

# **SCHELMISCH GSD**

## **GROOMING YOUR GERMAN SHEPHERD**

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### **Dog Grooming Made Simple**

Setting up a regular dog grooming schedule for your German Shepherd is the best way to insure that things don't get neglected. While brushing his coat will be at least a weekly occurrence, bathing can be done two to three times a year.

### **Brushing Your German Shepherd**

The German Shepherd Dog has two coats: A thick woolly undercoat for insulation and waterproofing; and a shiny overcoat. Most GSDs have a medium length coat, although there are also those with long-coats. Since GSDs shed their coats continuously it's desirable to brush them once or twice a week, to reduce the quantity of hair falling around the house. In addition this will enhance the health and beauty of the coat, since brushing removes dead hair and distributes the natural oils. Older loose hairs dull the appearance of a dog's coat, so when they are removed the fresh lustre of new growth restores the appearance.

### **Brushes and Combs**

Use a Pin Brush to brush the thick undercoat, getting all the way down to the skin. With care on your part, the rounded ends of this brush's bristles should protect the skin from abrasion and irritation. Brushing backwards can be helpful in loosening dead hairs.

A Bristle Brush is easy on the skin – a good choice for puppy hair and for more extended brushing sessions on grown dogs. It is helpful in removing dead hair, in addition to distributing the natural oils.

slicker Brushes have many fine bent wires and are used for removing shedding hair. Since they can cut the outer coat, go gently and move with the grain of the hair.

The wide-toothed comb is useful for removing loose hair left behind following a brushing.

An undercoat shedding rake is the best tool for shedding periods when large quantities of the undercoat typically come loose. The rubber nubs help it to easily pull out the dead hair.

### **Washing and Drying Your Dog**

Put a non-slip rubber mat in the tub, and then use a hand-held hose attachment with warm water, testing with the back of your hand to insure the temperature is not too high. Wet your dog's coat thoroughly, and then apply the shampoo, working from the back of the head and neck downwards. Shampoo and rinse by sections. Since you want to avoid water in the ears and nose, and shampoo in the eyes, the face can be washed with a damp cloth. You might find it helpful to improvise a step-up

device to help your GSD to get in and out of the tub. Diluting the shampoo with water helps it go on evenly and extend further.

Since your German Shepherd has a thick coat, he needs to be dried thoroughly, especially before going out in cold weather. Start off with a vigorous towel-drying, then use a hair dryer on a low-heat setting, holding it 10-12 inches from the coat. Without a hair dryer it can take a very long time for the coat to air dry, in particular if you are not in a dry climate.

## **Shampoos**

A shiny, healthy coat comes primarily from a good diet – it starts from the inside. As long as your German Shepherd is getting quality nutrition, your grooming work will produce good results.

Dogs and humans have different PH levels, so their shampoos differ accordingly to provide the appropriate PH balance. Dogs' skin has a PH of 7.5, whereas humans have a PH of 5.5; their skin being more acidic. So avoid using a human shampoo on a dog since it is likely to cause scaling and irritation.

Should your German Shepherd's skin have a condition that calls for special attention, there may be a shampoo that can help. Here are some skin conditions, with shampoos formulated to help them:

Dry, scaly skin: Moisturizing shampoo

Oily, scaly skin: Anti-seborrheic shampoo

Itchy skin: Oatmeal-based anti-pruritic

Infected skin: Anti-microbial

Flea shampoos are also available, but are unlikely to give any benefit for the extra money. They do kill fleas, but so do regular shampoos. And since "flea shampoos" have no residual flea-killing properties, you don't need to waste your money! Fleas have to be prevented or treated in other ways.