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## **Grooming German Shepherd Puppies and Dogs**

Grooming is so critical to healthy skin. The skin is the largest organ of the body. It can be subject to infection, scaling, rashes, etc. Grooming can obviate many of these problems. It:

- a. removes dried and dead skin allowing the pores to breath
- b. removes old hair when they are shedding, therefore increasing the comfort of your dog for seasonal change and coat seasonal preparation.
- c. Stimulates blood flow to the skin and overall health

But very few people really know how to groom a German Shepherd correctly. As you know a male sheds about twice a year at season change, and a female about four times, twice for season and twice for heat until they are spayed.

You must groom at least once a week. An inside dog sheds more than one left outside during the winter. During the summer, A/C may actually help retain coat. You need three brushes to groom a GSD correctly:

1. rake (German is the best)
2. shedding blade (shaped in a "U" and made of a band of thin steel about 1 inch wide. When open, the blade is about 18 inches with little teeth on each side)
3. slicker (the surface is a rectangle about 3 x 5 inches with wire bristles in rows)

Here is the process:

1. Start with the rake. This is good for removing the undercoat, but removes some top coat too. You may brush both ways, but mostly head toward back with the hair.
2. Start at the rear with the tail, and continue with the feathery light colored flush to each side of the rear. Groom the rear end. Then move up the back. Do the underside gently, watching for private parts and nipples. Move up the back and to the shoulders. Then the top of the neck. Then the chest brushing from the ground up on the chest.
3. Next use the shedding blade. This removes loose mainly top coat. Do the same pattern as for the rake. However, when complete you may open the blade and grab either handle and pull from front to back over a large surface. This is quite efficient.
4. Finally, use the slicker to remove any loose and leftover hair from the other two blades. It is also quite efficient at removing under coat as well. Use the same pattern.

Don't forget to give your German Shepherd puppies or dog a treat when you are complete, as well as lots of positive reinforcement. You want the experience to be a good one so they will look forward to their next grooming. Puppies may wriggle a lot, but persist and they will get used to it.