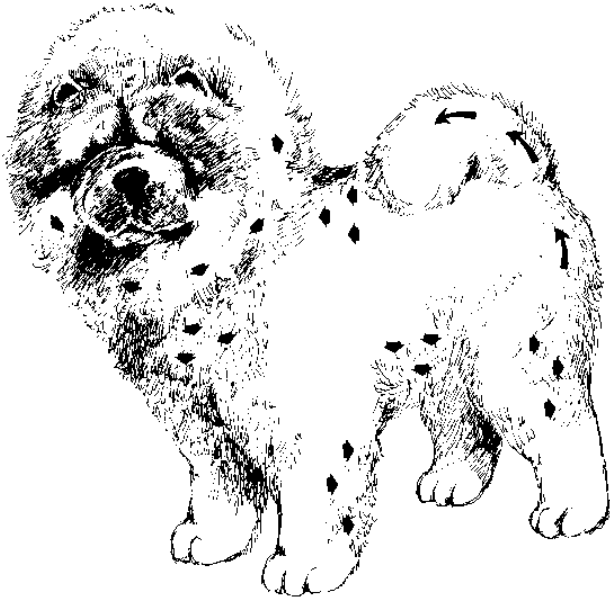


GROOMING THE PET CHOW

By Kathy Lee Beliew



Before purchasing your first Chow is the time to decide whether or not you are willing to spend a couple of hours a week to groom him properly. The Chow, unlike some coated breeds, **does not** require extensive trimming; but none the less does require a few hours of brushing, bathing, nail clipping, etc. to maintain his lion-like appearance. Grooming should begin as soon as you acquire him, whether this be six weeks or six months of age. You **MUST** establish a rapport with him on the grooming table. A sturdy table is advised for grooming. You will have better control of him and it will save your back. At first he may thoroughly enjoy the special and individual hours spent grooming. The Chow is inherently clean and has a

very high opinion of himself. The weekly grooming helps maintain his lordly appearance and attitude.

Let's begin with the correct equipment. Quality equipment is of the utmost importance. A Greyhound medium-coarse stainless steel comb, which is very expensive, but is made to last a lifetime, is a necessity. Buy a well-balanced 7 inch scissors. Be careful not to drop the scissors, as it ruins the cutting edge and balance. Add to this a medium size slicker brush, preferably a Twinco, and a St. Aubrey's medium pin brush, a Resco nail clipper and a product called Quick Stop (a nail cautery). To complete your equipment, get a quality coat dressing and a conditioning shampoo. **Never use human shampoo.** Ring 5, St. Aubrey and Bio Groom make excellent products. Dogs are not people, and the PH balance is quite different. A hair dryer, preferably a floor model, but the hand-held type will suffice. Now that we have the puppy and equipment, let's begin.

Nails, being the quickest, but not necessarily the easiest to achieve, should be done a weekly basis. That's right, 52 times a year! With each Resco nail clipper purchased, instructions can be found on the box. Occasionally, when a nail is trimmed too short, it will bleed. This is when the Quick Stop is used. I am most fastidious about foot care on the Chow, because they have the most beautiful round, compact foot in all dogdom. Proper care will keep the foot correct and permit him to walk on his toes. The hair between the toes can cause the toe to spread. It will also cause the Chow to slide on slippery surfaces, and I might add, drag dirt into your home. He's now ready for his first bath. I'll put a drop of mineral oil into the eyes to prevent the soap from irritating, as I like to shampoo the head in its entirety. Thoroughly wet the coat, apply shampoo and rub vigorously to work up a lather, adding more water as needed, permitting the shampoo to reach the skin. When the entire body is lathered, begin rinsing. This is the most important step in the bath. Absolutely NO shampoo is to be left behind. It is very damaging to the coat and irritating to the skin. Towel dry him while still in the tub, being sure to get the water out of his ears. Use Q-Tips if necessary. The blow-drying process is to begin. Lay your Chow on his side. This make take two people the first few times; but insist and **MAKE HIM** obey you. Begin with the belly hair and legs, working your way to his spine, blowing the coat and brushing down to the skin. You **MUST SEE** the skin, even on the heaviest coated Chow. Repeat this process on the other side. Now stand him up and dry his bib.

Bathing should take place on a monthly basis. The Chows that I am showing are bathed weekly. Don't let anyone tell you that bathing once a week dries the coat. With proper shampoos and coat dressings and with good nutrition, it will **NOT!** With your Chow completely brushed out, you can now scissor any long wispy hair that protrudes beyond the coat silhouette. Now mist the coat with a quality coat dressing and your grooming is complete. A weekly brushing is accomplished in the same manner, omitting the shampoo and water. Lay the Chow on his side and begin brushing, beginning with the belly and working your way up the body. It is advisable to mist the coat with the coat dressing as you brush. Brushing the coat dry will cause breakage of the hair. Remember, **ALWAYS** brush to the skin. Use the slicker brush on the shorter hair and the pin brush on the longer coat.
