

Recommended Product, Tools & Equipment List

Setting Your Holistic Grooming Space Up For Success



The Holistic Dog Groomer
@theholisticdoggroomer



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Introduction

Hello, I'm Stephanie (The Holistic Dog Groomer)!

I've been asked many times for my list of recommended tools and products, by both pet carers and professionals looking to implement a more holistic, animal-centred approach to the way they groom.

You will find within this guide some considerations for all budgets. Please know however, that there may be alternative equivalents available that are more affordable but equally as effective, and so it's worthwhile to shop around.

Additionally, there is no such thing as 'one size fits all', and it's up to you to observe and decide the needs of the individual animal and base your purchases on this (if you are a pet carer). As a pet professional, I recommend you invest in a few different tools that enable you to accommodate to different needs.



They say that failing to prepare is preparing to fail, and so with that philosophy in mind, it's always best to organise your grooming kit before the demands of grooming arise.

Love,

- The Holistic Dog Groomer

Chapter 1

The Philosophy of Holistic Grooming

What is holistic grooming?

If you have read my book, 'The Magic of Holistic Grooming' then you will already have a pretty good idea of what holistic grooming is, but for the purposes of those who maybe haven't...

Holistic Grooming is the idea that grooming is made up of many individual parts that collectively together, form a complete context that will in turn dictate how we approach the task to consider the individual needs of an animal in front of us.

We are thorough in our understanding of not only the dermatological demands of washing, drying and styling but in how an animal communicates, behaves and feels safe.

What's more, we prepare our environment based on the animal perspective, to ensure we consider the significant details that might be considered a "trigger" or "stressor" to an animal.

Our tools and the products we use must also consider the needs and even, preferences of the individual to help further reduce stress in a grooming environment.

The most important thing to remember is:

The majority of undesirable behaviours we see within the context of professional grooming are caused by fear, stress, pain or anxiety.

When we think of cats and dogs as EMOTIONALLY ADVANCED animals, we can begin to understand why the approach we take must take into consideration what makes an individual feel safe in a given environment.

In this E-Book, we will be focusing on just one part of the jigsaw that forms the whole story - the bigger picture.

I've found that most professionals and carers opt for very generic tools and products with little-to-zero thought around how they might contribute to stress in the grooming environment and process.

I will be giving you my recommended list of grooming tools, products and equipment, but remind you to always base your decisions on individual suitability before purchase.

Chapter II

Introduce Tools & Equipment Positively.

For the purposes of explaining, I will use brushing as an example of how to introduce tools safely, and positively to your dog.

- Introduce the brush and reward and praise immediately after with a high-value reward.
- Extend interaction by placing the brush on the dog before immediately rewarding and praising the dog, prolonging the duration of contact at the dog's pace, as you go.
- Begin very careful strokes of the brush followed by immediate praise and reward (do this for three seconds initially before releasing to gauge tolerance). Repeat.
- If you feel more distraction is required, opt for high-value spreadable rewards on a Lickimat, and brush stroke the dog while he licks the reward. Stop as soon as the reward is finished or the dog stops licking, praise and repeat.



Cooperative Grooming Products

Tools to assist you in achieving cooperation

It wouldn't be low-stress grooming without the following invaluable tools to help set really solid, positive foundations from day one.

- LickiMat®
- Snuffle Mats
- A Foot Stool
- An Adjustable Table Stool
- Thick Padded Yoga Mat
- Tub for Treats
- Clicker (if you would rather not mark with a word)
- Aquasorb Towels
- Fluffy Bath Mat
- Video Recorder
- Hydraulic Grooming Table (if professional)
- Hydraulic Bath (if professional)
- Jugs (one for water, one for shampoo)
- Thick, Padded Belly Strap (if professional)

"The love of a dog is a pure thing. He gives you a trust which is total. You must not betray it"

- Michel Houellebecq

Being able to introduce choice and consent from the get-go can help enhance the animal-human bond far more successfully, than any other approach. Having a broad selection of tools that can be used to introduce consent-based exercises will help make grooming non-threatening, and safe.



Chapter III

Gentle Brushes for Low-Stress Grooming

Before anything else, it's important to consider the skin of a dog before deciding which tools to use. For more sensitive, allergy-prone dogs it is far better to opt for plastic, pin or plastic-capped brushes. For dogs with incredibly thick coats, it might be best to opt for a slicker-type brush used correctly.

Avoid cutting tools like shedding blades and otherwise, as this damages the skin and breaks good hair.

- Rubber Curry - deshedder on dry, short coats and an effective massage tool when used during the shampoo process
- Pin Brush - an all-round purpose brush for medium-long coats
- Undercoat Rake - good for removal of dead undercoats in double-coated breeds
- Greyhound Comb - great for checking the coat for tangles and combing through fine medium-long hair
- Porcupine Brush - good finishing tool for brushing medium-long coats and can also remove some tangles too
- Bristle Brush - great finishing brush for sheen for puppies and short-coated breeds
- Tangle Teezer - great tangle buster for puppies, fine coats, and medium-long coats
- Soft Slicker - this tool can be used in extreme cases where a coat is incredibly thick and requires something more robust. It must be used carefully to avoid causing trauma to the skin. For best practice, brushing through a thick coat while it is damp will cause less friction due to the advanced elasticity of the skin

Recommended Brands:

- I absolutely love Denman as a brush manufacturer of gentle, plastic and bristle brushes suitable for a more sensitive coat. These are ideal introductory brushes for puppies as well.
- Mikki-Pet's Bamboo range is ideal for more robust, grooming-grade brushes.

Chapter IV

Low-Stress Nail Trimming & Tools

NEWSFLASH! EVEN THE PROFESSIONALS ARE SCARED OF NAIL TRIMMING!

The most important thing to remember with nail trimming is:

LESS IS MORE, MORE FREQUENTLY

Prevent a bad experience with a more versatile tool!

There are various types of nail trimmers on the market today, and it's incredibly confusing when trying to decide which one is the best, so here is my advice on what I've found works best and why.

- Scissor-Style Nail Trimmers (remember to get a size suitable one)

It's far easier to manipulate what angle and how much nail to take when using a plier-like, scissor-style nail trimmer rather than those that require you to place the nail through the little hole.

Why? Could you imagine if your dog decided to yank his paw suddenly with a nail trapped in that little hole and the potential damage that could incur?! (I mean, eeeek!!).

They are also capable of taking as little off the nail as possible in whichever angle you decide - basically, you want to be trimming away a tiny amount as far away from the quick as possible. Picture a chisel approach rather than a chopping one!

For more on technique, you might want to check out my Low-Stress Nail Trimming Mini-Course via <https://courses.holisticgroomingacademy.com>

Additionally, it's worthwhile investing in:

- A Scratchboard
- Nail File
- Nail Dremel

Chapter V

Low-Stress Clipping & Trimming Tools

For clipping, I have found the least intensity vibration is best.

With that in mind, I suggest:

- Heiniger Opal - if you are a professional then you will need a heavy-duty clipper. The quietest I've come across to date is this brand and model.
- Amazon Clipper - these are not heavy duty by any means however, they are INCREDIBLY quiet making them the very best for touch-sensitive dogs, puppies and dogs who need time to build up to more intensity. You can get replacement heads in some of the brands available which is good too.
- Amazon Paw Pad Trimmer - these are typically advertised for rabbits and pad work, but I LOVE them for getting matts away from intricate areas like behind the ears, beard or groin. They are again, incredibly quiet making them ideal for touch-sensitive dogs and puppies too.
- Comb Guards - comb guards can really help with maintaining a consistent length without taking too much off. Additionally, they can also be safer since they lift the clipping blade away from the skin. It's super important that the coat is completely matt and tangle-free before using these tools. They are best used on a clean and totally dry coat.

When it comes to scissors, this is very much an individual preference and will depend on your own comfort and requirements.

- Bull Cap Scissors - For the novice, I would always recommend you purchase bull-cap scissors to practice with to prevent anything pointy from getting into the eyes (heaven forbid), this is especially important for dogs who are nervous or puppies. Ask a professional to show you how to use scissors safely. You can get straight and curved scissors that are bull-capped via Amazon.
- Thinning Shears - these are the most forgiving of scissors because they don't take a clean cut from the coat. Again, looking for square tipped is safer than pointy if you aren't a professional. A good beginner tool.

Chapter VI

Low-Stress Drying Tools

A dog's ear can move in up to 14 different directions to allow them to hear a broad range of noise frequencies, often undetectable to a human. Their advanced sense of hearing should not be ignored.

A 2014 study concluded that the professional groomer should limit exposure to low-intensity dryers to 4 hours maximum per day, and less than 1 hour if higher-intensity, based on an 8-hour day per Occupational Health Guidelines (see reference below).

Could you imagine how intense the noise of a dryer must be to a dog?

What's more, based on their skin sensitivity, can you imagine how sore a high-velocity dryer must be on the joints?

It's important to keep drying sessions short and positive (I recommend bursts of 5-10 minutes with plenty of rest and toilet breaks in between).

With drying, here's what I recommend:

- Standing Dryer - for professionals, this can be moved around, set to different temperatures and is generally quite a low-velocity dryer. It's ideal for fluffing curly-coated breeds, and general drying. It's a good puppy tool as well.
- Dyson Dryer - these are quite low-velocity but they have several options available to suit different drying demands. They have a good range of temperature settings, including a no-heat option, ideal for allergy-prone skin. Pricey though, but the whole family can use it!
- Drying Plastic-Capped Pin Brush- this can be a good puppy introduction tool. The only risk is overheating so just be sure to monitor this at all times.
- Aquasorb Towel - some dogs absolutely hate being dried, so it might be necessary to gently squeeze dry excess moisture from the coat and allow the dog to air dry. This is a short-term solution for some breeds who really need their coats dried to prevent heat spots.
- Happy Hoodie - while the name is misleading, these products may be accepted by some dogs to help break the sound of the dryer. Not suitable for Brachycephalic Breeds.

Start as a means to go on and don't lose faith!

If you would like to learn more about holistic grooming you can purchase my books, both available on Amazon:

- The Magic of Holistic Grooming
- A Teacher's Guide to Low-Stress Grooming

Alternatively, you can visit The Holistic Grooming Academy for access to a range of different educational webinars, mini-courses and even my Accredited Holistic Grooming & Behaviour Diploma.

<https://courses.holisticgroomingacademy.com>

