

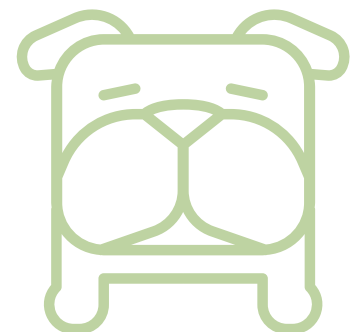


Dog Owner's Manual

By Kasper Halevy, President and Founder of the
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in collaboration with club members

Preface

Palo Alto Humane Society (PAHS) extends heartfelt thanks to Kasper Halevy for his hard work and dedication in researching and producing this manual. Kasper and the middle school Animal Advocacy Club at the International School of The Peninsula decided to produce two manuals of pet care that will be accessible to the local community through the International School of The Peninsula and to visitors to the Resources page of the PAHS website (<https://www.paloaltohumane.org/resources/>). The students elected to write about dog and cat care because they are the most popular pets among their friends and classmates; Kasper collated and organized the very useful and easily accessible information contained in the manual.





Attitude Toward Dog Ownership

Before you embark on your quest for owning a dog, make sure you do not construe dog ownership as a chore or a burden. Also make sure that you are prepared for a long-term commitment with some twists and turns along the way. Having a dog isn't always a piece of cake, but with a positive, patient, and loving attitude, it will soon become second nature to you to care for your canine companion.

Dogs are one of the most popular pets in the world, outranked only by fish and cats. They are also among the most difficult to care for. There are so many different breeds of dogs to choose from, each with different personalities and behaviors. Throughout this section, we will review the things you need to do in order to properly care for your dog.

Food and Water

Your dog's most obvious needs are food and water. The amount of food you give to your dog depends on your dog's weight (unless your dog is on a special diet, in which case the veterinarian will dictate how much food to give him). We recommend buying several different

types of dog food to start with. At the beginning of each meal, feed your dog one of these foods. If you see that your dog eats more of a certain food or particular brand, chances are that he probably prefers that one, so that brand might be the right fit for your dog. When your dog is still a puppy—typically 0–1 year old, or whenever your dog stops growing for a long period of time and reaches adulthood—give him puppy food. Once he is an adult, provide him with regular dog food. As for water, leave bowls with clean water throughout your home so your dog has access to water everywhere. Of course, consult your veterinarian regarding the food that your dog should eat.

Here is a list of human foods that you should never feed your pet: **Alcohol, Apple Seeds, Avocado, Candy, Chewing Gum, Toothpaste, Mouthwash, Cat Food, Chocolate, Coffee, Tea Caffeine, Cooked Bones, Corn On The Cob, Fat Trimmings, Garlic, Grapes, Raisins, Human Vitamins, Liver, Macadamia Nuts, Marijuana, Milk, Dairy Products, Onions Chives, Peppers, Persimmon, Peaches, Plum, Raw Meat, Fish, Rhubarb, Tomato Leaves, Salt, Sugar, Tobacco, Xylitol, and Yeast.**

While some human foods won't harm your dog, many will. Before you feed your canine any human food, consult with your veterinarian and make sure that it will not be poisonous to your dog.

Space to Sleep

Another important component to owning a dog is providing him with a place to sleep. Some owners prefer to have their canines sleep with them in the same bed, but others might feel a bit uncomfortable about that. If that is the case, consider buying a crate and a doggy bed to give your dog a restful and cozy place to sleep. Even if your dog seems to prefer to sleep on the floor, you never know when he might switch over to his bed.

Spaying and Neutering

Spaying or neutering your dog is one of your primary responsibilities as a dog owner. Spaying is the removal of a female animal's reproductive organs, and neutering is a similar surgical procedure for males. Why is this so important? Doesn't it just cause unnecessary pain for my companion? Absolutely false! Here are the reasons that spaying or neutering is a must for your dog:



1. Overpopulation. Uncontrolled and widespread reproduction contributes largely to pet overpopulation, one of the most prevalent issues affecting the animal community today. On average, a female dog and her offspring produce a grand total of 67,000 dogs in six years if left unspayed and unneutered! Many of these helpless puppies are unwanted and end up in shelters, where most are euthanized. Even if they don't go to a shelter, their life as strays is almost worse! Picture a situation like this one: Imagine if about 11,000* humans showed up in your community in one year and looked for housing. Competitiveness for housing will increase, resources could be depleted, and many of these people could end up impoverished. Surely you wouldn't want to play a role in such a destructive cycle, right? *11,000 represents the number of dogs born per year to the original female dog and her offspring.

2. Increase in life expectancy. A recent study (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/04/130417185904.htm>) shows that, on average, the lifespan of an unsterilized dog is 7.9 years, and a sterilized dog, 9.4 years! To be more specific, the study has shown an 18% increase in life expectancy among neutered males and a 23% increase in life expectancy in spayed females.

3. Decreased chance of developing certain cancers. For males, the risk for testicular cancer is significantly reduced, as is that for prostate cancer. For females, certain types of cancers of reproductive organs, such as cervical or mammary cancer, are almost entirely eliminated.

4. Overall improvement in behavior. One of the biggest differences between sterilized and unsterilized canines is that the unaltered ones have a desire to roam. Dogs will go to great lengths to reach a female who is in heat (the stage in a female dog's reproductive cycle in which she looks for and is receptive to a male willing to mate), which is a natural desire in animals. This yearning for a mate often results in an uncontrollable and desperate pet, who might engage in destructive behaviors, such as

tunneling and jumping over fences, to reach a female dog in heat. Male hormones (testosterone) also cause more aggressive and territorial behavior, making your dog quite difficult to contain. Some recent studies have suggested that the sterilization of dogs has no effect on their behavior, and in some rare cases even conclude that unspayed females suffer less from these behavioral problems. However, the full effect on behavior remains unclear. So far, more evidence point to the benefits mentioned here. Even if those contradictory studies were correct, the benefits in general still outweigh the possibility that behavior won't change with spay or neuter.

5. No unwanted pregnancies. Having a pair of unsterilized dogs and trying to avoid the birth of puppies is very difficult. The female would need to wear a diaper or other protective device, and the male would continue to pursue the female aggressively, creating difficult situations in the home. Females can give birth to puppies twice yearly, and caring for the puppies is costly and time consuming.

6. Avoiding overcrowding in shelters. Unwanted litter puppies will end up in shelters and will take a space that could have been for another dog. When shelters become overcrowded, the oldest residents are, more often than not, euthanized to make space for others.

By spaying or neutering your dog, you will reap all of the above benefits plus make space for dogs who could potentially get a second chance at life through adoption from a shelter!

To read about more benefits of spay–neuter and how to debunk common excuses for not sterilizing your dog, visit <https://www.canine-journal.com/benefits-of-spaying-and-neutering/>.

Now that we know the benefits of spaying and neutering your canine companion, let's take a look at what to expect post-surgery.

Post-Spay

Spaying is a very invasive surgery, as it removes the uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes. That is a shock to your dog's system. You can expect recovery to take between 10 days and 2 weeks. During that time, be sure to keep your dog's activity levels as low as possible. Supervise her at all times and make sure she is on a leash at all times. A special collar or cone is mandatory so that your dog can refrain from licking at the incision wounds, which could cause infection and reopening of the wound plus other complications.

Post-Neuter

The neutering surgery is a lot less invasive in comparison to spaying, so the recovery time for your boy should be shorter. In fact, your dog might not even notice that anything was removed! However, this does not mean you can go back to your normal active routine with your dog immediately after surgery. From 10 to 12 days should be ample time for recovery, and all precautions that must be taken for spaying must also be taken for neutering (protective cone or collar to prevent licking, supervision at all times, and so on).



To end this section, we will cover some of the signs post-surgery that indicate something is wrong with your dog and that medical assistance is required immediately:

- Your newly spayed dog has trouble breathing (a slight cough is normal—it's from the tube used to keep her airways open during surgery).
- The wound reopens or becomes abnormally red or hot.
- The area around the incision swells significantly or begins to ooze out pus (mild swelling is normal).
- Your dog develops a fever.
- He or she refuses to eat or drink more than one day out from surgery.
- Your dog is vomiting or has diarrhea.

As always, consultation with a veterinarian regarding spaying and neutering and instructions for post-surgery care is necessary. Doing some of your own research is also a good idea (but do not limit it to only one side of the “argument”). Before you spay or neuter your dog, have your veterinarian perform a checkup on your dog to see if he is physically apt to undergo the surgery. **If your dog is ill, surgical procedures should be off-limits (unless it is an emergency) until he is healthy again.**



Exercise and Mental Stimulation: Preventing Boredom

In order to have a happy and healthy dog, you need to stimulate him physically and mentally. If your dog doesn't get enough exercise, you simply can't expect him to be a well-mannered member of the family. This is because a lack of exercise and mental stimulation often results in behavioral problems.

To understand why exercise is so vital to dogs' health, we need to consider dogs' evolutionary history and the jobs they performed. Retrieving, herding sheep and cattle, and guarding the home were the jobs dogs carried out thousands of years ago. Wolves, the animals that dogs evolved from, hunt meat with their packs, travel in packs (which is why they actively seek attention), socialize with their packmates, and do almost everything in their packs. However, today dogs have everything they need to survive provided for them by their owners, and this lack of purpose and companionship of their own kind leaves dogs no outlet for their naturally active tendencies and need for socialization. Subsequently, the overload of energy they have results in boredom, which could lead to the development of behavioral problems, such as:

- Destructive chewing, digging, or scratching
- Investigative behaviors, such as digging through the trash
- Hyperactivity, excitability, and nighttime activity
- Play biting and rough play

Preventing these unpleasant behaviors in your dog is not the only reason that your dog needs to

get exercise. Just like humans, dogs need exercise to maintain good general health as well. Exercising helps your dog burn off fat and expend energy, which helps control obesity and makes him too tired to engage in potentially destructive activities. Exercise also helps prevent future cardiovascular, respiratory, or joint- and movement-related diseases such as arthritis.

How much exercise does a dog need? This depends on the age and breed of the dog.



The Impact of Age on Exercise

As a general rule, younger dogs need more exercise than older ones of the same breed. As dogs age, their bones and muscles inevitably become weaker. Of course, this does not mean you should stop exercising your elderly dog. In fact, he still needs quite a bit of exercise to prevent further weakening of his bones and muscles. Just make sure to monitor if your dog can withstand the exercise you provide him with by observing his behavior after each session. Of course, always check in with your veterinarian before you implement a new exercise routine or determine how much exercise your dog needs.

When exercising puppies, do not overwork them. Because puppies' bones and muscles are in the process of developing, it is essential to not put too much pressure on those delicate body parts. Again, this does not imply that your puppy should be slouching on the couch all day. Each week, slowly increase the amount of exercise your puppy gets. If you see that your puppy is exhausted and breathless after an exercise session, it will be smart to make future exercising sessions less intensive. When your

puppy ages out of puppyhood (usually between 9 and 15 months, depending on his breed), he reaches the peak of his exercising potential. Your puppy's bones and muscles will have fully developed and will not be deteriorating. This is the point in your puppy's life when he will be able to handle the greatest amount of exercise.

The Impact of Breed on Exercise

The age rule is applicable to all breeds. However, different breeds need different amounts of exercise. Energetic breeds such as the Border Collie or German Shepherd obviously need more exercise than a pug. Below is a table from The Dog Clinic that illustrates how much exercise time the most popular breeds need to maintain a healthy lifestyle:

Breeds	Daily Exercise
Bichon Frise, Lhasa Apso, Pug, Shih Tzu	20 minutes + indoor play
Miniature Dachshund, Yorkshire Terrier, English Bulldog	20-40 minutes
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Cairn Terrier, Cocker Spaniel, Great Dane, Miniature Schnauzer, Toy/Miniature Poodles, Shetland Sheepdog	40-60 minutes
Basset Hound, Tibetan Terrier, Whippet, West Highland Terrier	60-80 minutes
Golden Retriever, Siberian Husky	80-100 minutes
Border Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier	100-120 minutes
Border Collie, Dalmatian, German Shepherd, English Springer Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, Rottweiler, Weimaraner	More than 2 hours

<https://www.thedogclinic.com/dog-exercise>

Of course, there are many mixed breeds as well, so it might be difficult to determine how much exercise is ideal for your dog. Here are some general guidelines as to how much exercise a dog would need based on his physical appearance—remember that dogs with shorter legs often do not need to exercise as much as dogs with longer legs:

- Use common sense to judge whether a dog is getting enough exercise. If he's pacing around the house, even after exercising, then he's probably not getting enough exercise. If he's exhausted after walks, then you might want to reduce his time outside or split that time into two shorter sessions. Some dogs will even refuse to go out, which is probably a sign he's being over-exercised

(or if you know for sure he hasn't done any physical activity yet, it could simply be a sign of laziness!).

- Short-nosed dogs, such as Boxers, frequently struggle with vigorous, intensive exercise. They might require calmer and more sedate walks than breeds such as the energetic Border Collie.
- Toy breeds (and other very small dogs) and those that are brachycephalic (having a squashed-in face) can tire very quickly. Speak to your veterinarian before increasing or changing the kind of exercise.
- For breeds needing 40+ minutes of exercise per day, it is important not to do it all in one session. Split exercise time into several sessions to avoid overtiredness. As always, check with your veterinarian before making any relatively big adjustments to your dog's exercise regimen.



What Are Some Ways My Dog Can Get Exercise?

There are many ways to exercise your dog. Below are a few of the many activities that you can do with your dog to keep him (and yourself!) in shape:

1. Hiking, going on a walk, or jogging. These activities are perhaps the most common forms of exercise for dogs. You also get to have a good time as you get your own daily dose of physical activity and have time for reflection about the day's events, while your dog can explore wherever you are walking and get his own physical exercise and mental stimulation (we will discuss these topics shortly). However, be

sure to change your routes to keep your dog interested. If you take the same exact route for a prolonged period of time, your dog will eventually run out of new things to investigate and won't be as excited about the outing or get as much mental stimulation.

2. Fetch and catch. These games are most effective when played in a spacious environment. If you have a sizeable backyard, playing there should work fine. However, if you find that your ball or object is flying over the fence or outside your property very often, it would be a good idea to go to a local park. The awesome aspect of fetch and catch is that you don't have to exert much of your energy, but your dog will be running across the field many times, making this game fun and effective exercise for him. A good tip to prevent him from getting bored after only a few round trips is having a treat ready every couple of times that he returns the ball or object to you. Your dog will understand that he has a chance of getting a treat every time he brings the ball back, motivating him to do so. However, try not to give him too many treats—give him a treat only if you detect a serious lack of interest. This is because if you give him treats too often, he might follow commands or perform activities only when you have a treat in hand, that is, he might not obey you when you do not happen to have treats with you. Even if you did have treats for him, it is unhealthy for your dog to consume too many treats.

3. Swimming. As many of us know, dogs are great swimmers and love this kind of exercise. Taking your dogs for a swim is especially effective when you have children who love to swim, giving both them and your dogs a fun exercise session. However, do make sure that you educate yourself on how to care for a swim-loving dog. For information on training your dog to swim, visit: <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/lifestyle/swimming-is-great-exercise-for-dogs/>. For more information on how to take care of an already water-savvy dog, take a look at:

<http://www.happytailsspa-blog.com/2011/08/18/how-to-care-for-your-swimming-dog/>.

4. Tug-of-war or playing with a rope. For larger breeds, you can fling a rope around like a cowboy, have your dog jump or bite it, and then start a game of tug-of-war. This is a great source of exercise and will tire your dog out relatively fast. Also be sure to have a filled bowl of water near the area in which you're playing, because your dog will need it to stay hydrated. Although smaller breeds might not be able to perform the "jump bite," tug-of-war is still very much possible. However, do NOT yank the rope upward while you pull (for all breeds). This will stretch your dog's neck and head in a weird angle, which could lead to neck problems later on or even immediately. Also, do not be afraid to go a bit harder on your dog, especially with bigger breeds. They could be stronger than you think! Going soft could cause them to lose interest in the game quickly, as it does not present a challenge for them. The same thing could happen if you pull too hard—dogs are smart enough to know if they will lose every single time, there is really no point in playing. To motivate them to keep playing tug-of-war, balance the amount of times they win and lose.



What Is the Difference Between Mental and Physical Stimulation?

Suppose you take your dog on exactly the same hour-long walk for two years in a row. Is he getting exercise? Yes. Is he getting mental stimulation? Well, given that he most likely knows the walk by heart now, and there is

nothing more for him to explore, he is getting very little mental stimulation. Despite that walk being good exercise, your dog is bound to become bored of it after so much time doing the same thing.



What Are Some Different Ways to Provide Mental Stimulation?

When we humans think of mental stimulation, we think about writing that huge status report, planning out a curriculum for the school year, reading for work, and many more mentally challenging activities. Because we think of those kinds of activities, we often misconstrue mental stimulation for dogs as being very difficult. We can't make a dog study, after all! Dogs' mental stimulation is very different from that of humans. Some mental stimulation methods for dogs can include going on a leisurely stroll to an unexplored area. Because the stroll is nice and slow, they have the opportunity to use their senses to explore the area. When they do that, they try to remember the different smells they sniff and the scenery they see, motivating them to continue exploring. This is just one of the many ways you can mentally stimulate dogs. Here is a list of some additional ways to mentally stimulate your dog:

1. Make your dog work for his food. Even though it might seem a bit cruel, it's actually a very stimulating mental activity for your dog. Of course, if you notice that he is starving, feed him regularly with a bowl. However, if it is mealtime and he still looks relatively active, consider using toys such as the "Kong Wobbler" or the "Bob-A-Lot." Put your dog's portion of food in one of those toys and make him come up with a strategy to get the food out. This kind of activity exercises his problem-solving skills and is very rewarding for him, as the ultimate satisfaction will make up for the hard effort. You can also put treats in those toys, but not too often—too many treats is unhealthy for dogs (the same way that too much candy is unhealthy for humans).

2. Get your dog a puzzle toy! This kind of toy tests your dog's problem-solving abilities, boosts your dog's confidence, and challenges him mentally! Even a mere 15 minutes spent on interacting with a puzzle toy does wonders to enhance your dog's cerebral activity. There is a plethora of interactive puzzle games to choose from, so don't even begin to worry about there not being sufficient variety for your dog. Which toy to buy will be up to you—don't forget to take into account your dog's preferences. Keep trying out different toys until you find one that your dog enjoys. Make sure that you have plenty of toys for your dog at all times! For more toys, visit <https://topdogtips.com/best-dog-toy/>. You can always ask your veterinarian and other friends as well!

3. Suggested nose and memory games. As many of us know, dogs have an exceptional sense of smell, far better than that of humans. One great game to test that sense is hiding food items around the house. Right after you've introduced the concept of the game to your dog, make sure you say the game aloud and use smelly items. Saying the name of the game is important so in the future your dog will know what he needs to do when you call him and mention the game. Your dog most likely won't understand the concept of the game, so using smelly items at first will allow him to find the

items easily while also getting your dog accustomed to the purpose of the game. Make sure to praise and encourage your dog every time he finds an item. As for the suggested memory game, also called the "shell game," you will need three cups and an item that emits no odors. Put the item beneath one of the cups and spin all three cups around really fast. Then your dog will have to identify which cup contains the item—this game tests his memory. Of course, if you have any other ideas that you think may work, as long as it is safe for you and your dog, go ahead and try them out!

4. Interaction with other dogs, humans, and other animals. This is a fun way for your dog to use his senses to get to know more people. Your dog will try to socialize with the animal or person, compete with it, and observe. To dogs, this is plenty of mental stimulation and is fun too!

5. Training. One of the most direct ways to mentally stimulate your dog is by testing how well he can obey you and/or memorize commands—this tests his memory. Many dog owners take their dogs to weekly dog training sessions, which is highly mentally beneficial. You can apply the commands and tricks your dog learns anywhere, which is a great resource for constant stimulation. Training is a whole other field in itself, and each dog will have different needs (but all will need to be potty trained!). However, training your dog is a daily commitment, as you need to make sure your dog remembers each and every command. Consultation with a trainer and veterinarian is mandatory. For more information on potty training, which is a very critical skill for your dog to have, visit <https://www.happyfit-dog.com/potty-training-a-stubborn-puppy-the-ultimate-guide/>.



Hygiene and Grooming

Dogs, just like humans, need to maintain good hygiene. Would you want a dog with overgrown, sharp, dirty nails? Or a dog with rotting teeth, terrible breath, and absolutely nasty body odor? Most likely not. Here is what you need to do for your dog in order to keep him clean.

Nail Trimming

Trimming your dog's nails is absolutely essential to your dog's comfort and wellbeing. Nail trimming could be misconstrued as trivial, especially for dogs. However, it is the complete opposite. Below are the reasons why nail trimming for your canine is vital for his health:

1. Hindering your dog's ability to move.

Because stepping on toenails while walking is highly uncomfortable and painful, your dog will find a way to walk that alleviates some of the pressure of his toenails sinking into his paws. As well as being inefficient and only a partial solution, this will not allow your dog to walk properly. Yes, your dog will eventually adapt, but adaptation could result in injury, arthritis, and extreme discomfort.

2. Discomfort and increased chance of injury.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, your dog will experience great pain, and not only that, your dog may even break or rip a nail by accident. Breaking a nail is bad enough, but ripping could break open some of the dog's veins (located right behind the area where you are supposed to stop trimming your dog's nails).

3. Injury to you and damage to your furniture. Suppose you got home from work, completely exhausted and looking forward to sharing some quality time with your loving dog. He greets you at the door and scratches you with overgrown paws. After grimacing from the pain, you see that your couch has been decimated. Long nails contributes to many unnecessarily painful scratches and ripped furniture. Not good!



So the moral of the story is: Make sure you trim your dog's nails! You can do this either by having it done at the pet store (the easier way) or doing it yourself. For more information regarding how you can trim your dog's nails yourself, visit <https://simplewag.com/how-to-trim-dog-nails/>.

Brushing

If you think that brushing is only a matter of aesthetics, that's simply not so! If you think you can skip brushing, you're dead wrong! Unlike humans (at least, men and boys), who can get away sometimes with not brushing their hair, dogs are covered in hair, so we need to take brushing our dogs seriously! Here are some reasons why brushing your dog on a regular basis is good for him:

1. It prevents mats. A mat is essentially a clump of inseparable hair that needs to be cut off in one piece. Humans can get them too. Not only are mats a nuisance, but they can also cause skin infections and discomfort.

2. It helps you become accustomed to the way your dog's skin looks when it is healthy so you can notice irregularities such as parasites or bugs. No one would want a nest of bugs in their hair, would they?

3. It distributes your dog's natural oils.

This prevents any greasy buildup in a particular spot, provides equal "resources" to every part of your dog's body, and makes him aesthetically pleasing.

4. It reduces shedding. This phenomenon is very common in dogs and is often quite a hassle. Despite the inevitability of shedding, you can lessen the effect of shedding by brushing regularly. Regular brushing removes massive chunks of soon-to-be-shed hair.

5. It's great bonding time, especially for shy dogs! Brushing is a wonderful way to cultivate a healthy relationship with your canine companion while giving them a soothing (that is, if you do it correctly) massage and later reaping all the benefits mentioned above.



Brushing your dog, unlike nail trimming, is not difficult at all. Just be gentle while you brush, brush in the direction that smoothes your dog's hair, and make sure you don't touch any of your dog's sensitive spots. For long-haired dogs, you might sometimes need to lift up part of their fur and brush underneath to ensure that you brush thoroughly. Now you are most likely wondering, will my own hairbrush work? The answer is a definite "no." For more information on which type of hairbrush you should use for your dog, visit <https://iheartdogs.com/the-top-7-benefits-of-brushing-your-dog/>.

Bathing

As humans, we bathe or shower every day. For dogs, this is not the case. Giving your dog a daily bath, is first of all, unnecessary and secondly would also remove an unhealthy amount of his natural oils. However, it is still necessary to clean your dog and make sure no

harmful particles or disease-causing organisms remain on your precious companion, as well as making him smell so much better, making life more pleasant to all who meet and greet him. How often you give your dog a bath depends on his breed, so, as always, consult with your veterinarian. Below are some guidelines to follow while bathing your dog:

1. Make sure you brush your dog before bathing him. This gives him smooth, washable fur rather than matted fur.

2. Use lukewarm water. While humans prefer hot showers or baths, hot water can burn your dog's skin.

3. Throughout the whole process, just like when you brush his teeth, **be reassuring to your dog** to let him know that this procedure is not meant to torture him.

4. Use shampoo made for dogs. Squeeze out a substantial portion and softly massage or rub it all over your dog.

5. Be sure that absolutely no soap is left on your dog. This will irritate your dog's skin.

6. Air-dry your dog. A human hair dryer is much too hot for your dog, so use one that is specifically designed for dogs.

7. Reward and praise your dog! This encourages him to not dread having to bathe and perhaps even enjoy baths in the future.





Tooth Brushing

Tooth brushing—everyone’s favorite, right? It might seem odd that dogs would need to have their teeth brushed, as historically no one did that for them. However, now that canines have evolved into pampered household pets, tooth brushing is an instrumental aspect of your dog’s grooming. Here are some reasons why your dog’s teeth should be brushed regularly:

1. The obvious reason—bad breath. By brushing your dog’s teeth, you remove the things that cause that nasty odor, as well as any food particles that could rot your dog’s teeth.

2. Preventing plaque and tartar buildup. For those who are unfamiliar with these terms, plaque is a white or colorless sticky paste that builds up on the surface of your dog’s teeth over time. Tartar is a calcified deposit containing chemicals that contribute to the rotting of teeth. Brushing teeth is the perfect solution for avoiding the buildup and aftermath of tartar and plaque.

3. Protecting your dog’s other body parts and organs. If there is too much buildup of tartar and plaque in your dog’s mouth, bacteria, toxins, and other harmful substances will eventually make their way into his bloodstream and possibly damage his internal organs.

It is easy to understand why tooth brushing should be done regularly. However, actually performing the task requires precision and patience. Here is a guide showing how to properly and effectively brush your dog’s teeth:

Step 1: Find a good time to brush, preferably during the late afternoon or evening, or whenever your dog begins to wind down for the day. A calm and relaxed dog is always better to approach when you prepare to brush his teeth. Gather all the tools that you need: a doggy toothbrush, doggy toothpaste (avoid using your own human toiletries—these can be poisonous to your dog), and some treats for later.

Step 2: Positioning. An ideal position for you would be kneeling or sitting, and for your dog, sitting or lying down. This is a good way to gauge your dog’s anxiety.

Step 3: A series of three tests. (1) Gently open your dog’s mouth and rub your fingers gently around his gums. By doing this, you are essentially simulating brushing your dog’s teeth so you can see if he accepts it or not. If he adamantly refuses, you will need to take only one step at a time during each session until your dog stops resisting. (2) Test the doggy toothpaste. Squeeze a tiny bit out and have your dog taste it (it is edible). After the first taste, give him a second and then a third. If he doesn’t like the toothpaste, he will not lick it, which means you should get a new flavor of toothpaste (most come in flavors that are tasty for dogs such as poultry, beef, or peanut butter)—it is just a matter of your dog’s preferences. (3) Test out your doggy toothbrush. Make sure your dog doesn’t wince or show any signs of pain or discomfort—if he does, it means you need to be even gentler. If you see occasional light bleeding, don’t fret—it’s normal. However, if the bleeding is not slight, that could mean you are brushing too aggressively, or it could be a sign of gum disease (consult your veterinarian as always).

While brushing, make sure you move the brush in a circular motion. During the first round, make sure the tips of the bristles point directly onto the gumline. The second round and beyond can be treated as if you are brushing your own teeth, except more gentle.

Finally, after brushing your dog's teeth, make sure to praise him to help him develop a liking for brushing teeth (which saves a lot of hassle). A treat or extra attention and cuddles works wonders!



Haircuts

This section exists to dissuade you from shaving your dog. Having to shave your dog is easily prevented by regularly brushing your dog's hair. There are three reasons for a doggy haircut: (1) If your dog has mats. As mentioned in the section about brushing, mats are easily avoidable by regularly scheduled brushing. (2) If your dog's hair is considered too long. By brushing your dog, you essentially give him a small haircut every day before his hair grows too long, nullifying the purpose for a proper haircut. (3) A matter of aesthetics. However, brushing, as mentioned before, is basically all you need to do to make your dog look nice and fancy.

Another reason why some people like to cut their dog's hair is because they claim that their dog gets too hot during the summer. However, not only does cutting a dog's hair not cool him down, but it could also actually increase the risk of sunburn on his newly exposed skin. Before humans tamed dogs and were involved in grooming, dogs fared perfectly well without having their coat shaved off. Because dogs have adapted to a variety of different coats, it is nearly always unnecessary to shave those coats off.

Only very long-haired breeds need haircuts regularly to prevent many hair-related problems.

However, double-coated breeds, that is, dogs that have an undercoat, should NEVER have their coat shaved off. By shaving off a double-coated dog's fur, you can cause him to have permanent hair loss.

Reminder: Always consult with your veterinarian before doing anything—these sections are intended only to outline needs for the general dog population, not for each and every specific dog.

Here we conclude our information about caring for dogs. If you are considering adopting a dog, ask yourself: **Am I ready for one?** And don't forget—be honest with yourself! Your dog's health and wellbeing depend on it.



Bibliography—Sites to Consult

Welcome to the bibliography! If you have any lingering questions or would like to learn more, these are all of the websites used in the compilation of this manual. Consulting these and a veterinarian for additional information is always a great idea!

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