

Washing the Dog

By Kay Brickley

1 There are more than 400 different breeds of dogs in the world. Whatever kind you have—a tiny chihuahua, a shaggy sheep dog, or a powerful pit bull—it will someday need a bath. Let me set the stage for your washing event.

2 A tub has been filled with about 3 inches of warm, not hot, water. A shower mat is on the floor of the tub. The dog shampoo is open on the floor next to it. A bucket for dunking and pouring water is available. Old towels have been gathered, and a blow dryer is plugged in and ready. All that's missing is your best friend, the dog. You know that dogs get dirty. You know that your dog will need a bath now and then. You have begun by preparing the room, but what are some tips for bathing your dog?

3 Before you begin to dunk your pooch into the water, start by brushing its fur. Fur will be easier to clean if it is not tangled. If tangled hair gets wet, it becomes matted hair, and matted hair does not look good on your dog. Your dog may also have bits of sticks, dirt, and other things in its fur. Brushing will get rid of these pieces and make fur easier to clean.

4 Next place some cotton balls in your dog's ears. You don't like to get water in your ears, do you? Well, neither does your dog. Water in a dog's ears can cause ear infections and irritation. Those things may cause a trip to the vet. We don't want that to happen!

5 Now comes the hard part—time to bring your dog into the bathroom. Maybe your dog likes to take a bath. Maybe your dog hates

to take a bath. Now is the time to find out. Get a firm grip on your dog and talk to it in soothing, calm tones. Close the bathroom door behind you. Get the dog in the bathtub.

6 Use a bucket to wet your dog from head to tail. Be careful not to get water in its eyes. Using a small amount of dog shampoo—not people shampoo—make some suds and massage it through your dog's fur. Keep a hand on your dog, as it may try to shake the suds off. Your dog may look really strange now that it is all wet and soapy. Don't worry. It will be back to normal in no time.

7 After your dog has been soaped, drain the tub water. Fill it again with clean, warm water. Once more, use the bucket to rinse off your dog's fur. Use your hands to work the water through the fur. Rinse well to remove all the soap. If you do not rinse well, your dog's skin may become irritated when the soap dries.

8 Finally, your dog is going to want to shake itself dry. Let it have one good shake. Prepare to get wet yourself! Then use old towels to dry the fur some more. A blow dryer can be used if you want, but make sure you set it on warm, not hot. Praise your dog for being such a good sport. Open the bathroom door and let it run off. Oh, and don't forget to praise yourself for being such a responsible pet owner.

Dog bathing. (n.d.). In *Dogtime*. Accessed February 1, 2011. Retrieved from <http://dogtime.com/bathing.html>

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Dogs That Need More Baths	Dogs That Need Fewer Baths
long-haired dogs, such as collies	short-haired dogs, such as beagles
dogs that spend lots of time outdoors	dogs that are kept indoors
older dogs	young puppies

Glossary
Breeds —type of dog
Set the stage —prepare
Dunking —to put something in liquid and pull it out quickly
Gathered —to put things into a group
Tips —useful information
Tangled —to knot up hair
Matted —to make hair very knotty
Grip —to control something with your hand
Suds —tiny bubbles made from soap and water
Good Sport —losing a game or competition without getting angry

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