

Grooming The Japanese Spitz

An Owners Guide to the Grooming, Bathing and Scissoring of their Dog.

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The Basics - preparing your dog for the bath

There are 4 separate stages;

1. Thoroughly groom the coat, trim toenails, clean ears and brush teeth.
2. Bathing.
3. Drying.
4. Scissoring feet & hocks.

Equipment you will need:

- Soft Slicker brush
- Wide Tooth comb
- Toenail clippers
- Ear Cleaner & Cotton Wool
- Small pet or child's soft toothbrush and doggy toothpaste
- Shower
- Jug or container for diluting shampoo
- Towels
- Hair Dryer
- Fine Tooth comb
- Single edge thinning scissors
- Small 5-7 inch straight scissors

Before you begin grooming your dog you need to secure him on a non-slip grooming table or bench. It is always preferable to groom your dog on a non slip surface so that you can see what you are doing and the dog feels more secure. If you are using a normal table you will need to place a rubber mat onto the surface to prevent the dog from slipping.

Start grooming with your soft slicker brush from the neck down to the centre of the back, front legs, sides and hind legs, then pay particular attention to the ruff and the mane as this is a heavily coated area and may become dirty with food and saliva.

Check carefully behind the ears as this is very prone to knotting, you may need to use a finer comb on this area.

What we are aiming to achieve here is to remove any dead hair and debris from the coat, you do need the right technique, what often happens with this type of coat is that the top inch gets beautifully groomed but the rest of the coat underneath



becomes matted. Part the hair and brush from the root to the tip, Always be methodical when you are grooming and do not be tempted to jump about the coat, finish each section before moving on to the next.

You need to then repeat the process with the comb until the comb slides through the coat easily, at this stage you should have groomed the body thoroughly. The tail plume should also be brushed and combed through the same way. Begin at the base of the tail and work towards the end.

Now you need to check under the tummy, there is usually less hair on this area so will require gentle handling but we cannot leave it out altogether as it can become dirty and stained particularly with male dogs. Try to encourage the dog to lie on its back and gently brush the hair on the stomach.

Now with the grooming process complete we can move on to the nails.



Nails

Many people dread cutting their dogs toenails, just in case they catch the quick and make the dog bleed, however long, overgrown nails will detract from the desired neat appearance of the Japanese Spitz foot. It is better not to cut the nail right up to meet the quick as this could be a little sore, leave a small amount of the nail clear of the quick.

I usually find it best to trim the nails with the dog facing in the same direction for each foot. I am right handed so I would have the dog facing to the right and carefully lift each foot in turn & trim.



Try and trim the nail off level as you don't want to affect the way the dog will naturally wear the nails.

If you do accidentally cut a nail and make it bleed, don't panic! You can buy a coagulant powder that will stop the bleeding immediately, have some in your first aid kit.

All this done we are ready for the bath.

Bathing

- Thoroughly wet the dog's coat this will save on the amount of diluted shampoo you need to use.
- Apply shampoo to the dogs coat and massage right through the coat.
- Comb through the coat to make sure shampoo has reached the entire coat.

- Thoroughly rinse all traces of shampoo out of the coat –this is very important, as the coat will look dull & greasy if any traces are not rinsed away and the skin may become irritated.
- Squeeze excess water from the dog's feathers.
- Towel dry.

Drying

This is possibly the most crucial stage in the preparation of the Japanese Spitz, you need to achieve the impressive 'stand off' coat. If you allow your dog to dry naturally the dog's coat will become flat, you need to brush as you blow dry.

Place your dog on a table or bench and direct the dryer at a small area of the coat, this is the area you need to start brushing, brush from the root to the tip - you are effectively straightening the coat, again you must be thorough as drying the Spitz completely is quite a long job.

Dry each side of the dog, then the tail, ruff and mane and lastly down the centre of the back.

Once you are satisfied that the dog is completely dry you can move onto the final preparation, scissoring the feet and the hocks

Scissoring

The Japanese Spitz should have a small neat foot; this is spoiled if the toes become too hairy and the hocks overgrown.

To trim the feet you will need your soft slicker brush, straight scissors and thinning scissors.

- Firstly brush the hair down over the toes and pick up the foot so you are looking at the pad, trimming the over-lapping hair level with the pads.
- Then brush up the hair on the top of the foot which will lift the inter-digital hair then scissor this using the thinning scissors so it blends in with the short hair on the rest of the foot.
- To finish off the foot brush down over the foot and check it is neat around the toes, trim off any uneven growth and you should have a neat and tidy foot



Next attention should turn to trimming the hocks . . .

The trimming on the hocks should be only enough to give a neat appearance, you should use straight or thinning scissors carefully to create a straight edge to the hock. Use your brush or fine tooth comb to lift the hair before scissoring.



You should now have a beautiful groomed and pampered dog.

Well Done !