

7 KEYS TO A HEALTHY SHOW COAT:

Ninety Percent (90%) of all judging is done on the first impression of the dog as it walks in the ring..... 10% will be eliminated for movement or structural problems, but you will rarely overcome a judge's first impression of your dog. The dog that catches the judge's eye as it comes into the ring will stand a 90% greater chance of winning. REMEMBER: *You never get a second chance at a good first impression.*

Feed a quality diet. Make sure your dog is getting adequate protein, carbohydrate and fatty acids with the diet. Balance this with your dog's lifestyle. Older dogs will need fewer calories and less protein than a puppy. Most commercial foods, and most raw diets do not contain adequate essential fatty acids to maintain a healthy shiny coat. Add a good source of fatty acid to your dog's food such as #92 EFA SUPPLEMENT.

Excerpt from the AKC GAZETTE MAY 2010: *NUTRITION: MORE THAN SKIN DEEP:*

EFA's are polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) including omega-6 and omega-3. Vital for maintaining normal skin function, these serve as a source of energy and help prevent the loss of water and other nutrients through the skin barrier. A diet deficient in EFAs will, after two to three months, cause the coat to become dry and dull and the skin to have a fine scale. Continued EFA deficiency can cause hair loss, slow hair growth, itching, matted hair and greasy skin. Secondary skin infections with poor wound healing can also arise. Supplementing with linoleic acid-10 to 15 milliliters per 55 pounds body weight can result in a rapid improvement in disorders such as seborrhea, atopy and allergies, with highly improved skin and coat in three to eight week. Just adding oils to food may increase the need for added vitamins and other minerals, so it is better to use a high quality balanced supplement rather than adding supplements piecemeal. Note that what they are saying is that it is better to add a balanced supplement than to piecemeal adding oils or vitamins to your dog's diet. Isle of Dogs #92 supplement is pure linoleic acid so it goes directly into the bloodstream and skin without overworking the liver.

2. USE A QUALITY PH BALANCED DOG SHAMPOO.

A dog's skin is about 7.5 while human skin is about 5.5 (to put it in perspective, water is about 7.0). Therefore, a dog's skin is more alkaline so ideally a dog's shampoo should be between 6.5-7.5 ph or it could be irritating to the skin. *Highly acidic shampoos will diminish the hair's protective qualities, removing valuable oil from the coat and skin. The result is dry, irritated skin, a dull coat, flaking and waves as well as hair loss. There is no Federal regulation of dog shampoos, conditioners and styling products. Therefore, anyone can put anything in dog shampoos and styling products without regulation. The huge majority of dog shampoos are not properly ph balanced. All Isle of Dogs products are ph balanced for canine coat and skin and made to FDA human regulations.*

There is no excuse for not bathing a dog, period. Regardless of the breed, the proper shampoo and conditioner will enhance the coat and texture, not soften or ruin it. Terrier coats and coarse coats need to be bathed. Failing to bathe leaves dirty skin, staph and streph infection lying in wait in the skin and the dog smells. This is not healthy nor is it considerate of a judge. Use the right shampoo, the right conditioner and you have great texture, healthy skin and a dog that a judge can touch.

3. USE A WASH OUT CONDITIONER AFTER SHAMPOOING: Shampoos by design are used for cleaning- removing unwanted grime from the skin and coat. *But shampooing, without sealing the coat afterwards, leaves the hair shaft open- at that point residue can enter and oils and hydration escapes.* What you can do is use a conditioner after shampooing to close the hair cuticle and restore hydration, moisture and elasticity. Conditioners also fill in the damaged hair that drying, brushing, dematting and rubbing causes. Just normal wear and tear chips away at the hair cuticle. Conditioners can help to restore the cuticle to a smooth state and one that gives a more lustrous appearance and feel.

4. BE AWARE THAT WEATHER, CENTRAL HEAT AND AIR, HORMONAL CYCLES AND ILLNESS CAN CHANGE THE CONDITION OF YOUR DOG'S COAT.

Hot weather, central heat and air, the seasonal cycles in your bitch, illness, including hypothyroidism and the use of antibiotics can change the condition of your dog's coat. At certain times of year, or during illness, you may need to condition the coat more than you normally would. You can tell if your dog's coat is dry: The ends of your coat will feel rough and the hair will be split; the skin may appear dry; or the dog may actually look greasy; flaking skin may appear; the coat may look dull; the hair may become thin, the color will not be rich. These are all signs of a dry coat. It's time to use a heavier conditioner and increase your fatty acid supplement. Always use shampoo and washout conditioner from the same company. If you mix an organic shampoo such as Isle of Dogs with a chemical shampoo from any other company, you will actually harm the coat.

5. UTILIZE PROPER BATHING TECHNIQUES.

Wet your dog to the skin. You will use two lathers of shampoo. The first lather will remove surface dirt and grime. The second lather will actually complete the cleansing and infuse the hair shaft with any components in your shampoo you want to utilize. (*A NOTE ABOUT LATHER:* A properly ph balanced dog shampoo will not have a great deal of lather.) Place the shampoo in your palm, rub your hands together and work from the neck down. Take a damp washrag with a small amount of shampoo and wash the face. If you are diluting the shampoo, shake the bottle well, pour that mixture down the back and on the sides and work in, again working from the neck down. Rinse completely.

Repeat step 1. If you are using a colored shampoo, then let this sit on the coat the recommended time. Rinse completely. The hair will squeak and you will not feel product when the coat is rinsed. Incomplete rinsing is one of the prime reasons for a dull show coat. When the hair squeaks clean on back, sides, front and rear of dog, you are done.

Condition. Take your wash out conditioner. If diluting, pour the mixture over the dog, and follow directions. If using full strength, put the product in your palms, work into coat and let sit the recommended time, if any. Rinse completely. If the coat squeaks and you can't feel product, your dog is clean.

5. DRY YOUR DOG PROPERLY: It is strongly recommended that you use a dog hair dryer, and not a human hair dryer. Over time, the heat from a human hair dryer can damage the coat and skin, drying out the skin and creating dry, thin coat and irritated, itchy skin. Blot dog with a towel.. Depending on the coat, work with the lay of the coat not against the coat. On drop coated or curly coated dogs, rubbing back and forth with a towel can actually matt the hair. Blow dry. A note about **STAND DRYERS:** **One of the prime culprits in loss of head and neck hair is the use of a stand dryer that has been put on high heat. Keep your stand dryer on a very moderate heat.**

6. PROPER BRUSHING: Never, ever brush a dry coat. If you do not use a spray prior to brushing you will shred your dog's coat, over time causing the cuticle to roughen and split. Every coat type has the correct spray to use to condition and brush the coat including terrier and harsh coats. Isle of Dogs has several brush out sprays that will insure that you will not destroy your dog's coat, and will actually help the coat to grow stronger, thicker and more plush.

Use the correct tools. Every coat type requires different brushes and combs. If you do not know what to use, consult with an expert. Invest in the best. They last a lifetime and do not ruin your dog's coat.

REMEMBER, GOOD SKIN AND COAT MAKE YOUR DOG LOOK GOOD AND FEEL GOOD. BAD SKIN AND COAT REFLECT ON THE HEALTH AND CONDITION OF YOUR DOG. ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT SHOW DOG, RETIRED DOG OR PET DESERVE THE RIGHT PRODUCTS TO KEEP THEM HEALTHY. ISLE OF DOGS HAS A RANGE OF PRODUCTS FROM SHOW TO PET THAT ARE HEALTHY, PH BALANCED AND AFFORDABLE.