

## Grooming is not just about good looks – it's also about good health!

### Why do dogs need to be groomed?

Depending on the breed of your dog, his/her fur will either:

- continue to grow until it is cut
- die after a period of time and be shed from the coat
- or both of the above.

Dogs that shed can do so once a year, several times a year or even constantly all year round. Shedding can also occur in times of stress, after surgery, and even after giving birth. For the health of your dog's skin and coat, and to maintain his/her good looks, it is important to regularly clip and/or remove dead fur from your dog's coat, and also to give him/her regular baths to keep his/her coat clean and fresh.

### What are the benefits of grooming?

Whilst the benefits for us are obvious (we all enjoy having a clean and nice-smelling dog around the house), our dog also benefits physically and mentally from being clean and well groomed. Some of these benefits include:

- Quality time with you. Taking the time to brush and comb your dog not only allows you to spend quality time with him/her, but the regular combing and brushing will also stimulate his/her skin and keep the coat clean and healthy.
- Early detection of health problems. Being in such close contact with your dog also means that you will become familiar with the health of his/her skin. You will be able to quickly deal with any fleas, ticks or other nasties that may appear from time to time, and become aware of, and deal with, any allergies, lumps or bumps in their early stages thereby allowing you to seek veterinary advice before they become a larger problem.

By feeling the condition of your dog's fur when grooming you can discover a lot about his general state of health. For example a dull, dry, brittle or greasy coat can give you a lot of clues about the state of your dog's diet, hormones, allergies etc.

- Reducing hair around the house. Regular grooming will not only ensure that dead hair is removed from your dog's coat, but reduce the amount of fur left all over your house and furniture.

- Socialisation. Visits to a professional groomer will allow your dog to become used to different people, places and sounds, and when combined with regular grooming at home, it also ensures that he becomes used to being touched all over. This is extremely important for those situations where your dog may need to be touched or checked over (eg dog shows, the vets or grooming salons).
- Increased general wellbeing. Regular trips to a professional groomer can feel as good as a massage does to us if a hydrobath or a mitt and/or soft brush are used during the grooming process.

### What grooming routine should my dog have?

The most appropriate grooming routine for your dog will vary depending on its breed, and might include any (or all) of the following:

- brushing/combing
- bathing
- clipping
- coat stripping
- nail clipping
- ear cleaning
- teeth cleaning

### How often should I groom my dog?

How often you brush and comb your dog will depend on its breed and the length of its fur. But when it comes to bath time, beware of over-washing your dog as it can upset their skin and cause irritation. You should not bath your dog any more than once a week and you should make sure you always use a soap-free shampoo specifically designed for dogs. At Zen for Dogs we recommend bathing and clipping every 4 to 6 weeks to keep your dog looking and feeling its best.

### Who should groom my dog?

Grooming can be done at home, or by us, or both, but regardless of your preference, your dog will still benefit from the care and attention it receives.