

## **GROOMING**

### **Is the Havanese easy to groom?**

If you don't wish to groom your dog every second day, DON'T get a Havanese.

The best information on grooming your Havanese is found in a chapter from the book, 'A Joyous Havanese' by Kathryn Braund. THIS BOOK IS A MUST for all Havanese owners. Not only is it a delightful read but jammed packed with everything you need to know about your little charmer. I find grooming my Havanese a breeze and most enjoyable. The Havanese are a walk in the park in comparison to grooming my Bichon Frise which takes an age.

The Havanese is non-shedding. The coat actually retains the hair that should fall off. Hence the need for regular grooming. This 10 to 15 minute maintenance groom should be a pleasure time for both you and your Havanese. You need a special table or bench where your puppy looks forward to being touched, brushed and combed.

Introduce your puppy slowly to the grooming area with lots of touches and treats. Then very gently introduce a brush. It is essential to lay your puppy on the side or back to ensure that you can brush/comb under the legs where matting frequently occurs. Use lots of praise and encouragement as you envelop him to your chest then lean over to lay him down. The best comb is a medium width comb with rotating teeth. This comb slides easily through the coat and does not tend to snag or break the coat. DO NOT PULL the coat as you brush or comb. Hold the coat down firmly between the comb and the skin or you will hurt your puppy. ALWAYS use a spray mist with a few drops of conditioner in the water. If you don't mist spray and brush you will get split hair. If you find a mat try to gently tease it out with your fingers then use the end of the comb to loosen the individual hairs, Spray on some detangler if necessary. Then use your rotating comb to eventually brush through. I have never had to labour over a mat as I am absolutely committed to a one hour grooming session per day for all 4 Havanese. This really does pay off.

The paws are a very sensitive part of your puppy especially the front ones. It is essential to touch and fondle the paws as much as possible. This also goes for mouthing. Use your hand and run your fingers around puppy's gums. This will prevent your puppy from biting down hard and makes it easier to pop a pill down the throat as necessary. I gently use a slicker brush to groom the legs or hold the paw at the base and use a flicking action with a wide toothed comb.

As your pup gets older the hair will begin to cover the eyes. It is wise to band the hair to expose the beautiful almond shaped eyes of your Havanese as well as giving them more vision! Be sure that you remove, brush and redo daily. You can buy non stick tiny multi coloured rubber bands from your local pharmacy.

### **How often should I bath my Havanese?**

This depends whether you are showing your Havanese. I bath my Havanese two days before the show. If I am not showing, my Havanese will get a bath once or twice a month depending if they have been rushing about the orchard. I am not an advocate of bathing too frequently as I believe too much bathing strips the coat of essential oils. If they have dirty paws it is paws into a bucket before coming inside.

Before beginning, brush and comb thoroughly to eliminate dead hair, knots and mats. Have everything necessary, 3 towels (one for wrapping and 2 for drying), shampoo and conditioner before you put your puppy in the tub. Clean your puppy's ears if necessary and place a small ball of cotton wool gently in the ears to soak up any water accidentally entering the ear canal (common cause of infection). Place a rubber mat or towel on the bottom of the sink or bath tub. A hand held rubber free flow mixer attached to your tap is ideal. Free flowing water is better than sprays.

Make sure your puppy is completely wet to the skin before apply a good quality chemical free, organic pet shampoo. I use the lovely natural ESPREE products. Do not apply shampoo neat.

Dilute to about 1 in 4. Work up a good lather down to the skin. Take special care to clean the anal area and paw pads. Rinse the coat thoroughly, NEVER LEAVE ANY SHAMPOO ON THE COAT, making sure the water runs clear. Wash your puppy's face with a face cloth and take great care to avoid the eyes and the nostrils. Tilt the puppy's head downwards, using middle finger and thumb over the eye flaps to stop water entering the ears, but also cupping the rest of the hand above the eyes to help eliminate suds and water going into the eyes. Shampoo again if necessary. Once completely rinsed off apply an after bath conditioner, massage in and leave for a few minutes (no longer as puppy could get chilled). Then again, rinse thoroughly. A separate conditioner is a MUST as it makes brushing and combing so much easier allowing the brush and comb to slide through the coat with ease. Using your hand, squeeze the excess water paying particular attention to ears, tail and legs then use your hands like a squeegee to run down the length of the coat. Wrap snugly in a towel and dry off with dryer in a small warm area.

Introduce puppy gradually to a blow dryer (the noise may frighten at first) but it is essential to dry him off on WARM setting NOT HOT. High heat will burn and ruin the coat. Using a pin brush, brush the coat carefully in the direction the coat grows while blowing in order to straighten any waves or kinks and reach all layers of the coat.

### **Can I clip my Havanese and what about Toenails?**

In the show ring, the expectation is that the Havanese be shown completely natural. The coat should part naturally without it being manipulated like the dead straight part in the Maltese. The only part of the body that can be clipped is between the pads and the paws rounded around the nails. As necessary, you can thin around anal area with thinning scissors and clip around the penis to keep clean. My view is why should or would we sculpt a Havanese to look like a Lhasa Apso? It makes little sense when we have our own most beautiful, authentic breed.

If your Havanese is a pet, a groomer can puppy clip it similar to a Bichon Frise, they do look rather cute clipped.

As already mentioned it is so important to get your Havanese used to having their paws handled. This makes it easier to clip their nails. There are two types of clippers available. The guillotine style (I prefer) and scissor style. NEVER USE HUMAN CLIPPERS which split and injure the nails. I clip the nails every two weeks. Always ensure that the blades are sharp, the guillotine style has replaceable blades. Always clip in good light and cut at a perpendicular (90 degree) angle to the nail and don't forget the dew claws. Grimsby has black nails so you never know where the quick is so I only take off the tip as it curls over. You will need to cut more frequently to achieve the proper length. Twinkle has white nails so it is very easy to see her pink quick. Rule of thumb, always take less than take the risk of cutting the quick which will bleed profusely and hurt your puppy. They have very long memories and next time may be a battle. If you are not confident your local vet provides that service at a minimal cost.

### **How do I stop the bleeding if I cut the quick?**

Have styptic powder or pencil, flour or cornstarch in hand in case you accidentally nick the quick.

My Bichon has very bad tear staining, will my Havanese have the same problem and is there some remedy to help correct this unsightly problem?

It is important that every morning you remove the sleep from the eyes with a warm face flannel. Your first line of defence is the dye and preservative free evolutionary diet. Most commercial food and biscuits even some organic brands contain dyes and can cause not only terrible unsightly tear stains but a bright orange mooch, red discolouration around the anal area, eyes and penis. Always read the labels and stick to white or pale coloured cookies or better still make the cookies in the diet section of this site. In some areas the water is very hard with high iron content or has chemicals not good for your little dog. Use filtered, bottled or rain water but replenish it daily.

To avoid a very wet face and floor use a glass bottle with an angled ball Bering end that they turn when licking to get the water. Some plastics are known to cause staining and absorb odours so if

you use a bowl be sure it is stainless steel which is bacteriostatic or glass. If tear ducts are blocked, often tears will spill over and stain the face. Take your thumb and fore finger and gently massage the bridge of the puppy's nose up on the sides under his eyes. Most dogs like this. At first do it once or twice daily for a week or two then just once or twice a week. You may be surprised after a while when the hair starts to grow back clean. Sometimes eye inflammation, conjunctivitis causes eye stain, check with your vet regarding the appropriate drops. Steer away from the antibiotic Tetracycline as it causes serious stomach upsets.

There are some products on the market that can help and natural remedies such as zinc, a little cider vinegar or lemon juice in the drinking water. My view comes back down to diet. Up until 6 months ago my Bichon had a beautiful white face. I started feeding him a natural biscuit from a holistic outlet. I was mystified as to why around every orifice his wool changed to bright orange. I finally occurred to me that the only dietary change was these once a day biscuits. This product I had thought would be absolutely OK. He has now gone back to my recipe and the white wool is starting to come back around his black nose, black lips and under his eyes. I have recently sourced a product called PetSpark and have had huge success with this herbal product. A lesson learned not to be lazy and make my own tried and proven recipe.