

## Brushes, Combs & Related Tools

Combing and brushing a dog's coat are among the most fundamental aspects of pet grooming. Brushing and combing loosens and removes dead hair and skin, as well as dirt and debris; distributes natural oils throughout the coat; and prevents tangles and mats. It is also essential before bathing a dog. It just takes one instance of trying to unsnarl wet tangles to understand why. Other tools that perform similar functions include dematting and de-shedding combs, rakes and splitters, as well as carding and stripping knives.



Budimir Jevtic/Adobe Stock

### Brushes

Depending on the dog, you might use several different types of brushes during a single grooming session. You should always have a few high-quality versions of each type on hand. The following includes several brush types that you will regularly use to groom dogs.

#### Slicker Brushes

The slicker brush is the brush used most often by groomers of dogs and cats. It has fine wire bristles close together on a flat surface and penetrates deep into a dog's coat to remove loose hair, tangles, matted hair, dirt and dander (dead skin flakes).

Slicker brushes work well on dogs with longer, curly and/or woolly hair, such as Golden Retrievers, Poodles, Siberian Huskies and Cocker Spaniels. This type of brush is also great for general coat maintenance because the bristles massage, increasing blood circulation and distributing oil throughout a dog's hair.



Millers Forge Universal Curved Slicker Brushes

Slicker brush bristles are fine and sharp. Pay attention to the amount of pressure you apply so that you do not scratch a dog's skin. Do not use this brush on a dog with flea bites, broken skin, open wounds, a rash or other skin issues. Have different sized slicker brushes because using one that is too big for a dog can scratch the skin. Slicker brushes come in strong, medium and soft tensions.

- Soft slickers are great for puppies and can be used on faces and other sensitive areas, on soft-coated dogs and on pets with sensitive skin.
- Medium-tension slickers are the choice for everyday use, light dematting and fluff drying..
- Strong-tension slicker brushes are good for dense, heavy coats.
- Pointed, triangular-shaped slicker brushes work well on hard-to-reach areas, such as above or below a pet's eyes.



*Groom Professional®  
Triangular Soft Slicker*

### **Wire Pin Brushes**

A wire pin brush looks like a hairbrush for people. It has wide-set, straight metal pins that are sometimes capped with protective balls. This brush's pins are too widely set to catch matted hair. Instead, it is good for brushing longer coats that have been detangled and for adding shine during the final brushing. Wire pin brushes work well on Afghan Hounds, Setters and Bichons Frises—breeds whose coats can become flyaway or frizzy—because the pins' wider spacing reduces static electricity buildup during brushing.



*Andis® Pin Brush*

## **Bristle Brushes**

A bristle brush, also called a soft brush, has clusters of soft, straight, tightly packed bristles. These effectively remove loose hair and debris and spread hair's natural oils throughout short-haired and smooth-coated dogs, such as Pugs, Italian Greyhounds and Jack Russell Terriers. The soft bristles cannot detangle hair or penetrate longer or thicker coats.



*Safari® by Coastal Bristle Brush*

## **Rubber Curry Brushes**

A rubber curry brush is a soft, flat, rubber brush with stubby rubber teeth. It easily removes loose hair, dirt and debris and can be used on the ears, paws and tail. Rubber curry brushes are also great for scrubbing lathered-up dogs during bath time. The brush provides a massage that most dogs enjoy. Brushing with a gentle, circular motion all over distributes the natural oils in the dog's coat. The de-shedding action of a curry brush becomes more effective when used with a de-shedding shampoo (see the Shampoo section further on in this stage). The brush can be used on a dog's ears, paws and tail. Brushing with a gentle, circular motion all over distributes the natural oils in a dog's coat.



*Kong Zoom Groom for Dogs*

## **Grooming Gloves**

Also called hound gloves or mitts, they have rubber nubs on the palms and fingers. They remove loose hair and dirt and spread the natural oils across a dog's coat. Grooming gloves can also be used during bath time in the same way that rubber curries are. They are most effective on short-haired and smooth-coated dogs. Two important advantages of grooming gloves: They enable you to easily "brush" a dog all over, and they can be very calming to many canines. Some dogs are afraid of brushes, but using grooming gloves is so similar to petting that they more willingly accept it.



*HandsOn All-In-One Pet Bathing & Grooming Gloves/Ryan's Pet Supplies*

## Combs

Combs are swept through dogs' coats to locate tangles and remove debris and other foreign objects, and are generally used with brushes during preparations for bathing. Metal-toothed combs are better for grooming because the teeth do not bend and you can easily disinfect them in between clients. Metal combs glide through coats better than plastic ones and work well to fluff up coats that need scissoring. Groomers primarily use metal-toothed combs that are at least 7-inches long.



Ryan's Pet Supply & Groomer's Choice

As a groomer, you will likely switch back and forth between combs and brushes as you work out the tangles in a dog's coat. The combs you use will depend greatly on the type of coat a dog has. Combs can be:

- Coarse-toothed with wide-spaced teeth
- Medium-toothed with moderate-spaced teeth
- Fine-toothed with very close-spaced teeth.

Different combs are used for specific conditions or types of coats. To tackle different grooming tasks, you will want to have several types of combs in your grooming kit. What follows are the basic comb types and their various tooth configurations. Shedding and undercoat combs are covered in the De-shedding Tools section.

## **Flea Combs**

A flea comb has extra fine teeth that do a great job of separating coat hairs to remove fleas and their eggs and detritus. It can also be used to gently comb away discharge or dirt from under a dog or cat's eyes.



*Paw Brothers Flea Comb with Handle/Ryan's Pet Supplies*



*Paw Brothers Poodle Comb Extra Long Teeth/Ryan's Pet Supplies*

## **Coarse-Toothed Combs**

A coarse-toothed comb has the widest spaced teeth of any comb and is the best comb for working through dense and fluffy coats to remove tangles and break apart mats. It can also be used to fluff a coat.

## **Medium-Toothed Combs**

A medium-toothed comb performs well on hair of any length, on thicker coats and lightly matted areas. It can also be used to fluff a dog's coat.



*Resco Carbon Fiber Medium-Toothed Wrap Comb w/1.5-in. Round-tipped Pins*

## **Greyhound Combs**

Metal combs without handles are generally called Greyhound combs. These have round or flat spines and come in various sizes that correspond to a dog's size or the area of the coat you are grooming. They might have uniform very fine, fine, medium, coarse or extra coarse teeth, or combine two types of teeth on one comb. These combs are ideal for fluffing, detangling and removing dead hair.



*Master Grooming Tools 7½-in. Greyhound Comb, Coarse*

## Multi-Use Combs

Multi-use combs, which combine two different types of teeth onto one spine, are generally called Greyhound combs. Fine/coarse-, medium/coarse- and medium/fine-combs are very practical as they enable you to adjust to changes in coat type and texture without having to switch tools.

- **Fine/Coarse-Toothed Comb:** It has fine teeth at one end and coarse teeth at the other, making it useful for grooming hair of various lengths. It can be used after brushing—first the coarse side, then the fine side—to help remove any small knots missed by brushing. You can also use the coarse side to brush a dog's coat and the fine side for delicate areas around the eyes.
- **Medium/Coarse-Toothed Comb:** It has medium teeth on one end and coarse teeth on the other. This type of comb works well on medium to large breeds with moderately coarse to coarse coats, such as Chow Chows, German Shepherds, Schnauzers and Terriers.
- **Medium/Fine-Toothed Comb:** It has medium teeth on one end and fine teeth on the other. Once tangles and mats have been removed, it can be used to provide a final combing or fluffing on a variety of coat types.



*Paw Brothers 7.5-in. Fine/Coarse Carbon Steel Comb*



*Resco 6.8-in. Medium/Coarse Comb with 1.5 in. pins*



*Groom Master 10-in. Medium-Fine Comb by Mastercut*

## Two-Sided Combs

A two-sided comb—also called dual-sided, 2-in-1 or combo tool—typically has coarse, medium or fine teeth on one side, and a shedding or other type of grooming comb on the other. As with multi-use combs, two-sided combs are convenient to use; instead of pausing during grooming to switch tools, you simply flip the comb over and use the opposite side.



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**Note:** Finishing and half-moon combs are discussed in the Finishing Tools section further on in this stage.