

## Kylie's Pictorial Guide to Grooming for Field Spaniels

### Grooming a Field Spaniel

Unlike many other spaniel breeds, the Field Spaniel carries a moderate coat. The coat is well-suited to the owner-handler who wants to show his dog, yet easy to maintain for the hunter or pet owner. We often refer to Field Spaniels as a "wash'n wear" breed as even for show, we do not spend hours upon hours in grooming the dogs here at Calico.

Regular brushing and bathing, along with an investment in basic grooming equipment will save countless dollars spent on visits to the grooming parlor. Only a minimal amount of trimming of the ears and feet is required for everyday wear. For show purposes, a bit more trimming on the head and throat will be necessary.

#### Basic Grooming Equipment Needs

For all Field Spaniels	Add these things if you will show your dog
Metal dog comb, medium/coarse style	All-purpose stripping knife (blade)
Bristle brush	Coat Conditioner (for use after bathing)
Slicker brush	Daily coat conditioner spray with sunscreen additive
Thinning shears (blending shears)	Electric clipper with #10F blade & #7F blade
Straight shears	Spray bottle with misting device; fill with distilled water
Nail Clipper & Styptic powder or solution	Tackle box or container to store grooming equipment
Cotton Balls (large size preferred)	(Option) Dremel for doing toenails
Ear cleaning solution	
Dental Care brush and toothpaste made for canines	
Shampoo (for dark coats or all-purpose shampoo)	

#### Routine Brushing

- Brush the coat with the lay of the coat, starting at the head and working gradually to the rear.
- Comb feathers gently, taking care to avoid pulling the feathering if you find a snarl.
- Misting the coat lightly with a spray bottle filled with distilled water avoids coat breakage during routine brushing and combing.
- If there is an old, sturdy table available, placing a non-slip rug on top of the table and lifting the dog to the table top will make routine grooming chores easier to do. The rug will provide an adequate surface so that the dog does not slip.

- Frequency? If you can do this daily, that's great. If not, try for at least once a week.

### Clipping Toenails

Field Spaniels generally have tough black toenails and the "quick" (vascular nail bed) is nearly impossible to see. Nails must be kept up on a weekly basis as nails, which are too long, may result in improper placement of the foot as the nail hits the floor. A nail clipper is used to nip the end of the nail off, followed by using the nail file to smooth rough edges. Styptic powder is a necessity since with the difficulty of seeing where the nail bed lays; it is all too easy to cut a bit too close. As an alternative, a nail grinder may be utilized to shorten the nail and provide the same smoothing of the file at the same time. Many dogs dislike nail cutting intensely. This may be avoided by routinely handling the feet at times other than for nail cutting.

Here is an excellent site for learning how to use a dremel to do your dog's nails: [www.DoberDawn.com](http://www.DoberDawn.com) and then scroll down and click on the "How to Dremel Dog Nails" link.

### Ears

Ears should be cleaned weekly using cotton balls and a powder or liquid cleansing agent as recommended by your veterinarian or breeder. Do not be tempted to use a cotton swab since you can probe too deeply and cause harm! Shorten the hair at the opening of the ear canal by plucking or **careful** use of a thinning shears.

### Teeth

There are many types of brushing products available for routine dental care. Although you will need to train your dog to accept brushing/cleaning of the teeth, it is time well spent. A tooth scaler is also a useful device that is relatively easy to learn to use to remove tartar. Your veterinarian should be able to show you how to use a tooth scaler appropriately.

### Bathing

Fields who are shown are bathed far more frequently than those whose primary occupation is companion. On the average, a home companion will require bathing no more frequently than once a month especially if routine coat care via a thorough brushing is done.



Before starting, this dog has a very shaggy appearance.



A #10F blade is used on the top of the head, going with the grain. For some Field Spaniels, depending on the type of coat, a clipper is not used on the head and only a stripping blade and thinning shear is used to neaten the hair.



Clipping with the 10F blade continues down the cheeks on the foreface. Again, depending on the type of coat, a thinning shear and stripping blade may be used instead.

Tops of the ears are trimmed as well. Use a 10F blade going with the lay of the hair on the ears; you will clip about 1/3 of the way down the ear.



The lips are shaved or trimmed very close.



The inside of the ear, around the ear canal opening is trimmed very close. This allows the ear to “breathe” and the air flow helps keep the ear dry which prevents ear infections.



Using a 10F blade, the neck is shaved against the lay of the hair. You will create a V-shape with the tip of the “V” ending about 1 inch above breast bone.

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Now that the head is completed, it is time to move on to the neck. Notice how shaggy this neck appears!



This is what thinning and striping and about 2 hours of work looks like. This goes all the way on the sides of the dog throughout and slowly blends into the throat where the dog was previously clipped.

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These front legs and feet are very shaggy.



Following grooming, the front legs appear neater



This close-up shows the trimming that has been done to neaten the foot.



Before grooming, these feet are shaggy and unattractive. The excess hair can easily pick up mud and burrs.



This photo shows the foot at the left untrimmed



Notice the shaggy bottom of the foot. With the footpad covered by hair, the dog has little traction when walking, running or playing.



After trimming, the footpads are easy to see. This is important so that the dog has good traction when ambulating.



This rear leg is very shaggy. The hair hanging down from the thigh is too long as is the hair between the toes.



Notice how different the rear leg looks when trimmed. The hair on the feet has been trimmed. The hair on the rear pastern has also been shortened neatly



This shaggy tail is just beginning to show a "flag" (hair growth beneath the tail). Some Field Spaniel fanciers like to leave a flag, others prefer the tail without the flag.

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Now the tail has been trimmed and neatened. Notice the blending that has been done near butt and the sides of the thighs into the tail., so that there are no sharp lines apparent.

If you have any questions about  
grooming please call Kylie at  
262.510.1359 or email  
[chuckmunster99@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chuckmunster99@sbcglobal.net).

Good Luck and Happy Grooming!!!