

Cool, Comfortable, and Knot-Free: Summer Dog Grooming and Cuts

From backyard sprinkler runs and games of fetch to dog-friendly days at the beach, summer is filled with opportunities for outdoor fun with your furry friend. But all too often, dog owners overlook the challenges their canine companions may face in warm weather, including heat stroke, matted coats, and hygiene issues.

Contrary to popular belief, not all dogs should be shaved in summer. For double coated dogs, this practice can actually make them **more vulnerable** to sunburn and heatstroke. Read on to learn about best practices for warm-weather dog grooming and summer cuts for dogs.

Groomer Tip:

Asphalt and other surfaces can get extremely hot, burning pads and causing injury. **Protect your pup's sensitive paws** with booties, paw wax, or balm.

Coat Care 101

A dog's coat isn't just a soft and fluffy surface for cuddling; it actually helps regulate internal temperature and provides protection against heat, sunburn, insect bites, and surface injuries. While all canines require some degree of dog grooming (even if it's just a regular bath), the right haircuts and grooming services will depend on their breed and coat type.

When it comes to summer cuts with some dog breeds, trimming may be a better option than a super short cut because of the breed, coat type, grooming frequency, and lifestyle of the pet. A common issue in the summer is matting (severely tangled hair), which can happen due to a lack of regular grooming. When this occurs, the knots can trap dirt and moisture, harboring bacteria and causing irritation. This can potentially cause long-term effects on skin health, mobility, and hygiene. The good news is that matting can easily be prevented by regular grooming, either at home or from a professional groomer.

Common Double-Coated Dog Breeds:

- 🐾 Labrador
- 🐾 Pomeranian
- 🐾 Havanese
- 🐾 Papillon
- 🐾 Scottish Terrier
- 🐾 Shepherds
- 🐾 Husky
- 🐾 Border Collie
- 🐾 Samoyed
- 🐾 Shiba Inu



Did You Know?

- Generally, dogs with double coats require more grooming than their single-coated counterparts. Additional brushing and helping your dog shed its extra hair will help it maintain the ability to stay cool during the hot summer months, decreasing the risk of heatstroke.



Dog Grooming Benefits and Tips

Proper coat care and haircuts for dogs can enhance airflow and prevent fleas, ticks, and skin infections. In turn, this will **improve your dog's mood**, helping them feel more comfortable. Follow these tips to ensure the best summer grooming experience for your dog.

Groomer Tip:

If your pup is outdoorsy, **it's best to keep their coat on the shorter side**. This will help prevent the formation of mats and the collection of debris and burrs. With a shorter cut, you will need to watch out for sunburn, especially for light-colored and white dogs.

Get on a Schedule

Establishing a regular grooming schedule can ensure your pet's comfort and hygiene, whether you are grooming at home or using a professional groomer. If you are using a professional salon, reserving appointments ahead of time can help you plan around vacations, work schedules, and other events. In addition to summer cuts for dogs, remember to clean their ears and trim their nails. **A dog's nails should be trimmed every three to six weeks**

Groomer Tip:

If your pup is a fan of going for a **summer swim** in the lake, rinse them off afterwards and **comb them out** with a wide-tooth metal comb to avoid matting and get rid of potential irritants or debris caught in their coat. Be sure to watch out for ear infections caused by water trapped in their ears.

Groomer Tip:

Matting is the most important side effect of summer to avoid. **Matted fur can hurt your dog** by pulling on their skin. They can also cause painful sores, risking infection.

Consider Coat Type and Breed

Haircuts for dogs should be tailored to the individual coat type and breed. For Boxers and English Bulldogs don't necessarily need haircuts or trimming, but they do require regular baths and brushing. Breeds such as Labradors and Golden Retrievers with medium coats require frequent brushing, paying particular attention to the undercoat. **Heavy, thick, double-coated breeds** like Huskies and Newfoundlands require almost **daily brushing to keep their coats neat and clean**. Meanwhile, curly-coated poodle mixes require haircuts every 6-10 weeks (with brushing in between) to keep in top condition and prevent matting.



Get Tools You Can Use

For grooming at home, picking out the correct dog brushes to use can be confusing. The correct brush can have a significant impact on the health, condition, and comfort of your dog's skin and coat. Whatever type of coat your dog has, brushing/combing helps remove dirt and dead, shedding hair. **Brushing also gives you the opportunity to notice anything unusual, such as cuts or sore spots**. Plus, it serves as a time to bond with your pet. If you have a puppy, start brushing right away to get them used to being handled. Use a soft brush on that fluffy puppy coat so they'll learn to enjoy it.



Other tools you may need, depending on the breed of your dog, include **nail clippers, shampoo formulated for dogs, a dryer and quality hair clippers and shears**.

Watch for Signs of Summer Discomfort

Particularly during the summer months, you'll want to **be aware of any signs of heat-related discomfort**, and one of the first and most obvious symptoms is excessive panting. Dogs pant to cool themselves, but if their **panting becomes rapid and/or labored**, it could mean they're suffering from heat distress. Additional early signs include **drooling, rapid heart rate, lethargy, and bright red gums and tongue**, while advanced signs can include **vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, and collapse**. If you notice any of these early or advanced signs in your dog, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Getting Started with a Professional Groomer

Proper grooming can safeguard your dog's comfort, health, and happiness, so you may want to consult with a specialist before you embark on summer grooming journey. A trained professional can help assess coat health and advise owners on safe grooming decisions. At The Barking Birch, our specialists provide a full suite of breed-specific dog grooming services, and we make sure to go at your dog's pace to provide a calm and peaceful session.



Heatstroke in Dogs: Know the Warning Signs

Warning Signs:

- 🐾 Excessive panting
- 🐾 Drooling or thick, sticky saliva
- 🐾 Restlessness or discomfort
- 🐾 Rapid heart rate
- 🐾 Red or pale gums
- 🐾 Glassy or anxious eyes

Severe Symptoms:

- 🐾 Vomiting or diarrhea (sometimes with blood)
- 🐾 Weakness or collapse
- 🐾 Staggering or uncoordinated movement
- 🐾 Seizures
- 🐾 Unconsciousness

What to Do:

- 🐾 Move dog to a shaded/cool area
- 🐾 Offer small amounts of cool (not cold) water
- 🐾 Cool with damp towels or fan—not ice
- 🐾 Contact a vet immediately

Contact The Barking Birch today to book a professional grooming appointment!

