

## Grooming your Coton de Tulear

The coat is one of the most distinctive features of the Coton De Tulear. In Madagascar it reminded people of cotton fields near Tulear, the island's principal port and the nearest to Africa.

Grooming is an essential part of owning a Coton De Tulear, whether you have the coat cut (Puppy Cut) or allow it to grow. You will need to groom regularly to keep it looking beautiful and tangle free. If you wish to show your Coton you must only trim the footpads, never the coat.



Accustom it to grooming from an early age. Your breeder will have introduced the new routine with a bath and brushing. Since the puppy's coat is not very long grooming is easy. When the texture of the puppy coat transforms into the adult coat, between seven and eighteen months of age, you will need to brush often to avoid tangles. Although the coat is considered non-shedding there is some dander. Therefore, the Coton de Tulear is not a truly hypoallergenic dog, as some claim.

Your new puppy will need to be groomed for approximately 10 to 15 minutes a day. Try to make this an enjoyable experience for both of you or your puppy may become bored and fidget after a few minutes. Always speak to your puppy encouragingly; this should help it to relax. For many owners and Cotons grooming becomes 'quality time'.

Initially try to groom your puppy on your lap as this is a comfortable position for both of you. In time you will need to move to either the floor or a grooming table.

Never groom the coat when it is dry; this will break the hair and can cause damage. Use good quality grooming products which can be obtained from, for example, [Plush Puppy](#), [Hub International](#), [Groomers](#), [K9 Competition](#), [Jean Paul Pets](#), [Bed Head](#), [Christies Direct](#), and [Cotonluv](#).

It is not advised to use human products on the coat as they are not designed for dogs and could be harmful to the dog's skin.

On the following pages we will consider:

1. Grooming items;
2. Step by step guide to grooming your puppy;
3. Eyes, ears and teeth;
4. Bathing; and
5. Drying.



## Grooming items

There are a few essential grooming items you will need as your puppy gets older. We offer some suggestions.



### [Chris Christensen Wood pin Brush](#)

This pin brush has pins of wood and is very gentle on the coat. It combs the tangles without hurting the dog. It is gentle enough for puppies.



[Mason Pearson Brush](#) is available in two versions. One with nylon and boar hair bristles and another with boar hair only. The boar hairbrush is used for daily grooming as it removes dirt and all the loose hairs. This brush must be used as the final step of grooming. The Nylon/boar hair is used to fluff up the coat.



### [Mini Comb](#)

This small mini comb is used to clean the dirt from the corner of the eyes, face & paws.





### [Chris Christensen Pin Brush](#)

This brush is used for brushing Cotons with a thick and long coat, from about 8 months old.



[The Poodle Comb](#) is used after brushing. You can use the ends to separate tangles and comb them out.



### [Spratt Comb](#)

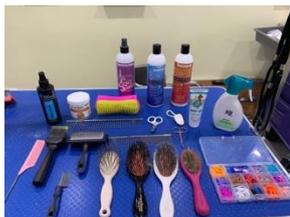
When you have brushed the dog with the brushes and the Poodle comb it is time to use the Spratt Comb. It helps remove any small tangles or knots left behind.

Other equipment you will need are toenail clippers and scissors with blunt edge to trim hair around feet and also bull nose scissors to trim the hair between pads.

A [grooming table](#) is helpful but not essential. You can use a rigid surface topped with a rubber backed bathmat to keep your Coton from slipping. You may find that a table helps prevent your back from becoming tired.



## Step by step guide to grooming your puppy



1. Lightly spray the entire coat with grooming spray avoiding the eyes and go over the entire coat with the puppy brush, this will help to loosen any small tangles and make it easier for you to groom.
2. Take the comb and gently comb through the coat, teasing out any knots, paying particular attention to the areas behind the ears, under the legs, the feet, the groin area, and the belly.
3. Brush the hair in sections, starting at the tips and working toward the roots, ensuring that you always brush to the skin. Follow the same routine each time you brush, so you do not miss any areas.
4. If you find any matted hair, apply a detangler and leave the product to work for about 5 minutes while you brush elsewhere. Then use a wide toothed comb and your fingers to gently separate the hairs.
5. Check that the ears are clean and hair free. We recommend using [Ear Plucking Powder](#) which makes it easier to grip the hair. However, you need to be gentle when plucking out any hair that is growing into the ear. Be careful not to put anything into the ears as this can cause problems in the future.
6. Check eyes for any debris and remove gently with eye wipes or cotton wood pads soaked with water or appropriate eye cleaner. Finish grooming by using the mini comb around the facial area.
7. Check the length of the claws and clip the tips off. This should be done every week initially as your puppy's claws grow very quickly, when your dog is older every two weeks. If you do not feel confident to do this, then your vet can do this for you at a nominal cost. However, your dog trusts you so try to do this yourself.
8. You should also get into the habit of wiping your puppy's bottom even if it is not dirty as one day the dreaded dirty bottom will arise and if your dog is not used to having his bottom wiped you will find it difficult to clean. Doggy wet wipes are very convenient.

## Eyes

Eye care is very important and needs to be done every day. It is important to remove any mucous or dirt using a mini comb, so that your Coton will not rub its eyes. This will also prevent any staining around the tear ducts. Use your mini comb to remove any mucous then use eye wipes to cleanse the eyes.

If your Coton has redness, weepy eyes or swelling you will need to consult your vet immediately for medical advice.

If your Coton has eye stains, there are several cleaning products on the market to help reduce the colour of the stains. Eye stains can be caused by a number of reasons - such as infections, over-producing tear ducts, inverted eyelid, or simply not being cleaned daily. The cleaning products work best if you use them every day on the affected areas.

## Ears

Always check your Coton's ears weekly. If you see any hair growing inside the ear canal you must remove it immediately. By using a small amount of ear powder, available from your vet in each ear will help you to get a grip on the hairs remove them more easily.

Very gently using your thumb and index finger pull a few hairs out at a time until the ear canal is clear. To clean the outer ear, dip a cotton wool ball into a canine ear solution and carefully clean outer area. You may also use ear wipes as they work very well.

If you see your Coton constantly scratching his ears or shaking his head and there is brown smelly discharge present, take your Coton to your vets and he will give you ear drops and show you how to use them correctly. It is always safer to consult your vet if you are unsure about any health aspect involving your pet.

## Teeth

It is important to look after your dog's teeth. Although they are not prone to cavities like humans, they can still develop problems like tartar, plaque build-up and gingivitis. Severe dental diseases can result in teeth requiring extraction or permanent damage to the underlying bone.

It is a good idea to get your puppy used to having its teeth brushed. This can start as soon as your new dog is settled in your home, and you feel comfortable doing so.

Purchase some enzymatic dog toothpaste and a brush from your vet. Enzymatic toothpaste helps break down plaque and reduces bad breath. **Never use human toothpaste as this is toxic to dogs.**



## **Bathing**

The frequency of Bathing your Coton is up to you, depending on whether you show your Coton, where you live or where you walk your pet. Most Coton owners bathe their dogs every three to four weeks. It can be done more often if you require it but always remember it must be done properly every time.

Before bathing your Coton must have its hair thoroughly groomed removing all matting and dead hairs. Never bath your Coton with mats in his hair as these mats will join with other coat hairs causing an even bigger mat.

Place your Coton onto a rubber mat in the bath tub. Wet the hair thoroughly with lukewarm water, except for the head. Apply the shampoo and work it into lather. Rub the coat all over the back making sure that the entire coat is fully lathered. Try to gently massage from the root to the tip of the hair, without rubbing too vigorously which can cause tangles. Always wash the belly and the inner sides of the legs. Always leave your Coton's head until last as not very many dogs like having their faces washed. Wet the head using a sponge then apply the shampoo making sure that none of the shampoo goes near the eyes. Rinse your dog well, and then give a second shampoo if needed. It is extremely important to rinse every bit of shampoo; leaving shampoo in your dog's coat can lead to skin problems and a dull coat. A good way to check that all the shampoo has been rinsed is to rinse until the water turns clear. Depending on the condition of your dog's coat now would be the time to apply conditioner. Rinse thoroughly once again.

During bathing never let your dog stand in water. Always use a shower head and leave the plug out of the bath. While your Coton is in the bath waiting to get dried use the detangler and conditioning spray, then start to dry your pet. Use lots of encouragement and praise during the bath to make bathing a pleasant process.

## **Drying**

Squeeze all the water from his coat and towel dry. Place your Coton on your grooming table and use another towel to absorb more water. Allow a good spontaneous shake. Stand your pet or lay him on one side, if you prefer, and begin drying with the cold -medium heat of a hair dryer. Always dry roots first, then carry on through the rest of the coat. Use a hair slide to set locks of hair upright to dry the root first, because Cotons have such a long coat this will stop the ends of the coat from becoming over-dried and damaged. You can use your fingers to gently lift the hair as you are blow drying to help give the coat extra body. Only when the coat is fully dry can you brush and groom your Coton. Always finish grooming by using the Mini comb around the facial area. Apply a top knot or doggy hair clip to keep his hair from his eyes.

Finally give your Coton a treat and cuddle for being so well behaved.

