

GROOMING THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG

The German Shepherd was originally bred to herd flocks of sheep in harsh climatic conditions and their double coat protects them from rain and snow. It is also resistant to picking up dirt and stray material.

Dogs that have upright, erect ears, especially working dogs like the German Shepherd are more susceptible to ear problems. Since the ears are upright, they attract a lot of environmental pollution like dust, sand, and grime. If the outer ear and the ear canal is not cleaned properly and regularly, the ears can get infected. This will cause the dog to scratch the ears and thereby cause wounds. Pus also gets formed inside the ear, causing inflammation and if not treated at the correct time, the ears can get permanently damaged and will drop down. Another important culprit for the onset of cancer of the ears is by unprofessional and improper method of cleaning the ear. Be careful when you clean the dog's ears and ensure that water does not get into the ears when you bathe him.

Common problems in German Shepherd Dogs:

- Excessive Shedding
- Dull and greasy coats
- Ear Infections
- Over grown nails
- Skin problems

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

- Greyhound Comb
- Slicker Brush
- Pin Brush
- Wide tooth metal rake
- De-Shedding tool/ furminator
- Cotton wool
- Ear cleaner
- Eye stain remover
- Nail clipper
- Styptic powder
- Tooth brush and doggy tooth paste
- Cleansing shampoo
- Absorbent Towels
- Dryer
- Finishing spray

OPTIONAL TOOLS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL DOG'S REQUIREMENT;

- A pair of medium sized scissors
- Black chalk

Procedure:

1. Clean the eyes using a little eye cleaning solution on a piece of cotton. Remove any tear stains with a tear stain remover.
2. Clean the ears with ear cleaning solution on a piece of cotton. Do not probe too deep into the ear canal. Make sure you clean all the crevices as well.
3. Raise the top coat and brush the under coat first with a large slicker brush starting at the head upto the tail in the direction of the hair growth. Then use a pin brush to brush the entire coat.
4. Use the Furminator only if necessary or if there is excessive shedding. Do not strip away too much of the coat as an undercoat is very necessary for a German Shepherd Dog. Also remember not to use too much force as this may cut the hair.
5. To remove matts, especially behind the ears, neck, chest and thighs, use the greyhound comb. For severe matts gently separate the matt into smaller sections and use a rake followed by the greyhound comb.
6. Use a nail clipper and clip the tip of the nails. Do not forget the nails on the dewclaws. If you cut too much into the quick, it will bleed. Use styptic powder to stop any accidental bleeding.
7. Plug the dog's ears with some cotton wool so that water does not get into the ears while bathing the dog. Make sure you use tepid water and not hot water to bathe the dog.
8. Wet the dog thoroughly and apply a good cleansing shampoo avoiding the face. Do not use tick and flea shampoo unless it absolutely necessary. This could affect the dogs coat texture. Do not use any conditioner.
9. Massage and saturate the shampoo well into the coat using your fingers and follow with a rubber scrubbing brush. Rinse out thoroughly and ensure that there is no shampoo left on the dog's coat. Use a mild, non-irritant, tearless shampoo to wash the dogs face.
10. Use some doggy toothpaste on a doggy toothbrush to brush the dog's teeth. Wash the mouth area to avoid toothpaste residue.
11. After bathing the dog, use a soft absorbent towel to remove the excess water from the dog's coat.

12. Dry the dog thoroughly using a force dryer to fasten the drying process. Start from the back, so that the noise does not startle or frighten the dog. Slowly move towards the front. Do not forget to dry between the toes and under the paws. Then use a blow dryer and brush the dog with a pin brush in the direction of the hair growth as you are drying him. Once the dog is completely dry, comb the dog's hair thoroughly with a greyhound comb. Use the slicker brush on the dog to remove any loose hair and as a finishing touch.

13. If the dog has a very broad muzzle, use the scissors to snip off the whiskers from the muzzle, chin, sides of the face and above the eyes. If the dog's muzzle is narrow, do not snip off the whiskers. Whiskers will give the illusion of a broader muzzle.

Snipping off the whiskers is the dog owner's decision.

14. Snip the hair from between the pads and toes on the feet to give a neat appearance only if necessary.

15. Use the black chalk deftly, to cover slight imperfections if required. Do not use dyes or hair colors.

16. Use a finishing spray to give some sheen to the coat.

The common reason why people bring their German Shepherds to the grooming salon is because of excessive shedding. German Shepherds are heavy shedders. There is no way to prevent shedding. Regular brushing at least two to three times a week and using a furminator every fortnight will help. Bathing the dog too often will strip the dog's coat of its natural oils and the hair will look dull and the skin may get dry and flaky. Besides good and correct grooming, a healthy diet and good maintenance will keep the dog healthy and show-ready anytime.

By Radhiya Hemchandra
Master Groomer & Professional Pet Stylist
Fuzzy Wuzzy