

Grooming of DBL Program Puppies

Program puppies will need to be groomed regularly and well kempt. Grooming consists of bathing, nail trimming, cleaning ears, brushing teeth, and brushing. Long haired breeds will also need regular haircuts. Grooming should always be stress free and a positive experience, do not force the program puppy to tolerate grooming. Instead, take your time, be patient with the program puppy, and use lots of praise and treats. With practice, the program puppy will become more accustomed to grooming. Consistent grooming also helps keep the program puppy clean and healthy. A list of recommended tools and supplies can be found in the [Puppy Raiser Shopping List with Links](#) page in the Puppy Raiser Manual.

Grooming is also an excellent opportunity to practice handling the program puppy. For example, you can have the puppy stand calmly while you brush them, while brushing you can also check their mouth, teeth, gums, inspect their ears, feel down their legs working your way to each paw, touching their body and then their tail. Another great example is having the program puppy cradled on their back between your legs while you trim their nails. This helps the program puppy relax in a more vulnerable/submissive position while being handled.

Bathing

- Should happen every 4-6 weeks. Bathing more frequently than that can cause the coat to lose its natural oils, dry out, and cause itching and flaking. If the program puppy has been in the mud or has been swimming and recently received a bath, you may rinse them off with water.
- Program puppies between the ages of 8-12 weeks should be bathed with a non-scented tearless shampoo. Older puppies may use a lightly scented shampoo. Oatmeal shampoos are recommended as they are gentle and nourishing to the skin. Medicated or flea and tick shampoos need to be approved by a DBL staff member.
- The water temperature should be lukewarm. Aim water nozzle at a 45-degree angle and rinse against the growth of the hair to ensure you are rinsing all of the shampoo out of the coat. If there is any residue left over from the shampoo, it can cause skin irritations.
- Dry the program puppy off with a towel as much as possible.
- If you would like to dry them off with a hair dryer, make sure the hair dryer is on the cool setting ONLY. Do NOT use any of the heat settings of the hair dryer, as you can potentially burn their skin. Introduce the program puppy to the hair dryer slowly in small increments and start towards their backend. Gradually increase the time increments so the program puppy becomes accustomed to the dryer. Do not directly blow the air into their face or ears, and do not allow the program puppy to air snap at the dryer.
- If you notice any raised or red bumps, rashes, balding, or other irregular skin conditions during the bathing process, you may need to contact the vet.

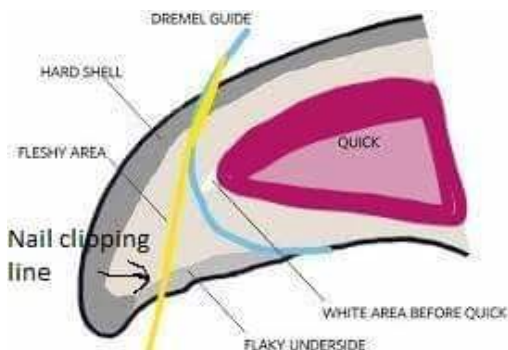
Brushing

- Program puppies should be brushed 3-4 times a week, and both before and after bathing (once completely dry). Regular brushing keeps the program puppy's coat healthy and shiny. Checking their skin regularly will also help you to identify any potential health issues or irregularities early on.
- Short-haired puppies can be brushed with a soft slicker brush or rubber brush for shedding.
- Longer haired puppies will need to be brushed with both a comb and slicker brush. Depending on how easily the coat tangles, brushing more frequently may be required. Make sure the brush and comb make contact with the skin to ensure there are no tangles.
- Always brush in the direction of the hair growth.
- When using FURminators, slicker brushes, or other brushes with metal teeth, take care to not brush too hard, or repeatedly over one section as this can cause skin irritation.

- If you notice any raised or red bumps, rashes, balding, or other irregular skin conditions while brushing the program puppy, you may need to contact the vet.

Nail Trimming

- Nails should be trimmed every three to four weeks.
- Nails should be kept short and not touching the ground. Long nails can cause discomfort while walking and can cause injury to the tendons of the paws.
- Nail trimmers and Dremels can be used to trim the nail. Nail trimmers can be used to cut the bulk of the nail off, then the Dremel can be used to smooth the sharp edges left behind by the nail trimmers. It is not recommended solely using a Dremel, as it can take more time to trim the nail down to the quick, which could cause the program puppy to become impatient and start to pull.
- Nails are comprised of two parts, the quick and the outer shell.
 - The quick is a blood vessel comprised of nerves within the nail. The quick will bleed if cut into.
 - The hard out shell protects the tissue inside the nail.
- Nails will either be light colored or black.
 - With lighter colored nails, you will be able to see the quick which is the soft pink tissue in the center of the nail. You can use that pink center as a guide of where to cut and not to cut. As you get closer to the quick, you will see pink at the center of the nail. Stop once you see that pink center, if you continue to go further you will cause bleeding.
 - Darker colored nails are a little more difficult as you will not see the quick from the side of the nail. When cutting darker nails, cut smaller sections at a time until you see a black dot in the center of the nail. The center will start off by looking white and chalky in the beginning, then you will notice a greyish chalky spot, then what looks like a wet black dot. Stop trimming once the black spot looks wet, that is the quick. Going further will cause bleeding.
- If a nail is quicked during trimming, dip the nail in quick stop, or apply pressure, to help stop the bleeding.





Teeth Brushing

- Program puppies should have their teeth brushed 1-2 times a week. Brushing teeth weekly helps to prevent plaque buildup, keeping the program puppy's teeth and gums healthy.
- Use a soft bristled brush made for dogs or a rubber finger brush.
- Do not apply too much pressure when brushing, the toothpaste will be enzymatic and will do most of the work once applied to the teeth.
- Only use dog toothpaste.
- Do NOT use human toothpaste. Human toothpaste can often times contain Xylitol which is highly toxic to dogs, causing blood sugar drops and potentially causing damage to their liver. Human toothpaste also contains high levels of sodium along with fluoride. Fluoride toxicity can result in drooling, nausea, vomiting, rapid/irregular heart rate, restlessness, incontinence, weakness, seizures, and in severe cases death may occur.

Ear Cleaning

- Program puppy's ears should be cleaned once a week. Routine cleaning will help keep the ears free of debris, ear mites, and helps to maintain a healthy bacterial balance which will help prevent ear infections.
- Use only DBL approved ear cleaner with cotton balls.
- Wipe the visible parts of the puppy's ears, do not attempt to wipe the portions of the ear canal that aren't visible.
- Do NOT use a Q-tip as that can cause debris to be pushed further into the ear canal, or also damage the ear drum.
- If you notice the ears are inflamed, red, hot to the touch, yeasty smelling, or noticed the program puppy has been shaking their head or scratching their ears frequently, these may be signs of an ear infection and should be seen by a vet.

Grooming Tools

- Grooming tools should be cleaned off and/or sanitized after each use to keep from spreading potentially harmful contaminants. Doing so also helps aid in the longevity of the tools.
- Tools should be put away after every use and not left out or used as toys with the program puppies.