

Rabbit Grooming Tips

Need help when it comes to grooming your rabbit? Follow these rabbit grooming tips!

By Caroline Charland

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A key factor to make rabbit grooming easier is to do it in a quiet, distraction-free place.

Tired of the gash marks down your arms every time you attempt to get your rabbit to stay still so you can groom it? You can get your rabbit to sit still long enough for a nail trim and grooming. First of all, gather all the grooming supplies beforehand: nail clippers, Quick stop or other styptic powder, cotton swabs for cleaning the scent glands and a breed-appropriate brush for removing the loose hair.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 1: Find a quiet, distraction-free spot to groom your rabbit. If you are using a counter or table, make sure your rabbit can't jump off of it. Better yet, place your rabbit on a towel on your lap while seated on a chair or the floor.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 2: Calmly talk to your rabbit, and stroke its head or ears to settle it down. If your rabbit tries to jump off, hold it gently but firmly. Cover its eyes for a little bit to help it settle down.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 3: Start with its coat. Make sure the brush you use is right for your rabbit's fur type. Generally, a bristle brush, grooming mitt or even Rubbermaid gloves work well on short-haired breeds. Long-haired breeds might need a flea comb, shedding blade and/or dull-tooth wire comb-type brush.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 4: Keep in mind that a rabbit's skin is very sensitive and tears fairly easily. If you see irritated skin, or your rabbit squirms when you brush, you might be using the wrong tool. Your rabbit should find brushing relaxing, like being petted. It should not be on edge from having its hair pulled. If your rabbit's fur is matted, take it to your vet to avoid the possibility of accidentally lacerating its skin.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 5: Good grooming includes keeping your rabbit's nail growth under control and in good condition. Overgrown nails are more apt to become caught on carpet or caging and torn. Left unchecked, a rabbit's continuously growing nails can start to curl and turn up, which makes sitting and hopping painful.

Rabbit Grooming Tip 6: Use a sharp nail trimmer, which will have less torque and less pull on your rabbit's nail bed. Scissor type clippers generally work well on small breeds, while cat- and dog-style trimmers are strong enough to cut larger breed's nails. Ask your vet for the best nail trimmer for your type of rabbit.

Brush your rabbit's coat at least weekly, more if you own a long-haired breed such as an Angora or American fuzzy lop. Nail trims should be done every couple months, depending on how fast your rabbit's nails grow and if it has opportunities to wear its nails down naturally with digging.

Once your rabbit gets use to a routine and knows that it must tolerate being handled for a brief amount of time, grooming sessions should go more smoothly.

Do A Quick Exam

When your rabbit is relaxed and sitting still, perform a body exam. Check its body for lumps (including its jawline), its fur for fleas, ticks, scabs and other skin irritations and its eyes for discharge or swelling. If you notice any of these conditions, make an appointment with your rabbit's veterinarian.