



BASIC COAT CARE FOR CATS

Cats frequently groom themselves, and basically handle most of their own care. However, as a cat owner, there are some things you can do to help. Older cats, overweight cats, cats with arthritis and illness may not feel well enough or have physical limitations that prevent them from grooming. Additionally, one-on-one time with your cats promotes bonding.

Start Young

Begin with training your kitten to accept routine grooming. Do not wait until the cat has become an adult, with an adult hair coat. Teach your kitten to accept the feel of a brush and comb (even if it is not doing anything), and to let you handle his feet for nail trims, and to look into his ears and mouth. Be patient and consistent. Teaching him now that handling doesn't hurt will allow you to brush, comb, clip nails, and wipe ears later.

Brushing and Combing

Brushing helps distribute skin oils throughout the hair and removes dead hair and skin cells. If your cat is prone to hairballs, removing dead hair limits the amount they will swallow. Check mat-prone areas on long-haired cats—behind the ears and elbows, and the hind legs. Overweight cats frequently cannot reach their backs, and dead hair accumulates along the spine.

Do not cut out mats. If you cannot tease it loose, make an appointment with your professional groomer who can safely shave out a mat.

Look for Parasites and Other Problems

A healthy cat is reflected in the skin and coat. You can look for:

- Parasites (fleas and ticks)
- Skin lesions that might indicate a bacterial, fungus infections, or allergies
- Bite wounds or injuries on outdoor cats

Final Points

Cats do not need regular bathing. It removes too much oil from their skin. Bathe them only if dirty or if your groomer or veterinarian recommends it.

Brush and comb frequently. Brush short-haired cats once week and long-haired cats daily or as needed to keep hair mat-free.

Since coat is a good indication of health, feed a high quality food, and check regularly for external parasites. Check at least once a year for internal parasites with a fecal sample, and provide regular veterinary care.