

Nail it

How often does your dog need a pooch pedicure? As Pollari points out, it all depends on your dog. "If your pet plays a lot and there's plenty of wear and tear on his nails, then he won't need his nails trimmed as frequently," she says. "However, if your dog is a lounge lizard, then you'll need to clip his nails more often."

If you're not comfortable with using a guillotine trimmer or clippers, Krowiak recommends using an emery board to gently file the sharp edges away and keep your dog's nails short and rounded. Human fingernail clippers can also be used for small breeds or puppies.

If you accidentally nick the quick, the spot where the nail meets the skin, don't panic. Christine Speerin, CMG from The Grooming School, suggests using soft soap or cornflour to stop the bleeding.

Hear me out

Cleaning your dog's ears every week or so is a simple solution that can prevent your pooch from developing painful ear infections. To gently

wipe away excess wax and other gunk from the outer part of your dog's ear and around the creases, Krowiak suggests using gauze and an ear-cleaning solution for dogs. Dog wipes can also be just as effective.

"Whatever you can get out with your fingers is safe, but for places inside the ear that you can't see, leave it to the vet," she stresses. The same goes if your dog's ear is discoloured, smells offensive or thick with wax.

Bathing beauty

According to Garner, one rule to live by is that you should always brush your dog's coat before giving it a bath. If you don't, the water can make stubborn knots set in, making the task of de-tangling your pet's hair close to impossible. Another handy hint is to put cotton wool in your pet's ears to keep them nice and dry.

To begin, place your pooch in the bathtub or laundry sink (a non-slip surface will also make them feel secure) and, starting at the top of the head and slowly moving along the body, use a spray attachment to dampen the coat with

Looking for a good groomer?

Visit the Pet Industry Association's website at www.piaa.net.au for a list of Australia's Certified Master Groomers (CMG) and other groomers in your area.

warm water. Then, gently massage a shampoo formulated for dogs into the body using circular motions, rinse and repeat as needed until your pet feels squeaky clean. Follow with conditioner and rinse again to ensure every bit of soapy residue has been washed away. Towel dry your dog to remove excess moisture. A hairdryer set on low can be used to finish the job.

Furry freshness

Brushing your dog's teeth at least once a day will not only prevent smelly breath and tooth decay, but also mouth and gum disease. A yearly dental check-up, as well as giving your dog bones and dental toys to gnaw on, will also help prevent these painful problems.

When cleaning your dog's teeth, Pollari insists a doggy toothpaste and small, soft toothbrush are a must. The process is quite simple — using a small amount of toothpaste, gently clean your dog's teeth and gums as you would your own.

Never use human toothpaste, as it's not meant to be ingested and fluoride can be toxic for our four-legged friends.

Slowly, but surely

Is grooming a relatively new experience for your dog? Or maybe you're worried about how well your puppy will handle being primped and preened?

As Krowiak explains, the quickest and most stress-free way to ease your pooch into a regular grooming routine is to use a "gently, gently" approach. "The best way is to let your dog get used to the equipment and environment very slowly," she says. "Try to be nice and calm — if your dog freaks out, stop what you're doing, wait until he's calm and then start again."

Tash Savige, CMG from Professional Pet Grooming Services, also suggests playing with your dog's feet, nails and ears every now and then. This makes the sensation of being handled and touched in common grooming areas a little less scary for them.

Being confident, praising and rewarding your dog throughout the process and making the experience fun, will also ensure your dog is happy and more than willing by the time its next pampering session comes around! 🐾



You should always brush your dog's coat before giving him a bath.