For the love of grooming

Help your cat learn to enjoy grooming!

DOES MY CAT NEED MY HELP?

- many young healthy short-haired cats groom themselves well
- other medium to long-haired cats, older or overweight cats or those with health problems, can need a lot of help
- if a cat has mats, excess dander or a greasy coat, they need help

benefits of regular grooming

- cleanliness and comfort
- lessens hair and dander on furniture and clothes
- untangles and prevents mats (which can be painful)
- lessens hairballs!



TIPS

- your cat may like one brush and not another, so check out the "Explore brush options" section (next page) and try one or two types to begin

TRAINING FOR TOLERANCE

GOALS



- **keep it positive** (by using treats, praise and a gentle approach)
- **if less than positive, keep it brief**!
- **always end every session with a couple treats**, regardless of behavior, so grooming begins to means good things (can take kibble from daily portion or lean treats)

TIPS

give treats immediately so your cat relates them with grooming!



WORKING WITH YOUR CAT

Some cats love being brushed, others get stressed, but taking it slowly can be helpful! Like dogs, cats can be trained in time with treats, praise and affection.





signs of stress:

- wide pupils
- tail swaying
- circling
- long meows
- scratching
- biting





possible causes of stress:

- new to grooming
- skittish, easily over-stimulated or uncomfortable with close-handling
- painful/scary past experiences
- have painful health problems

VETERINARY ADVICE

It is not uncommon for shy, nervous or "busy" cats to get overwhelmed by handling. After taking things slowly, if grooming is still too stressful for your cat, call the ARLNH (number below) and/or call your vet for help!

TIPS

- for stress, try a pheromone plug in like Feliway
- your vet will have advice based on your cat's needs!



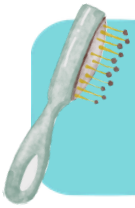
rescueleague.org
(603) 472-3647

EXPLORE BRUSH OPTIONS!

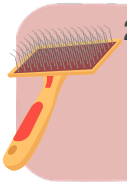
Sometimes finding the "right" brush is about what your cat will tolerate best.

TIPS

- if your cat shows signs of stress ("airplane ears," rapid circling or tail switching, dilated pupils, long vocalizations or hair fluffing), give them a treat, end for the day, even if the job is not done, and try a different type of brush next time!
- staying within their comfort zone helps create a good relationship with grooming!



1. **pin brush** - wide teeth and protective ball tips that make it gentle; sensitive cats tend to like these



2. **slicker brush** - curved metal tines that help resolve mats, but can be over-stimulating at times



3. **wide-tooth comb** - comb with wide teeth used to tease out mats gently (slowly to avoid tugging)



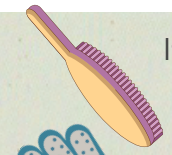
4. **dematting rake** - sheds loose hair and prevents/resolves mats; can be over-stimulating, so some only tolerate for short sitting



5. **dematting comb** - metal tooth with different length tines; like most tools to resolve mats, can be over-stimulating so watch stress levels



6. **hand-held buzzer** (quiet) to shave off mats, as able; often only allow a couple mats to be shaved off in one sitting







If they dislike other options:

1. **grooming glove/mitt**
2. **silicone or rubber brush**
3. **self-groomer** fixed to wall
4. pulling mats apart gently with **your fingers**

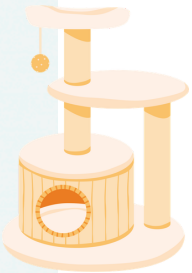
NEVER use scissors. Cats move quickly so they can easily cause deep cuts and traumatize a cat against future grooms.

PROFESSIONAL GROOMING

Home grooming is often best (cats usually dislike car rides and new places). If seeking a groomer, look nearby, read reviews and find out if they are Free Certified (they work around a pet's stress level).

MORE WAYS TO HELP

- **vacuum regularly**, especially for medium to long-haired cats who pick up dust everywhere, making cleaning themselves more difficult
- offer **cat trees and beds** and clean regularly so they can help themselves by rubbing up against the clean surfaces!



BATHING AND TEETH

Cats often clean themselves well and are known to dislike bathes, but some need help. For dander or a greasy coat:

- use non-scented pet wipes or a cloth in lukewarm water and tiny bit of Dawn dish soap (AVOID other human soaps; NEVER use dry shampoo)
- if they will not allow wipes, use a comb and wipe it clean with each stroke



Brushing teeth

- use toothpaste for cats only to remove tartar, prevent bad breath and lessen likelihood of future extensive dentals
- also helpful: dry food, dental chews, giving lots of fresh water and cleanings at the vet!

