest in breeding and exhibiting. She encountered her first Puli in 1975, and began a lifelong love affair with the breed. She and her husband added Norwich Terriers to the mix in 1992 for variety. After 30 years, they are still active in breeding and exhibiting, and Barbe is currently licensed to judge several Herding and Terrier breeds.

**Rules** 1. Starting a Puli puppy at an early age helps to simplify the training process as they mature, and the coat requires more time and effort. The puppy will begin to enter the cording process at about 9 to 10 months of age, depending on weather and the time of year.

2. Special care must be exercised on the ears. Always work your fingers in close to the skin, and separate by pulling gently and slowly away from the ear leather. Never, ever pull the hair apart towards the skin in this area, as the ear leather can easily be ripped open in this manner. You should also use a gentle touch when working on the coat on the tail to separate cords, as most Pulis are very sensitive in this area as well. It generally takes about 6 months to set the cords and get some sort of order into a juvenile. The adult Puli requires only a separation as above before the bath.

3. In order to have a glorious, fully corded coat, the coat must be kept clean and free of debris. It is also imperative to keep the dog free of fleas and ticks, since any scratching will remove the coat to the skin and impede the final process. The most important advice I can give is, **CLEAN HAIR GROWS**.

4. **Bathing:** Use tepid/warm water, and a low-sudsing shampoo. Pour the soapy water over and massage into the coat, much as you would if you were washing a fine-quality sweater. Squeeze the sudsy water through the cords and coat. Do not rub the coat, as this will cause matting and/or break the cords at the base near the skin. Repeat this process several times until the water runs clear. Once clean, the first rinse can contain a general conditioner. Rinse, rinse, rinse and rinse again until you are absolutely sure all shampoo and conditioner is out of the coat (leaving any shampoo/conditioner in can cause dogs to scratch).

5. **Drying:** Wring the cords to remove as much excess water as possible. Put several large, absorbent towels in a crate and put the dog in there to dry. The drying time is enhanced with the use of commercial dog dryers, but be sure to always keep the dryer on the cool setting, never hot. Keep changing the towels in the bottom of the crate to help draw out moisture and be sure to move the dryer around the crate and not just blow it on one area of the dog. Once completely dry, you can tidy and round the feet, trim excess length of cords from around the mouth, and tidy the rear end for sanitary purposes. If you are lucky enough to grow the coat to the ground, you may need to trim the length of the coat to keep the dog from tripping.

While the process may seem daunting at first, it really only takes about two hours to separate the coat, wash the dog, and get him under the dryer once you are used to the work and know how to handle the coat. The rest of the time is spent drying. After all is said and done, there is tremendous satisfaction in looking at a beautifully groomed, corded coat, and knowing that you made it all possible.

**Tools** The corded coat requires a minimal amount of equipment: a spray bottle (with water and a small amount of conditioner); pin brush; and a pair of scissors for sanitary trimming, and for trimming around the feet. Most of the work on the coat is done by hand.

Next step: [Hairless Dogs](#) | [More Coat Types](#)