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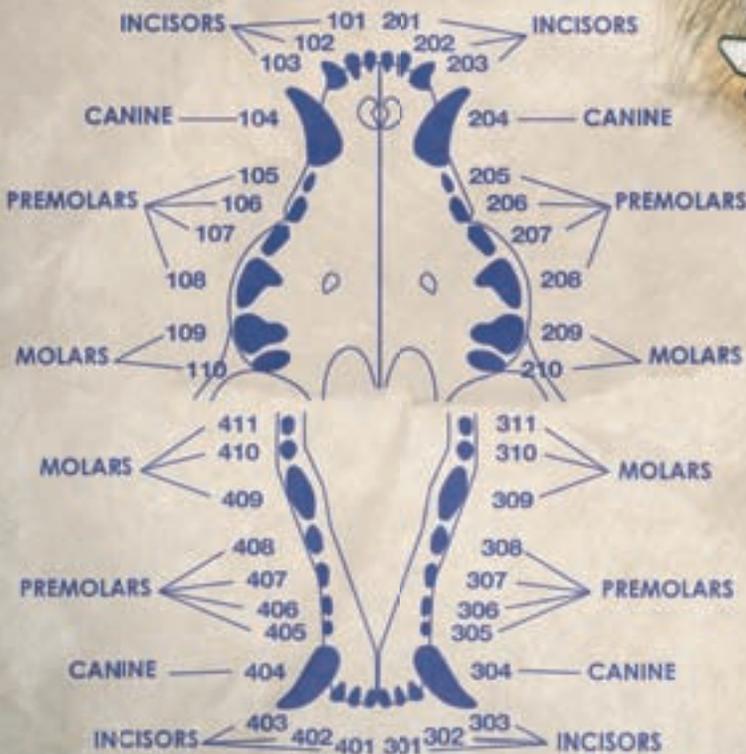
VOL. 30 ED. 9 • SEPT. 2011

DEMATTING

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When You Shouldn't

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Once a Thief	6
Dematting: When you should and When you shouldn't	10
Dorkie	17
Dog Dental Care, Why Should I Care?	22
Easy Money: "Chew on this!"	26
The Healthy Groomer/Veterinarian Relationship	32
The Groomer's Roundtable	36
Basic Creative Supplies	38
Back Problems	40
Clipper Maintenance	49
Deanise Stoops	54
New Product News	55
Classifieds	57
Calendar of Events	61



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Off the Top of My Head by Todd Shelly

Robo Boss



We now have a robot patrolling the Barkleigh offices. That might sound like some weird science fiction movie or soon to be cancelled TV sitcom (Robot Boss – coming this fall to FOX). Or, more likely, a TLC show (My Boss is a Robot). However, for better or worse, we really do have a robot cruising around our facility.

I'll explain from the beginning. Sally Liddick, the founder of Barkleigh, developed health problems that made it difficult for her to come to the office. She retired, but it wasn't because she wanted to. It was because she had to. She became bored. Her boredom turned into frustration that she was not able to be involved.

Then, I read an article in *Sports Illustrated* about a boy that had health issues that made it dangerous for him to attend school. The isolation from the other kids was taking an emotional toll on the boy, which led to a decline in his health. The school principal happened to know a company that was trying to market robots for personal use. A few days later the boy was set up as a robot.

The boy's emotional and physical health improved immediately. He felt like he was a part of everything again. I immediately thought of Sally's situation. I figured it should have the same effect on her. So, a few days later a robot was delivered.

The connection is basically *Skype* on wheels. There is a screen that allows for mutual viewing. She can see and hear us and we can see and hear her. She maneuvers the robot from her laptop. It feels a lot like playing a video game.

The first day started off with difficulties getting all the connections right. For example, the settings on Sally's computer prevented us from hearing her and other issues like that. We had an entire staff that was anxiously anticipating the robot and we couldn't even get the sound working.

By a fluke, Skip Bond happened to visit our office that day. Skip does all the filming at our shows and is now producer and director of our live streaming, so he is knowledgeable about audio/visual issues. After a little bit of effort (nothing is easy when it involves Sally), he corrected the problem and the robot was on its way.

At first the robot was a novelty as Sally motored around the office saying "Hi" to a few employees that she hasn't talked to in months. It was fun and exciting...for a little while. Then she started using it to get updated on what everyone in the office was working on. Then she started to get involved in their projects. Then I started to worry that I may have created a high tech monster.

I managed to distract Sally by inviting her/it to join a few of us for lunch in the break room. She did and the conversation quickly turned to typical break room conversation. Surprisingly, it did not take long to start talking to Sally as if she was there in person. It almost felt natural.

I'm not sure if interacting with a robot as if it is a human being is a good thing, or just creepy. We plan to take the "SallyBot" to *Groom Expo* and other shows in the future. If you see her/it there, feel free to come up and talk to her/it. You can decide for yourself if it's creepy.


todd@barkleigh.com

Once a THIEF

By Bonnie Wonders

I was told a great story by one of my good customers. Her name is Heather, and she owns a Lab and a Maltese. I groom these dogs every eight weeks, and a couple weeks ago, she asked me if I would do her father's 140-pound Labrador. The dog had never been professionally done before, but her dad had always bathed him in the past. She said her father was pretty ill, and she thought it would be nice if she had the dog groomed by me as a surprise. Of course I said yes.

She brought the dog in, and like the proverbial "bull in a china shop," he pulled Heather through the front door as if she only weighed 98 pounds. Actually, she probably weighs more like 100 pounds. She isn't very big, and he was taking full advantage of the fact. He headed straight for a display of beef treats like he knew exactly where he was going. The only problem was that in the process, he wrapped his outstretched *Flexi* around the pole of a display rack full of toys. Naturally, it was a free for all of latex.

I unwrapped the dog from the overturned pole and instructed Heather to come back in a couple hours. The grooming process actually went pretty well for a newbie dog and an old lady (me). However, any time the door buzzer went off,

the dog went into overdrive. He was sure it was someone that he needed to either greet or eat. Upon discovering that I would allow him to do neither of the above, he settled back down. A friendly chap he was, though, overall.

After the dog was done, I put him into a holding cage. About 15 minutes later, Heather walked in to pick him up. "So how did you make out?" she asked.

"Well, he was actually very good," I told her. "He sure is nosy, though. He wanted to know everybody that came in," I added.

"Oh, yeah. He's really outgoing. Let me tell you what he did two weeks ago," she said. Here's how her story goes...

My dad had to go into the hospital for some treatments, and he asked if I could keep *Buster*. Of course I told him it was no problem.

He never keeps a collar on *Buster*, though, and I always keep one on my dogs. For him, I used one that I had for one of my old Labs. He stayed in the yard and was such a good dog that I really didn't watch him that much when he was outside. He just hung around, mostly under the willow trees. A couple weeks ago, I let him out around 8:00 in the morning. I had to make a couple phone calls, and I kind of forgot that I had put him outside.

About half an hour went by, and I remembered that I hadn't let him back in. I went to the door and called him, but he didn't come. I went outside, yelling all over the place for him, but I didn't see him at all. Now I started to panic, and I thought if something happened to that dog, my dad would be absolutely crushed. I mean, that dog hardly ever leaves his side. I ran into the

Continued on page 8



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house, yelling for my husband. He came downstairs, and I was frantic, telling him that I couldn't find *Buster*. He went outside and called him with me. There was still no sign of the dog, so my husband jumped into his truck and went up the lane behind our house, which leads to a huge farm. This whole time, I was scared to death that the dog went down to the main highway and got run over. (Heather lives very close to an extremely busy road that runs directly into the middle of the town. She had every reason to think that he may have been hit.)

I was really praying that he went behind our property to that farm. About 25 minutes later, my husband came back and didn't have the dog with him. "I drove up through the fields at the farm and yelled my head off for him, but I couldn't find him. I've got to go to work right now, though. I can't be any later," he told me.

I got so sick to my stomach; I thought for sure I was going to throw up. I went back outside and kept walking around, yelling for *Buster*. He just wasn't around anywhere. I was so scared of what I was going to tell my dad. This was the last thing he needed to hear right now.

I went back into the house and was crying like crazy. About another hour went by, and my phone rang. "Did you lose a dog, by any chance?" this guy asked.

"Oh my gosh, YES!" I yelled into the phone. "Where is he?" I yelled again.

"Well, this is Chuck, the manager at *Giant Grocery*," the guy told me. "Your dog walked into the store and went to the bakery. He ate two loaves of French bread from there and then kind of wandered around the store for a while. Apparently, the employees thought that he belonged to one of the customers and that he

was a service dog. He's lying here with me at the express checkout. Could you come get him?" he asked.

I was so happy, but when I got to the store I was so embarrassed. I couldn't believe that he crossed the highway and didn't get hit. Then he went all the way up to the mall and the grocery store and just walked right in and helped himself. Thank God I put that collar on him, because it still had my old dog's ID tag. They wouldn't even let me pay for the bread that he ate.

I was laughing so hard by the end of her tale that I hadn't even noticed *Buster* lying in the middle of one of the retail rooms, happily finishing a box of elk jerky sticks. His taste buds are getting more refined, I suppose. Next, he'll be knocking off some liquor store in the hopes of scoring some nice red wine to go with the French bread and the jerky. The guy's got finesse...



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Dematting

When You Should and When You Shouldn't

By Cheryl Purcell

One of the biggest challenges we face as groomers is when to demat a dog. Whether it's an old dog or a new puppy, how do you evaluate the severity of the coat?

For me, it's always been a struggle. No groomer wants to have to shave a dog down to the skin, but at the same time, we all want to give our clients what they want. We need to consider the pet. How easy will it be to unmat the coat, how much time is it going to take, and what is the dog's tolerance level?

First, you want to try and determine the cause of the mats.

If I understand what caused the mats, it will help me make the decision as to whether or not to take on the challenge.

Is it coat change on a young dog? Somewhere around nine to twelve months old all dogs begin to lose their puppy coats and grow

Continued on page 12

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in their adult coats. When this happens, dogs shed the old coat, and it can easily become tangled in the new growth.

Is it from swimming? Nothing mats a coat worse than getting wet and not being brushed out after.

Is it from a plain lack of coat care? Clients might not understand that you have to brush out the coat on a regular basis.

Once you determine the cause, you have to decide if the coat can be saved.

Is it pelted (one giant mat all over so that you can't even see down to the skin)? I usually don't attempt to work on this type of matting. It is too far gone in my opinion and should be taken down smooth all over. This is the safest and most humane thing that can be done.

Is it spider webby (looks almost like cotton candy, but you can still see skin when you part the hair)? This is the easiest type of matting to work on.

Once you determine the cause, you have to decide if the coat can be saved.

Is it one of those situations where the matting is only in certain areas (like the ears and tail didn't get brushed, or my favorite – the body is great but the legs are all matted)?

I almost always try to save heads and tails.

Now that you have learned the cause, assessed the coat, and decided to tackle the challenge, there are a couple things you must do first. Explain to the client that this is a special service, and as with all special services, there is going to be a fee for it on top of the regular grooming charges. Sometimes this will make the decision for you, because a client is unwilling to pay

for this special service. I personally charge by the hour, double what I would get for a groom in that same hour. For example, if my average groom is \$25.00 an hour, I charge \$50.00 for the special services. This is very similar to what I charge for any other specialty (e.g. hand-stripping, hand-scissoring, etc.). You'll have to estimate how long this process is going to take you and let the client know up front. I never work on dematting for more than two hours or so. If it is going to take longer, for whatever the reason, (e.g. old dog can't stand, young puppy is wiggly, or the coat is in extreme condition), you must let the client know that for the safety and well be-

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Always remember to have the client sign a pet release form before starting.

ing of the pet, this process is going to be a multi-appointment grooming. Always remember to have the client sign a pet release form before

starting.

Now to begin the process – and like everything else we do, there is a process.

When I started grooming years ago, we didn't have all the wonderful products groomers have to use today. We had a slicker brush, a comb, some corn starch (yes, corn starch), and as always, good old fashioned elbow grease. I will not lie – I still have a box of corn starch in my salon today, which I find great uses for, but that's a different article all together.

First, you're going to want to bathe and condition your pet. I know that doesn't make sense. Don't we tell our clients not to bathe at home unless all the mats are out? Most of us do tell clients this, and it's because they don't have the same wonderful tools and equipment that we have.

One of the first companies I remember making products specifically for matted coats was *Best Shot* (Reader Service Card #8206). They had a three-step process that used shampoo, conditioner, and spray. These days, there are lots of great products to use. I like *Nature's Specialties' SUPER EZ DeMATT* (Reader Service Card #8207), or *Tropiclean's D-Mat Brush Out Solution* (Reader Service Card #8208). Both are good conditioners to help demat hair. I use an oatmeal shampoo first to help with skin irritations that often come with matted dogs.

After following the direction on the containers, use a HV blower to work out some of the dead undercoat. Also, it will help break up mats. Using a conditioning spray, like *Nature's Specialties' Quicker Slicker* (Reader Service Card #8209), mist the coat and let dry. I have always found that it is easier to work on the coat after it dries. Remember, we're not looking to get a fluff finish; we're working on getting a tangle-free coat.

When your pet is dry, move them to the table to begin the brush-out process.

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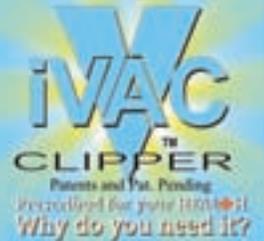
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begin breaking up the mats. Separate the mat from the surrounding hairs. I use my *K-9 dryer* (Reader Service Card #8210) on low for this and insert the dematter into the top of the mat. Using a curling or scooping motion going away from the body, cut through the mat vertically several times. You can also use thinning shears or a coat king.

2. Using the wire slicker brush, like from *Les Pooch* (Reader Service Card #8211), gently brush the mat in varying directions to break it apart. Be sure not to brush repeatedly over the same area. Clean the hair from the brush often to prevent

brush burn. You may find that the mat easily falls apart at this point, but if it still seems thick, use your mat splitter and some detangle spray on it again.

3. Gently comb out what is left of the mat with the metal comb, like a Greyhound comb. Avoid tugging or pulling on the fur. The mat should be split into small knots that slide out easily with the comb. If the comb is snagging and the knots aren't loosening, repeat Steps 1 and 2 before continuing further. If the pet is able to tolerate this so far, continue working on the coat until completed.

4. Give yourself and your dog a break if the mat removal process is taking longer than an hour. Remember: more than two hours and the client needs to come back in for another session.

Lastly, please remember that not all coats can be saved, and our job as Professional Pet Stylists is "humanity before vanity."

Cheryl Purcell is a Nationally Certified Master Groomer. She started her grooming career in 1991 when she opened a salon with her mother, Pooch Paws in Hanover, MA. She now operates that same salon with her husband, Ron and daughter, Krystal. A GroomTeam USA Member from 2002 to 2007 and five time Cardinal Crystal nominee, Cheryl also helped develop a state of the art pet grooming certificate program in conjunction with a local community college.

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Dorkie

Behavior **CLIPS**

by Gary Wilkes



The other day, I was working with a Dorkie – half Dachshund and half Yorkie. This little guy is territorial, fearful, and aggressive... a perfect mix of the two breeds. When I first met him, he charged me at the front door. I dropped my soft briefcase right in front of him, and he turned and ran in the opposite direction, screaming as if he were being killed. After that experience, there wasn't any way he would warm up to me.

Well, not exactly. I knew what he needed to jump-start our relationship. I had the owner put him on a six-foot leash, and then I sat on the ground. I took the leash, and he hit the end of it like a tuna – trying to get away from me. Then I did something I have done literally thousands of times. I pulled him about two feet toward me. I waited a bit and did it again. I did it one last time so that he was touching my legs. Then I let him run to the end of the leash, where I started the process again.

To conventional trainers, pulling a totally freaked-out dog toward you might seem to be a shortcut to a nasty bite. In reality, it's a great way to start an immediate relationship, even if the dog isn't cooperating. I learned this method when I worked in shelters handling hundreds to thousands of animals per year. Many dogs come to shelters with absolutely no knowledge of leash manners. If you try to pull them, they splay their legs and hit

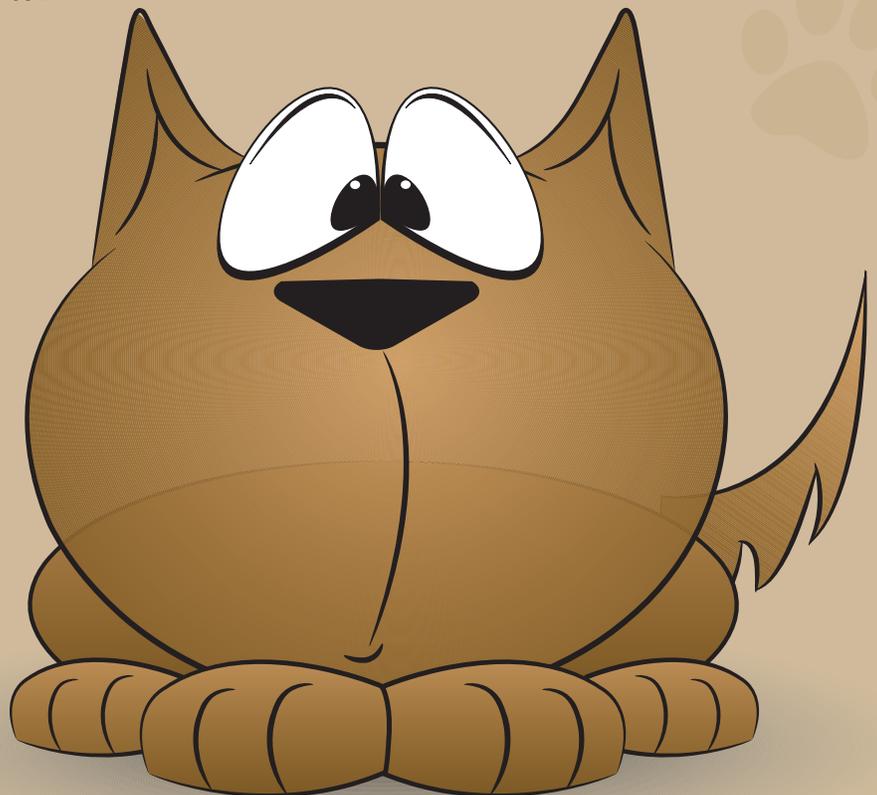
the ground like a sack of potatoes – or fight the leash violently forever. It all starts with a simple thought – the dog dislikes the leash pulling him toward you. His innate reaction to the leash is to fight it, not you. If you can make him concentrate on the leash, he won't really notice that he is being reeled ever closer to the evil, scary human. The trick is to take this in stages and make sure you don't turn his attention to you rather than the leash.

Short Stages

The primary rule of life is that constant force causes con-

stant resistance. If something grabs, pinches, holds, or pulls you at a constant intensity, you will keep fighting it until you get free. If the grab, pull, shove, or pinch changes intensity depending on what you do, you will rapidly change your behavior to neutralize the pull, grab, or pinch. That means that if you simply put a dog on a leash and reel him in, he's going to fight tooth and nail. If you take it in stages and back off whenever he stops fighting, he will rapidly become passive. The rule is this: if he struggles, pull him closer. If he is passive, let him rest for a moment and then reel

Continued on page 18



him in a little further. The goal is to get him so close that he's touching me. This allows me to touch him the way his owners do – with gentle touching and rubbing. Be cautious about the rubbing. There is a tendency to keep rubbing for long periods of time. It is far better if you rub for a second and then see what effect it has. Some dogs object to prolonged fussing. Again, try to present intermittent contact to allow the dog to rapidly get used to what you are doing.

If you want to learn how to use this technique, here are some tips for getting started.

- I have never been bitten by any dog I handled in this way. That doesn't mean it is without risk or that you can't be bitten trying it. On the contrary, if you barge into this, you will probably get nailed. It has to be done correctly. It is

simultaneously the most risky (your face is at about the same level as the dog's teeth) and the safest (you are less threatening if you are lower to the ground and immobile) thing you can do. Since I can't be there to guide you through it, start cautiously and practice until you feel comfortable. Don't start with a vicious, demonic dog. Start with a dog that is aloof and uncomfortable with the leash. Gradually work up to handling dogs that are seriously upset about being in the salon or being touched by people.

- **Smooth Pull:** The pull on the leash is a smooth, firm pull – not a sharp snap like a choke chain correction. The tension is more like an oar pulling through water.
- **Eye contact:** Use your peripheral vision to watch the dog. Studiously avoid direct eye

contact. The idea is for you to resemble an inanimate object. Let the dog fight the leash, and try not to draw any attention to yourself.

- **Touching the withers:** Do not touch the dog on the withers. For some dogs, this is a trigger for directed aggression. If the dog is fearfully aroused by the leash, your goal is to be as non-threatening as possible.
- **Touch the rear end first:** Once you get the dog close to you, swing your elbow out and let it touch the dog for a moment. Watch the dog's reaction. If it has no effect on his behavior, try to touch the dog for a few seconds near the hams or rump. Keep it short and gradually increase the time.
- **Tension on the leash:** When you do this correctly, the dog will be right next to you.

Continued on page 20

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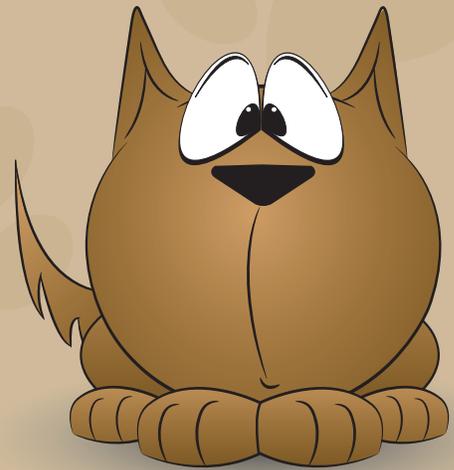
Whichever hand is holding the leash needs to stay lightly taut. Look at the direct line to your face, and then be ready to pull the leash to the side if the dog attempts to bite you. This will turn the dog's head so that the teeth do not connect with your skin.

The mainstream philosophy of modern trainers and behaviorists relies on using calm, gentle, slow-acting therapy for fearful dogs. Apparently they are not under the same time restraints as the rest of us. Taking weeks to months to get a dog comfortable with the process of being groomed isn't practical for you, the owner, or the dog. Using firm, safe coercion to force a dog to come to you is no more invasive than putting it in a tub and spraying it with water, blowing it dry, brushing its coat, and putting a nasty, popping clipper right next to

its ears. If we let an animal's irrational fear stop us, we might as well close up shop. In reality, dogs are highly resilient creatures. As long as you give them a way to negotiate the fear factor, the vast majority will get used to the process of grooming. Sometimes this is as simple as taking a break for a few seconds during bathing, brushing, or clipping – but you already do that. Teaching them to readily come to you on leash pays off by making your presence and your touch a normal and harmless event.

Gary is an internationally acclaimed behaviorist, trainer, author, columnist and lecturer. He has more than 30 years experience working with dogs, including eight years of shelter work. Gary Wilkes is responsible for the innovation and development of clicker training as a practical methodology for dogs and with his former col-

league, Karen Pryor, introduced this method in 1992. He currently has a full-time, veterinary referral based behavior practice in Phoenix, Arizona and is an author, a columnist and feature writer for Groomer to Groomer and Off Lead & Animal Behavior magazine. Contact Gary at wilkesgm@aol.com or visit www.clickandtreat.com.



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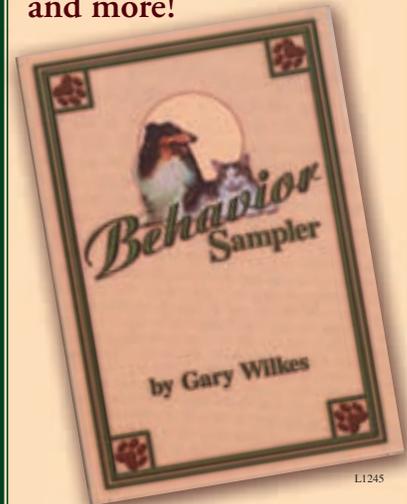
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Dog Dental Care

Why Should I Care?

By Dr. Boyd Harrell

Are puppies immune to dental disease? What causes dental disease in dogs? What can be done once dental disease is present? How can dental disease be prevented? What is the groomer's role? Why should I care? These are all questions that dog owners and groomers alike might ask themselves. The answers may surprise you. Let's take a look at each of them from a groomer's perspective.

Are Puppies Immune to Dental Disease?

Dental disease gets its start as soon as the first puppy teeth erupt. Though puppy teeth aren't commonly involved with deep disease of the gums and bone like permanent teeth are, there are times when puppy teeth are a part of severe inflammation and discomfort. Some common puppyhood dental issues include teeth that are misaligned, leading to an overbite or an underbite. Crowding of the teeth can lead to jaw malformations and debris trapped between the teeth, which in turn can lead to painful irritation and oral ulcer formation. When the canine teeth are forced out of their intended position, they may push into the roof of the mouth and create a painful indentation, or they may be directed toward the cheek, causing rub sores.

When there is a bite or alignment problem of the puppy teeth,

the permanent teeth may also follow suit, leading to lifelong dental issues, bite problems, chewing difficulties, or pain.

What Causes Dental Disease in Dogs?

If this question is answered first, then everything that follows will make more sense.

Plaque forms on teeth in just a matter of hours, which is true for people teeth as well. This is exactly why your dentist recommends brushing two or three times daily.

Plaque will form on perfectly normal teeth and forms even faster when there is a rough or uneven surface for the plaque to collect. When there is misalignment or bite issues, plaque (and later, tartar) will form very quickly. Even in perfectly formed mouths, at least 80% of dogs over three years of age will have some form of dental disease.

Plaque starts with "sticky"

proteins from saliva adhering to the tooth surface. Food particles, dead cells from the lining of the mouth and tongue, and bacteria join the saliva proteins to become plaque. Again, this happens in just hours.

The plaque will begin accumulating minerals from the mouth and within two to three days, the plaque takes on a soft limestone-like texture, which is called "tartar." With time, the tartar continues to harden and grow in size. This tartar causes gingivitis, or irritation to the gum line. The tartar also begins to work its way under the gum line, pushing the gum away from the tooth, allowing food and gunk to accumulate, and exaggerating the problem. When the irritation and infection deepen to the point of damaging the "socket" of the tooth, then we call the problem "periodontal disease," a form of dental disease much more severe than gingivitis. If the progression continues to go unchecked, the

Continued on page 24

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tooth will loosen and eventually fall out or need to be extracted.

All of this is bad enough, causing bad breath and a painful mouth. Some real trouble, though, is simultaneously affecting the rest of the body. A few of the bacteria from dental disease wind up in the bloodstream, where they hop a ride to other organs, causing micro abscesses. At first, these are not obvious, though with time, the organ will deteriorate by aging or failing at a rate faster than it should. Often the changes are written off as "aging." Unfortunately, this type of aging could have been prevented with some attention and effort early on in the dog's life. Once periodontal disease starts and other organs are involved, the problem can be slowed down at best, while cure and reversal are not possible. This makes prevention the best option.

What Can Be Done Once Dental Disease Is Present?

Once dental disease is present, veterinary care at some level is needed. Certainly regular and professional teeth cleaning, followed by home care, will be a part of the process. Antibiotics may be needed for several weeks when dental disease is advanced. Medical support for damaged organs, like the heart and kidneys, may also be needed. Sometimes treatment just isn't enough - the damage is just too great.

How Can Dental Disease Be Prevented?

Preventing dental disease is aimed first at preventing plaque build up and secondly at preventing mineralization of the plaque. Daily brushing is the gold standard, but only a few clients are willing to make

the effort. Much of client resistance is due to improper training and instructions, which lead to pet resistance and then owner frustration.

There are also many dental aids, like tartar control pet food, dental chews and treats, tartar-softening enzymes, dental toys, and water additives, which can actually be fun for the pet and owner alike. The best approach is whatever works, and what works is generally a combination of tools.

What Is the Groomer's Role?

Groomers can play a vital role by identifying a dental problem and by giving good advice on when to seek veterinary care and on effective home care.

Here are some examples of ways groomers can help:

Continued on next page



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- Point out puppyhood problems such as dental alignment problems and crowded teeth
- Identify retained puppy teeth and recommend early extraction of the same (Puppy canine teeth and incisors are the teeth that most commonly do not fall out on schedule.)
- Bring up the topic of home care early in the dog's life
- Train on proper brushing
- Have products available for purchase

Note: Many people have good intentions and would start a program if they had the tools in hand. If the products are not in hand within a day or two of a dental home care discussion, then often nothing gets done – the enthusiasm and desire quickly dissipate. Sending them to the pet store to pick up products risks the program not getting started!

- Provide handouts with specific instructions and product recommendations
- Stock many, if not all, of the products you mention in the handouts, and have them on display for clients to see, feel, smell, and hold.
- Have more than one discussion on dental care (Sales trainers say that between three and seven mentions are needed before most people are ready to make a buying decision.)

Why Should I Care?

Your involvement in the pet's well being and comfort is likely to be received with gratitude, creating a strong bond between you and the pet owner. This trust and bonding will pay dividends for the remainder of the relationship, as the pet owner comes to more quickly and consistently embrace your recommendations. That will translate into a more enjoyable partnership and greater profit for the business. I

don't know about you, but that is reason enough for me to get behind a dental awareness and support campaign. What are you willing to do?

Dr. Harrell is a former multi-veterinary practice owner and current business coach to the pet industry. He currently serves as Medical Director for the SPCA of Florida, headquartered in Lakeland, Florida. He has been speaking internationally



and coaching others to succeed in business for over 12 years. He is formally trained in life, leadership, health, and business coaching and helps people to understand themselves, how others tend to perceive them, and how personalities affect team building, performance, and harmony in the workplace. He also coaches all types of businesses in the Strategic Mindset process, helping owners develop entrepreneurial habits. He can be reached at DrBoydHarrell@gmail.com.



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EASY MONEY

By Joe Zuccarello

"Chew on this!"

"It's estimated that by the age of two, 80% of dogs and 70% of cats have some form of periodontal disease," explains Dr. Larry Kornegay, president of the AVMA (American

Veterinary Medical Association. "Periodontal infections have been linked to diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, and other life-threatening disorders."

WOW! What are you doing

about this as a pet owner? As a pet professional? As a pet owner, I hope you have started to adopt a strict regimen of oral hygiene efforts to battle this problem and the grips it can have on your pet's health. As a pet professional, we have an obligation to the pet owners who trust us with their pets' care to inform them of the severity of this problem. As a pet professional, we also have an obligation to the prosperity of our business; without prosperity, we won't have a business and won't be in a position to tell pet parents anything.

In previous writings, I have said something very similar to what I am about to say. Would you like to give yourself a raise? Most groomers can

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"Oral care services are perfect add-ons..."

only make more money if they take an extra dog on the books, raise prices, or do more big dogs. All of these methods will work, but what about working smarter and not just harder? How?! Sell extra services, namely those that not only provide

you with extra revenue but also educate the pet owner and benefit the pet in one way or another. Oral care services are perfect add-ons that satisfy all of these criteria.

Look at the numbers again. Let's say you are the only groomer

in your business, and you can groom eight dogs per day. Assume you are not great at selling but make a concerted effort to ask every person who comes through the door if they would like you to provide an oral care service on their pet. (We'll talk about service choices in a minute.) Again, if you are average in your ability to sell and only have two people take you up on your offer, that's an average of \$20 extra in revenue that day. Take that number times the number of days your salon is open per week, times the number of weeks in a year, and you have your "raise." For example, \$20 x 5 (days per week) x 52 (weeks per year) = \$5,200. What if you had more people working in your salon? Two groomers means \$10,400; three is \$15,600 and so on! Not bad, huh?!

Now that I have your attention (money always works!), let's

Continued on page 30

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"The products you carry should make it as easy for the pet owner as possible"

talk about the choices you have in service offerings. First, there is traditional tooth brushing. Depending on the toothpaste and toothbrush (person-type toothbrush or finger brush) you use, this service can be easy to start, and a fair amount of dogs will let you brush their teeth while others will not. Another choice is dental wipes. Yet another choice is a new way of addressing the pet's oral care needs, and that is a variety of products that are engineered to make the entire process easier for you and the pet. Based on a "no brushing necessary" position, products, such as dental gel, breath sprays and foams, water additives, and a variety of treats and chews, not only give you more options to address the concern of periodontal disease but also give your clients a choice of products to use at home on a regular basis.

Dental products are perfect additions to your service offerings,

plus they are a great addition to your retail offerings. Many groomers will say that dental services offered in salons on a "once a month" basis has very little effect on the pet's dental health. I beg to differ. I can tell you from experience that you will sell oral care services by simply asking everyone who enters your business. You will sell oral care products to pet owners who wish to take better care of their pet's teeth, since you have brought it to their attention that they should be. The products you carry should make it as easy for the pet owner as possible. If the product is hard to use or the process is hard to do, they simply won't do it.

When considering adding an oral care service to your menu of grooming choices, consider the relationship you have and need with the local veterinarians. The services you offer and the products you sell for "at home" use may not replace

the need for a veterinarian's attention to the pet's dental needs from time to time. Veterinary dental care is expensive and becomes more risky as the pets age. If we can give our pet owner clients an affordable "maintenance" service and product offering, maybe the trips to the veterinarian can be more for check-ups and quick spot cleaning or polishing versus extensive, in depth cleanings and extractions, or worse. After all, can you imagine what your dentist would say and what your teeth would look like if you didn't maintain your own oral needs between visits?

Easy Money. Start offering oral care services. If you already offer oral care services, consider using products that are effective and easy for you and the pet!

Joe Zuccarello is a National Accounts Sales Manager for Tropiclean Fresh Breath Made Easy! Dental products for dogs and cats. To find out more about Tropiclean Shampoos and Tropiclean Fresh Breath Made Easy! dental products, please visit www.tropiclean.net or call 800-542-7387.

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THE HEALTHY GROOMER/ VETERINARIAN RELATIONSHIP

A Benefit for Both

BY DR. MICHAEL FLECK



The second of a three part series, this article will emphasize the growing alignment of interaction among the groomer, pet owner, and veterinarian. There are simple steps that can be taken by both the groomer and the veterinarian, which can produce positive interaction. The new barrier that

sometimes challenges that relationship is the active input from the pet owner. Pet owners sometimes become self-educated experts on grooming and medicine by using their “bible” of information, the internet. They challenge both the groomer and the veterinarian with “facts” they have learned from

articles by self-proclaimed “expert authors,” generally with no basis.

With this new emerging challenge to both the groomer and the veterinarian, it is important for the groomer to feel confident in his or her expertise and for the veterinarian

Continued on page 34

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The advertisement features a central laptop displaying the Store Vantage software interface. To the left, a smartphone shows an 'Appointment Confirmation Service' message with an SMS icon. To the right, a speech bubble contains a five-star rating and the text 'I recommend my groomer to everyone!' with a Wi-Fi icon. Below the speech bubble are icons for Twitter and Facebook. A 'book online' button is also visible.

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ian to feel confident in his or her expertise. Furthermore, when building a better relationship between the groomer and veterinarian, both professionals must respect the boundaries of their own expertise. Remember that, by law, the veterinarian is the only professional trained and licensed to diagnose and treat pets. The groomer is acknowledged (not licensed or even universally certified) to style hair artistically and to utilize cleansing and conditioning products and grooming techniques that promote good hygiene for the skin and hair coat of the pet.

After presenting over 50 seminars to both groomers and veterinarians over the last few years, it has become apparent to me that progressive groomers can offer a lot – not just the stylish cut to the pet, but also much related to skin health care for the pet. Practicing veterinarians, even those including grooming as part of their business, generally know little about the wide scope of talents and capabilities of the progressive groomer. To share those talents and capabilities with the veterinarian requires communication with the veterinarian.

The groomer, instead of at-

tempting to treat a pet's serious skin or ear disease, should always inform the pet owner of a possible medical problem with the affected pet, which may require medical attention by a veterinarian. As a groomer, instruct the pet owner to tell the veterinarian that you recognized what appeared to be a potentially serious medical problem with the pet. Better yet, call the veterinary office and speak with the veterinarian (if possible) about the medical clinical signs. When that happens, the veterinarian gains respect for the groomer, and their office will recommend that their patients consider utilizing your talents for grooming. The result of this communication is good pet health care, and with the resulting veterinary referrals to you, your grooming business grows.

Finally, there are "ivory tower veterinarians" who will disrespect groomers and groomers' opinions of the valid pet health issues they observed. There are also "arrogant" groomers who think they know more about the pet's health than the veterinarian. When putting both sides to the test, as it relates to the health of the pet (i.e. diagnosis and treatments), the veterinarian will always



win the debate. I believe that "times are changing," and there is more mutual respect than a few years ago, but there is a long way to go.

In the next issue of *Groomer to Groomer*, we will present tangible ideas for giving the grooming industry more credibility and expanding the scope of their potential functions. We hope to present ways to allow groomers to legitimately perform more procedures on the pet and at the same time build a better bond with the veterinary community.

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The

Groomer's Roundtable

Roundtable Question:

- What's your favorite recent grooming product purchase?

Quadruped Dematting Solution (RSC #8212). Kerri Wagner, Bark Avenue Day Spa, Lafayette IN

K9 II Force Dryer (RSC #8213), WAHL stainless steel clip on attachments (RSC #8238). Nikki Elie, Backyard Bubble, South Grafton MA

Sonic Clean battery-powered toothbrush. Terri Garretson, Red Dog Spa & Boutique, Chantilly VA

Deshedding products are amazing, as well as the ones that speed up drying times. Jennifer Howard, The Pawty Palace, Katy TX

The Andis deshedding tool (RSC #8214). Melissa Longazel, The Lazy Dog Salon, Minesville PA

Nature's Specialty, Quicker Slicker (RSC #8209). Darlene Nosack, Dolly's Barking Bubbles LLC, Marysville OH

Electric table. I used a ramp system for years in my former shop, but now on my own. I purchased an electric table to serve two purposes: 1. Large dogs I cannot lift up onto my stationary table. 2. When placed in front of my raised tub it lifts large dogs to get into the tub. Being more "old school" in thoughts, this electric table has been the best purchase in a long time! *Valerie Attrill, Barking Beauties, Walnutport PA*

"Ultimate" shampoo by *Double K*. I haven't found a better all purpose shampoo yet (RSC #8215). *Tracy Spokes, Blue Ribbon Grooming, Prince George CN*

Shark Fins Shears (RSC #8216) and PlaQClnz (RSC #8217). Deena Holeman, D'tails Dog Salon, Portland OR

Groomers Helper (RSC #8218). Colleen Cogill, Animal Lovers Mobile Pet Grooming, Murfreesboro TN

The *Clipper Vac* works faster, cleaner, blades stay cool (RSC #8219). *Diane Hargrove, Puss & Pooch Mobile Grooming Spa & Salon, Blairstown NJ*

Bark to Basic shampoos (RSC #8220). *Pam Bach, Star Barks K9 Klipperly LLC, Picayune MS*

I love my new flexible slicker brush. Mats are so much easier to get out with this tool. *Alisa Starks, Home Away From Home Pet Boarding, Russellville KY*

Most recently we have brought in the *Furminator* and *Furminator* shampoos. For a long while, I resented the fact someone invented a 40 Blade on a handle and was charging 75 bucks for it. A pet supply store nearby dropped their *Furminators* to \$25.00 for the item, two *Furminator* de-shedding shampoos and a few extra *Furminator* brushes. I was so impressed with how well the "large 40 blade on a handle" worked, I kicked myself for only buying a second one at that price. It works, it works VERY well (RSC #8221). *Danielle Kemper, Phoenix AZ*

I bought a grinder that is quieter than my dremel that I used for nails. Dogs are more relaxed and less anxious when they hear it. *Michelle Emery, Groomingdale's, Sunnyvale CA*

Recently, the *Andis #6 blade* (RSC #8222). *Linda Claflin, NEPGP, Haydenville MA*

Nothing new, but love my *Clipper-Vac* and *Granddaddy* blower (RSC #8219), *Bathing Beauty* (RSC #8223), *Forever Stainless* tub (RSC #8224), *Kenchi* shears (RSC #8225)...and so on. *Nancy Secrist, Easdale: The Best Pet Care, Akron OH*

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The *Water Stripper Nozzle* by *Romani* (RSC #8226). *Sandra Seaman, Sandy's Grooming Spa, Kingston NH*

My favorite new item that I am using in my shop is the *Happy Hoodie*. It not only protects the dog's ears during HV drying, it helps dry the head and ears faster. I always leave the *Happy Hoodie* on while I cut nails. Even those dogs that were hard to clip nails on before seem more content during a nail trim with the *Happy Hoodie* on. Just an added bonus I found with this product! (RSC #8227). *Deborah Lowe, Sandig, Cleveland OH*

Just tried *E-Z Groom* products and really love them. Especially the *E-Z Groom E-Z Glide*, it works very well on de-matting dog's coats (RSC #8228). *Janice Faulkner, Fido's Fun House, Phoenix AZ*

We just invested in *Chris Christensen* brushes and are happy with them (RSC #8229). *Tamara Janowski, A Green Dog, Oak Creek WI*

Vac-Groom attachment for vacuum clipping. It works so good and so much cheaper! We even set it up for two stations for cheaper than it would be to get a single mini set (RSC #8230). *Erin McCormick, Heartstrings Dog Grooming, Blacksburg VA*

Hydraulic table, *Laube Lightening* clippers (RSC #8231), quick-dry shampoo/conditioner. *Jeri White, Rio Grande Groom & Board, Terre Haute IN*

Not so new to my shop, but I love my *Prima Bathing System* (RSC #8232). Cleans to the skin and rinses completely. *Groomers Helper* is a must (RSC #8218). I haven't been too impressed with anything lately. Can't wait for something new and exciting. I always try new products, but I definitely have my

favorites. *Amy Landis, The Hairy Hound, Richland PA*

Oster stand dryer- great (RSC #8233), Hydraulic table- love it, *Tropiclean Spa* shampoo- great (RSC #8234). *Crystal Lefler, Crystal's Many Paws, Richfield NC*

Double-sided slickers, I love them! *Christine Aleman, You Dirty Dog, Palm Desert CA*

Nature's Specialties Aloe Re-moisturizer for dry, itchy skin as an added service (RSC #8235). *Sherri Grissom, Pet Stop, Bowling Green KY*

I love *ShowSeason's Results Rinse* as it has helped my scissored coats to look fantastic and I love *ShowSeason's Detangling Spray*, it smells like cherries and goes right to the heart of the mat (RSC #8236). *Janie Semprevivo, Wag' N Wash, East Rutherford NJ*

Quadruped shampoos and supplies! Awesome products, I would recommend to any groomer! (RSC #8212). *Noela Bourgoin, Nose to Toes Grooming, Oakville CT*

Chris Christensen's ear cleaner, *Mystic Ear*. I really like it, it does a good job and I like the foaming action (RSC #8237). *Dorothy Line, 24th St Haute Dog Grooming Salon, Bakersfield CA*

Wahl Swichblade clipper. I love it with the metal combs, also from *Wahl* (RSC #8238). *Cheryl Petursson, The Purple Poodle, Brandon CN*

The *Happy Hoodie*. I absolutely love *Happy Hoodie*, it calms the dogs right down for the drying process. It works wonders (RSC #8227). *Tammy McCauley, Wag N Tail's Mobile Grooming & Spa, Woodland WA*

The *Groomer's Helper*, I really love it (RSC #8218). *Julie Lemire, K-9 Beauty Clips, Timmins CN*

SouthBark's Blueberry Facial (RSC #8239). *Shirley Bailey, Bow Wow! Barbers, Waxahachie TX*

Plaqclnz (RSC #8217) and *The Happy Hoodie* (RSC #8227). *Jim Cass, Ace Pet Grooming, Newport Beach CA*



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Basic Creative Supplies

by Dawn Omboy



Sometimes we all need a little nudge to get us started in the right direction. I have been doing “Creative Canine Coloring and Designs” into dogs’ coats for so long; it is second nature to me as well as to the groomers out there doing creative competition grooming. As I sit here on a plane returning home from a groomer gals’ weekend, it occurs to me that many would like to be able to offer little creative touches in their salons without breaking the bank or spending countless hours perfecting a single dog but have no clue where to start. By adding simple and quick little touches, you can really brighten your day and in-

crease your bottom line and client base as well.

My best advertising are the dogs walking around town sporting some simple color. It only takes one dog neatly groomed with a little extraordinary touch to pique the interest of friends, family members, and even strangers who say, “WOW! Where did you get your dog done?” And dogs WILL show off; they crave attention and get so much more of it when they have even the smallest touch of color added. Try it one time and take your dog to the park. Make sure to have plenty of your business cards in pocket to hand out. You will be a crowd pleaser and even stop traffic.

Continued on page 39

Below is a suggested list of some things you should have on hand in your creative box of tricks.

- Temporary colors: non-toxic artist chalk for small details, blow pens, Magic Color (Pet Society)
- Semi-permanent dyes: Queen of Color (Showseason), Manic Panic
- Longer lasting dyes: Kiss Express, Avatar (best dye for smooth or hard-to-color coats)
- Plenty of tint brushes, toothbrushes, spray bottles, and an assortment of small paintbrushes
- Rubber gloves
- Foil
- Assortment of stencils
- Glitter
- Extra towels
- Designated loop for coloring dogs
- Cholesterol cream (to work as a barrier that will protect hair that will remain uncolored)
- Stock up on accessories such as crimp beads, feathers, and hair extensions in a variety of colors.
- Extensions are a great way to add color without commitment.



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To help get you started, I would like to offer a little advice on getting supplies for the job. You should have a proper stock of dyes, tint brushes, and creative accessories on hand, which you will need for the services you want to offer to your clients. Also, know approximately how long it will take you to perform the service. When you first begin, it will naturally take longer, but as you become more comfortable working with the different products, you will be able to apply color in a very short amount of time with

less worry.

Cover the tabletop with a towel. Dogs should never be left unattended or unsupervised on a grooming table. I have an extra grooming table set to the side of my regular table, on which dogs that are processing color can sit, looped for their own safety with a designated loop. Usually there is someone to talk to the pet during this time and prevent it from shaking the color all over itself and the walls. I like the cable loops for this, because they clean up easily, do not absorb color, and can be

used on other pets without worry of "ring around the collar"! Another little trick when coloring ears would be to wrap the ears with foil after applying color and then secure with a Happy Hoodie (*Reader Service Card #8243*). This will prevent the foil from becoming a projectile should the dog decide to shake.

Instructional DVDs are available to help you get started and can be found at the Barkleigh store or on my website www.klippers.com. Supplies can be found at www.creativegrooming.com

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Back Problems

Getting Down to BUSINESS
BY TERI DiMARINO



As I lie face down on the acupuncturist's table feeling the tiny, thread-like needles being strategically placed in areas of my back, I wonder if I will ever be able to live without the nearly constant reminder that I have back issues. Probably not! I am, after all, a pet stylist, and this ailment seems to "come with the territory." Or so I thought. Our chosen occupation puts us all right in the crosshairs of potential back problems. Just the sheer basics of the job – standing, lifting, twisting, and struggling – set the stage for us.

Back problems can be as minor as a slight twinge in the neck and a dull ache in the shoulders, or it can manifest itself as a searing pain starting in the lower back, traveling through the groin and down the leg or legs. It can be caused by one wrong twist while lifting a dog or by sitting for hours at a computer desk. It can happen in one solitary episode, never to occur again, or it can plague a person for a few days or a lifetime, turning valuable time into slow, painful hours. It robs its victims of sleep and can incapacitate the strongest person. It can cut a professional pet stylist's career short.

Eighty percent of Americans will complain about back issues at one point in their lives or another, so we are definitely not alone. Then why do we ignore the issue

Continued on next page



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Why do we choose to disregard safety procedures that take the strain off of us?

and continue on when we begin having problems? Why do we choose to disregard safety procedures that take the strain off of us? There is a normal, natural degeneration of the spinal discs as we age, but pushing the envelope, as it were, can hasten this natural progression, causing us to have problems earlier in life.

Average groomers pride themselves in their safe handling techniques, but how many times have you found yourself lifting a larger-sized dog into a tub or onto a table with little or no assistance? How often has a dog made a sudden move, and in an effort to keep the pet safe, we make a move that twists something? Many groomers sacrifice their own well-being for the safety of the pet.

Back problems can range from something as simple as a pulled muscle to a slipped disc, and whatever the specific problem, they all take their toll on our activity level. The back is an intricate structure of bones, muscles, discs, tendons, and other tissues that extend from the neck to the pelvis. All of the components work together to provide structural support and mobility. Injuries can result from sports activities, simple housework, such as gardening or home cleaning, or a sudden trauma such as a car accident. In the case of pet groomers, lifting larger animals, controlling squirmy pets, and constant strain are enough to bring even the strongest groomers to their knees. While the lower back is the most com-

mon site of back injuries and back pain, the middle and upper back are no strangers to injury. In fact, that tugging ache down the side of your neck is probably tied to a back issue.

Common Problems

Once again, here is my disclaimer: I am a pet groomer, NOT a doctor. Your health care professional should ALWAYS be your first source of information. These are just some simple examples of how extensive back problems are in our industry and some suggestions for the prevention of further injuries.

What Happened?

Injuries can be muscular or spinal, usually radiating from spinal structures like the spinal joints, discs, and other soft tissues. It can relate to a single muscle or a group of muscles and can be caused by a single injury or straining over time. Poor posture can fall into this category of chronic strain.

Muscle injuries are usually treated successfully with stretching and strengthening exercises as well

Continued on next page

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as changing some posture and work habits. On the other hand, spinal injury treatment is individualized, depending on the location and severity of the injury and pain level.

We have heard about herniated or bulging discs. These can be the result of a traumatic injury or progressive straining and can cause extreme pain. Simply stated, the discs in our back are like pillows that separate each vertebra. When one of these pillows has a break or tear, it causes the inner lubricating material to leak out and enter the spinal canal, where it can compress nerve roots or the spinal column, causing nerve irritation, pain, and numbness. Sometimes a disc will bulge instead of break, but this can also cause serious pain.

Sciatica is the catchall term for one of the most common complaints and is caused by irritation or compression of nerves of the lower five vertebrae. Pain, weakness, and/or numbness can shoot through the buttocks and down the back of one's leg or legs down to the foot. The severity of the condition is dependent on the location and amount of nerve irritation. These are usually treated with physical therapy and/or anti-inflammatory drugs to help relieve the pressure and pain, but sometimes surgery is needed to relieve the pressure on the nerves.

Heaven forbid if you've ever had a car accident and experienced whiplash. This is a good example

of an injury that can cause chronic pain, requiring ongoing care and treatment. Sadly, the normal aging process brings an array of progressive problems like arthritis, disc degeneration, spinal stenosis, and osteoporosis, to name only a few. Taking care of ourselves is paramount in easing the onset of some of these conditions.

How Do I Find Out What's Wrong?

Obviously, pain in the back is your first clue that something is wrong. If you are sitting or lying still, you may feel what can be likened to an electrical shock through the muscles. These are spasms and seem to come in waves with little or no initiation. Spasms are usually the result of an injury, and we can usually pinpoint when and how it happened.

Your doctor may choose to perform some X-rays of the affected area. More serious cases may require an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or CT (computed tomography) scan. Both of these are non-invasive tools that are used to evaluate spinal abnormalities and are

very useful in diagnosing herniated discs, spinal stenosis, and other injuries. Not all back and neck pain results in spasms. Nagging stiffness and a dull, constant ache are very common.

What Are the Most Common Treatments?

Typical treatment of back pain usually begins with the administration of an anti-inflammatory drug such as Motrin or Aleve. These OTC drugs are usually pretty good at bringing down swelling and relieving pain, but your doctor may recommend prescription-strength medications. Some of these medications can, however, cause problems for people with sensitive stomachs, and long-term use should be monitored by a doctor. One thing I will say is that if you are told to take these medications a certain number of times a day, take them religiously! You may not get the full benefit of the drugs if they are dosed erratically and do not have an opportunity to do their job.

Ice or heat? It really depends on the injury and how soon after you

Continued on page 44

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begin treatment. Experts agree that ice is the first line of defense for the first 48 to 72 hours after an injury. The cold causes the blood vessels in the injured area to constrict, therefore avoiding excessive inflammation. Decreasing inflammation will help control the pain. After the first few days, heat can be applied as a “feel good” treatment to relax the muscles. Ice should always be

the “first” aid and should be applied after activity – never before. On the other hand, heat effectively relaxes the muscles when applied before activity and not immediately after.

Ice bags can be awkward, and while frozen bags of vegetables are usually a good substitute, you can make your own super-cold ice bags by mixing about three parts water to one part rubbing alcohol and

double-bagging it in zip-top plastic bags. Remove as much air as possible before sealing the bag. Also, the filled bags should be about one inch thick when lying flat on a table. These will freeze to a slushy consistency and conform comfortably to any area of the body. Just a word of warning: these are VERY cold and should not be placed directly on the skin, as you may risk frostbite. Place a towel between your skin and the ice pack to protect the skin. I keep a couple of these in the freezer at all times.

Warm compresses can be kept in zip-top bags and microwaved to the desired temperature. Once again, do not heat so much as to injure the skin. In either case, ice or heat should not be applied for more than 20 minutes at a time.

Physical therapy and exercise are important parts of a successful recovery. While the pain may make a person not want to move or even get out of bed, some sort of supervised stretching or exercise should be performed to keep injuries from getting worse and to keep the surrounding muscular structures healthy. Stretching is good exercise and is always a good way to start a day of busy grooming. Occasional stretch breaks during the day can be a welcome relief to a tired, over-worked body and can help prevent injuries.

Many groomers are on a first-name basis with their chiropractors. Personally, I am a huge fan of chiropractic medicine. Coupled with massage therapy, chiropractic care can help keep our “wheels aligned” and our spines healthy. Chiropractors work on more than just spinal problems. They can help with carpal tunnel syndrome, shoulder and elbow problems, and neck pain. Massage therapy is more than just a “feel good” experience. Good therapeutic massage can help relieve the tightness of muscles and tissues

Continued on next page

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surrounding damaged spinal areas, hastening recovery and offering some relief. A good therapeutic massage also helps the chiropractor get a better “adjustment” of the spine. Regular visits to a chiropractor can help keep your body in balance and help prevent further injury. On the other side of the coin, a good chiropractor will not adjust a person unless they are fairly certain they can help without causing further harm.

Acupuncture and acupressure, while considered alternative treatments in the USA, are therapeutic mainstays in many parts of the world. I have been a fan of acupuncture for years and credit it in helping to relieve a lot of my chronic pain issues. It is my personal feeling, based on extensive experience, that acupuncture is a commitment. One or two visits will not yield the results you may see with multiple treatments, so if you decide to try it, stick with it and give it a good chance.

Surgery is generally the treatment of last resort. It is usually considered after other treatments, such as epidurals, have rendered no relief. Surgical options should always be discussed in depth with your doctor. If there is ever any doubt, second opinions should be sought. Spinal surgery has advanced tremendously over the years, and many procedures that once resulted in long recovery times are now performed on an outpatient

Ergonomics in the workplace should be a primary concern.

basis, depending on the severity of the problem. Surgery doesn't always mean that a person's back problems can be eliminated. Like anything else, there are no guarantees. If a groomer goes back to his or her old habits, rest assured they will be headed for more trouble down the road.

Prevention

Once again, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. There's nothing worse than being out of work because of a simple, stupid move. Let's start with posture. Sitting or standing straight without slouching is paramount. While I have always had good standing posture, I find myself slouching over my computer keyboard and have to remind myself to sit up straight. After sitting for too long, my middle and lower back begin to ache, and I have to get up, stretch, and move around.

Ergonomics in the workplace should be a primary concern. Hydraulic tables should be standard equipment in the salon. While

many groomers still continue to use stationary tables, hydraulic tables offer a margin of safety that cannot be ignored. Tables should allow the groomer to work without bending or stretching excessively. The height at which you set the table will depend on the size of the dog. You do not want to have your arms raised too high over the pet, and you do not want to be bending at the waist over a dog.

The same applies to tubs. Waist-high tubs keep us from bending over the animals while bathing. I have known several salons that do a lot of larger dogs and installed lower tubs to accommodate them. While a lower tub may seem like a good idea, all of these salons eventually took them out, because they made the groomers bend over the tub at an awkward angle, causing bad strain on their backs. Save your money and put in a good, waist-high tub. While you're at it, look into tubs that have ramps installed. If you do not have a tub with a built-in ramp, look into the purchase of a separate ramp.

Continued on page 46

READER SERVICE CARD #8293

Hours of standing at a grooming table can take a toll on your back, shoulders and arms.

If you continually bathe large and small dogs, hydraulic tubs are available through some suppliers. DO NOT be tempted to pick up oversized animals without help. This is a proving ground for groomers' back injuries and possible injury to the pet. Many salons have a weight limit of about 35 to 40 pounds, and lifting an animal larger than that by yourself can result in injury. Lift with your legs and not with your back! Please be careful, as this is the single most common source of injury in our industry.

Hours of standing at a grooming table can take a toll on your back, shoulders, and arms. While there are some stylists who can groom sitting down, I am not one of them. Most groomers I know work standing up, and this can become stressful. Resting a foot on a small box (about eight to ten inches high) under your grooming table, switching feet occasionally, helps to take stress off your back and legs.

Standing on hard flooring can be a real killer. You see hairdressers standing on padded mats. Why not

us? The purchase of a "comfort mat" (as some are called), can take stress off of our feet, legs, and back. Well-fitting shoes with good arch support will add to your comfort and stability, helping to prevent strain and injury.

Neck pain is another common complaint in our industry. Hairdressers have the same problems, as they are raising their arms to scissor, comb, and curl. Have you ever noticed that right-handed groomers have more problems with the left side of their necks while lefties are bothered by the right side of their necks? Take a look at the mechanics of grooming. Righties will naturally use their right hands for their equipment, usually using a lighter touch with their shears, delicately handling their clippers, and keeping the blades lightly on the pet's skin. On the other hand (literally), they use the left hand to

Continued on page 48

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hold and control the pet they are grooming. This is usually tensed with a firm, but gentle, hold while keeping the animal still. This seems to put stress on the holding arm's side, and it radiates up our necks into the back of our skulls. Stretching and massage, along with ice, heat, and anti-inflammatory drugs, can usually help alleviate much of the pain. Once again, many groomers with this problem swear by their

chiropractors.

Evaluate your equipment. Older shears may be working against you by forcing you to strain your hand to get the job done. Heavier clippers should be replaced with one of the newer, lighter-weight models in an effort to lessen strain. Every little thing helps!

Take breaks. It's good for you and the animals. Build it into your grooming time. I know it's difficult

for the busy salon, but if you don't take a break in your day, you may be forced to down the road. Some back injuries may be prevented by maintaining a healthy weight, lifting objects with your legs, and using lower-back support when you sit or stand for long periods.

Exercise! We all hate this word, but the simple truth is that a strong body is less likely to become injured. Groomers historically have extremely good upper body strength for obvious reasons, but we stand (or sit) at our tables or tubs all day long with little to no lower body or back exercise. Look into putting some back-strengthening exercises into your daily routine. Once again, stretching is very important. I never get out of bed in the morning without going through my stretching routine.

Later on in their careers, many groomers are forced into taking only small pets for grooming. I am one of them, and while I really miss grooming large dogs, I just can't do it anymore. There comes a time in our careers when we just have to say "enough" and take care of ourselves, leaving the "big kids" to the younger groomers. Now go take a stretch break, book a massage for yourself, and ask for help putting that Bouvier into the tub.

An industry veteran, Teri has owned and operated successful salons and mobiles in Florida and California. A winning grooming contest competitor, Teri was a member of three GroomTeam USA Gold Medal teams. A multi Cardinal Crystal Award winner, Teri is a popular speaker, judge at seminars and trade shows across the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Korea and Australia.

Teri has written for all the industry publications calling Barkleigh Productions home in the position of Industry Consultant and author for Groomer To Groomer magazine.

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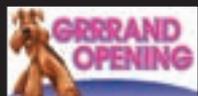


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CLIPPER Maintenance



By Chris Pawlosky,
National Training Manager for Jarden Animal Solutions
Makers of Oster Professional Products

Here are some basic clipper and blade care tips, which will extend the life of your equipment.

After you plug the *Oster A5® Clipper* into your wall outlet, turn your switch on. The switch is near the cord at the bottom of the A5 clipper. How you use your switch depends on the clipper model you use. Flip your switch, and you are ready to clip. Most *A5® Clippers* come with a size ten blade. There are many blade sizes that can be purchased to fit the *A5® Clipper*, leaving the coat from 1/125 to 1/2 inch of coat. *Oster*

also manufactures universal comb attachments to be placed over *Oster* blades, size #10 to #50, to leave even more coat than any *A5®* blade can. Combs are best used on clean, mat-free coats but can clip through a matted, dirty coat if needed.

Notice newer housing of *Oster A5 Clippers*.

When operating *Oster A5®* clippers and blades, keep the blade parallel to the body, and never cut into a fold of skin. Also try to follow the direction the hair lays and grows for a smoother

finish. Clipping in the direction of the coat growth is also a safer process. Anytime you can remove undercoat before clipping, you will produce a smoother finish faster.

Blade care is the same for any clipper blade. Start with blade wash, which is a solvent used to remove all dirt and hair from blade surfaces. Use a container that can withstand the chemicals. I prefer a stainless steel dish for single applications or a glass jar with a sealable lid, so I can reuse the blade wash.

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I first remove excess dirt and hair with a bristle brush, which is similar to a toothbrush. Submerge only the blade while the clipper is running. Do this for a few seconds. Next, lift the blade and clipper out of the blade wash and allow the wash to drip while it is still running.



Place your thumb on the blade latch release and push in. Remove the blade from the latch, and place it on a newspaper or paper towel to absorb the excess oil. Wipe off



any liquid that may have splashed onto the clipper. Place a drop or two of Oster® oil on both rails. Next, place a drop or two of oil on the top



cutting rail of the blade as shown. Observing the amount of rail thickness remaining will indicate how much blade life you have left. When an A5 blade's rail is flush with the back side of the blade surface, it is no longer able to be sharpened.

After removing the blade for cleaning, brush off excess hair from around the hinge assembly.



Before you begin cleaning the inside of the clipper, remember to unplug the clipper cord from the wall. Remove the screws from the faceplate using a Phillips-head screwdriver. Once the screws are loosened, carefully remove the faceplate from the clipper front. Observe the new faceplate. The large hole in the plate is used to stabilize the gear post. Grease does come out of the face plate. Removing the face plate can be messy, so have your paper towels and old newspaper ready.

Observe the color of the grease in the gear chamber. When it starts





to look black, I like to use a Q-tip to remove it. Replace it with new grease. Check the lever. When it is worn, it is narrower at top than when it was new. Using the clipper with a worn lever affects your cutting performance. Your cutting blade does not get pushed to achieve the entire cutting stroke. To remove the lever, simply wiggle it and lift up. The link rarely needs to be replaced. However, it can crack, so be sure to check it. The eccentric can become worn. It is easily replaced.



I place a small amount of grease in the gear post. After I am done filling the gear chamber with grease, I replace the two plates and the screws.

Next, we will move to the bottom of the clipper. Once removed, the vent cover can be brushed or rinsed



off. Replace it when it is clean and dry. There is a place for your fingernail or screwdriver to fit, so you can pry the vent cover off. This cover prevents freshly cut hair from being sucked into the clipper motor while clipping. Once removed, the vent cover can be brushed off or rinsed



off. Replace it when it is clean and dry. Remove the screw from the bottom of the clipper. The bottom cap comes off easily.

Once it is apart, check and see if you have hair built up. If you do, use a vacuum to remove it. Brushing it will allow some hair to get inside the clipper. This will degrade the performance over time.

The last thing I do is check the carbon brushes in the clipper. Using a flat-headed screwdriver, remove



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the cap that covers the brush carefully. The brushes are on springs, so be careful not to allow the cap to pop off. You can use tweezers or hemostats to remove the smaller metal cap inside, which holds the spring and brush in place. Again, be careful; the spring can cause this part to jump from the clipper. Here are the three parts held under the casing cap: the carbon brush at the top, the metal cap that holds the

spring and brush in place, and the plastic cover that is placed between the metal cap and housing cap. This brush is in good shape. When the brush is worn, you will hear your clipper running louder and getting hotter. When you take the carbon brush out, look for the O on the brush. If you are worn into that, you may want to replace it. When you replace the brush, make sure the concave edge is placed correctly over the armature. The brush will only fit one way, so do not force it in. If it doesn't fit, then rotate the brush a quarter turn.

After replacing all the parts, plug the clipper in and turn it on. In just a moment you should hear the clipper running smoothly. I recommend that the blades be done weekly and the clipper cleaning bi-weekly to monthly, depending on how much they are used. Make sure the blades are oiled well when placing them in storage. Look for all

our new clippers coming soon from *Jarden Animal Solutions*.

When you are cleaning your blades, also observe the cutter and comb placement. The cutter should be situated evenly on the rails, and the cutter should never be visible above the comb edge.

Christina is a Certified Master Groomer (NDGAA), Professional Handler, Breeder, Pet Store and Grooming Shop owner since 1985. She works for Jarden Consumer Solutions/ Manufacturer of Oster Professional Products, as their National Training Manager in the pet division. Chris has won the Cardinal Crystal Achievement Awards for Groomer of the Year, Congeniality and Judge of the Year. After winning the Oster International Invitational Tournament of Champions in 1995, she retired from competitive grooming.

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Deanise Stoops

by Kathy Hosler

“Grooming shows have certainly come a long way in the 26 years that I’ve been a groomer,” said an enthusiastic Deanise Stoops. “Going to shows like the *Northwest Grooming Show* in Tacoma, Washington is how a lot of us groomers get our education.”

“I have been grooming since I was 14 years old,” said Deanise, owner of *PurrrScision Grooming* in beautiful Sunset Beach, California. “I learned to groom by apprenticing and being mentored. I also attended *Nash Academy* a couple of times to get advanced training.”

Deanise added with a hearty chuckle, “I got most of my education through the ‘School of Hard Knocks’ – and by using the grooming competition ring as what I like to call the ‘crash course college class.’ That’s how you improve yourself. You work your way up from entry level, to intermediate, to the expert level by going and competing, challenging yourself, and asking the judges for critiques.”

Deanise started competing in the breed ring, but for the last 10 years, she has been doing creative grooming as well. “When I do creative, I always want the dog to have balance, symmetry, and a beautiful profile,” said Deanise. “I want the dog to look groomed – even if it’s covered with flowers or butterflies.”

Deanise competed in the Creative Grooming Competition at the *Northwest Grooming Show* with a dog that she had never groomed before. In fact, she had never even seen him. “Since I am in California and the show was in Washington, I was looking for a local Washington dog to use



Deanise Stoops wins second place at Northwest Grooming show in Barkleigh Creative Grooming Contest with her entry entitled “Digging in the Garden”.

in the contest,” said Deanise. “Carol Hoover, the groomer who would take third place in the Creative Competition, made the arrangements to provide a dog for me. The only thing I knew about the dog was that it was a white Standard Poodle. I didn’t know what he looked like or how much hair he had until the night before the contest.”

That night, Deanise looked the Poodle over and planned out her groom. During the competition, what started out as a beautiful, but plain, white Poodle was transformed into a flower garden complete with a fuzzy purple caterpillar and a beautiful multi-colored butterfly nestled among vibrant flowers and vines. Deanise took second place in the competition with her colorful entry.

Earlier in the year, Deanise had a spectacular win at *Groom & Kennel Expo* in Pasadena, California. She took first place in the Level 3 Poodle Class with a Miniature Poodle that she had adopted through a rescue group. “It was awesome – a great feeling!” Deanise bubbled. “As a competitor for many years, it is always so exciting to win.”

“I still get a lot out of all the

shows I attend,” said an upbeat Deanise. “And now I have an opportunity to give back. At the *Northwest Grooming Show* I was also a speaker. I gave a seminar on Bichons. Along with all the educational information I share, I like to put humor in my presentations. I have fun with the crowd and love to entertain them.” Deanise recalled, “*The Northwest Show* had a great turnout. There was a lot of positive energy in that fun crowd.”

“It’s important for groomers to attend shows and get continuing education. I know how it feels, especially when you are a beginner. You need your peers; you need that rapport with people. You’ve got to make contacts and start networking.

“Shows like the *Northwest Grooming Show* are a great place for people to get that foundation. It’s a big, big, awesome opportunity,” emphasized Deanise. “Even if you don’t live near each other, with the internet it’s easy to keep in touch.”

Without a doubt, grooming shows have come a long way. And with groomers like Deanise Stoops supporting them and sharing their years of experience and knowledge, the best is yet to come.

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Tropiclean's new *Oxy-Med* line of shampoos, sprays and wipes was developed to provide additional soothing aid with oatmeal and Vitamin E extracts. The *Oxy-Med* medicated care line is gentle enough for daily use while strong enough to clean all the way to the pores, lifting away dirt. Routine bathing with *Oxy-Med* leaves the skin and coat soft, shiny and looking great. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8240.

PET WIPES



Davis Manufacturing has released new *Pet Wipes*. The wipes make cleaning little messes easier than ever for groomers and veterinarians. The plastic dispensing canister holds

160 wipes that have been pre-moistened with a gentle cleanser. A slight tug with one hand releases one 6" x 7" wipe. The wipes are perfect for cleaning pet faces, ears, anal areas and paws between baths, removing loose hairs and allergy-causing dander and cleaning accidents. A quantity discount is given on orders of four and more canisters. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8144.

QUADRUPED SKUNK DEODORIZER & ODOR ELIMINATOR SPRAY



Quadruped's new *Skunk Deodorizer & Odor Eliminator Spray* eliminates skunk, pet and other offensive odors while leaving a clean fresh scent. The spray can be used to prevent bringing

skunk odors indoors by spraying the pet before bringing onto premises. The product is safe for puppies and kittens. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8201.

ULTRA CONDITIONING FACE & BODY SCRUB



Epi-Pet announces the 100% natural *Ultra Conditioning Face & Body*

Scrub. The product hydrates both the skin and hair coat while conditioning the skin and hair coat, softens the skin, increases elasticity of the skin and coat as well as calms and soothes the skin. The *Epi-Pet Ultra Conditioning Face & Body Scrub* is an exfoliating treatment that helps to soften the skin and restore a healthy glow. It can be used as both a facial scrub and a body scrub. Scrubs are applied in a thin layer to the skin (like giving a massage) and left on for two to five minutes. The slightly grainy texture will help remove dead skin cells, while hydrating and leaving behind healthy glowing skin and coat. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8202.

SPA IN A SPONGE FOR DOGS



Spa in a Sponge for Dogs is proudly made in the USA with patented infusion technology. *Spa in a Sponge for Dogs* is easy to use with pH shampoo and built in conditioner all in one. The product contains tea tree oil to help prevent hot spots and irritation and Aloe for healthier skin. *Spa in a Sponge for Dogs* is convenient, easy to hold and use and is good for 6+ baths (depending on the size of your dog). For more information, request Reader Service Card #8203.

CERTIFECT

Merial, the makers of flea and tick control product *Frontline Plus* have intro-



duced *Certifect*, an advanced topical solution that provides proven flea protection with added tick-killing power. *Certifect* kills ticks in 18 hours, whereas the current standard for tick-killing efficacy is 24-48 hours. It is also the only topical product that detaches ticks. Just like *Frontline Plus*, *Certifect* destroys the flea life cycle, giving dog owners, with the help of their veterinarians, a new solution in the fight against these pests. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8204.

NEON PAWDICURE POLISH PENS



Warren London has just released a neon collection for their dog nail polish line. Warren London has developed a patented water based nail polish pen that is safe for dogs. The Pawdicure Polish Pen dries in under a minute, is so easy to apply and can be removed with a non-acetone polish remover. Neon Pawdicure Polish Pens come in four colors; Smooch The Pooch Purple, Walk in the Park Green, Paw-ty In Pink, and Orange You Glad I'm Neon. Warren London also sells a white polish pen to use as a base layer for dogs that have dark nails so that the colored pen will show much better. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8205.

BIO-GROOM SPRAY SET



For extra hold and texture, Bio-Groom Spray Set is a quick drying formula that will hold the coat without making it feel stiff or sticky. The hold will even last during high humidity. Spray Set gives luster and smoothness to the coat, controls static and

prevents the loss of natural moisture from the hair.

Spray Set does not contain lacquer and will not damage hair. It is non-irritating, will not flake and washes out easily. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8246.

FURIZZY DOG GROOMING TOOL



The FurIzzy is a unique dog grooming, massage and scratching tool, assisting in grooming and the removal of unwanted dog hair. The product is easy to use and enjoyable for pets.

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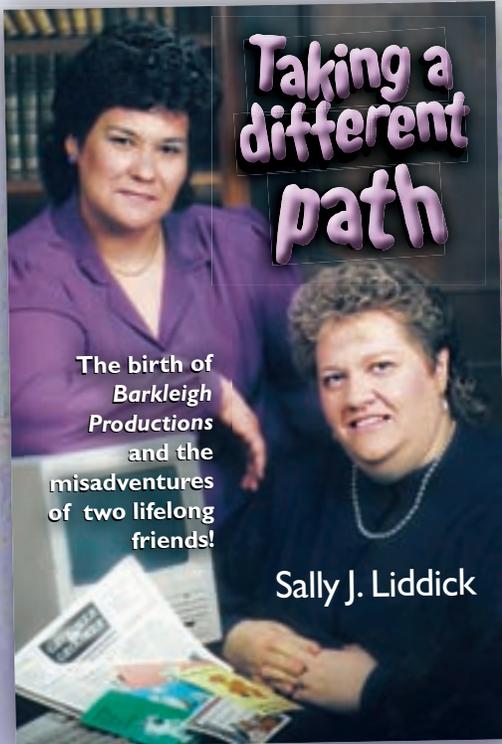
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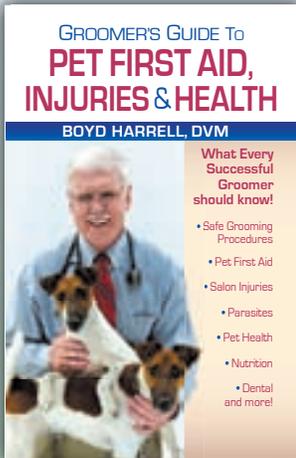
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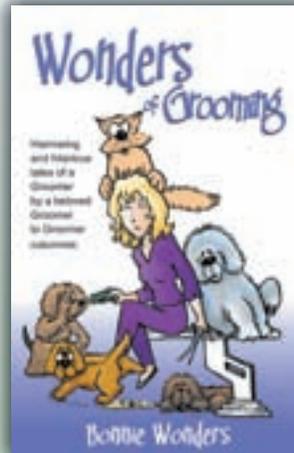
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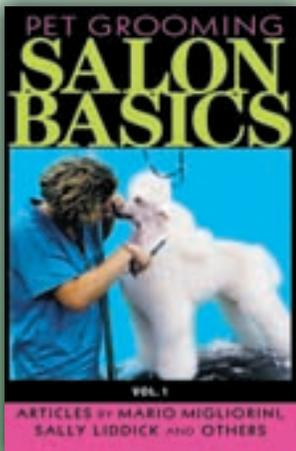
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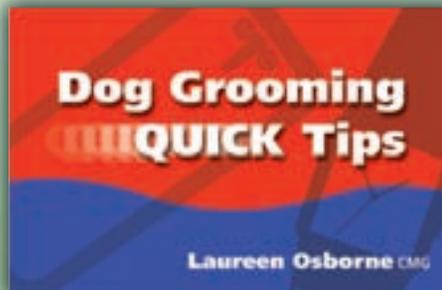
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DOG GROOMING QUICK TIPS By Laureen Osborne, CMG

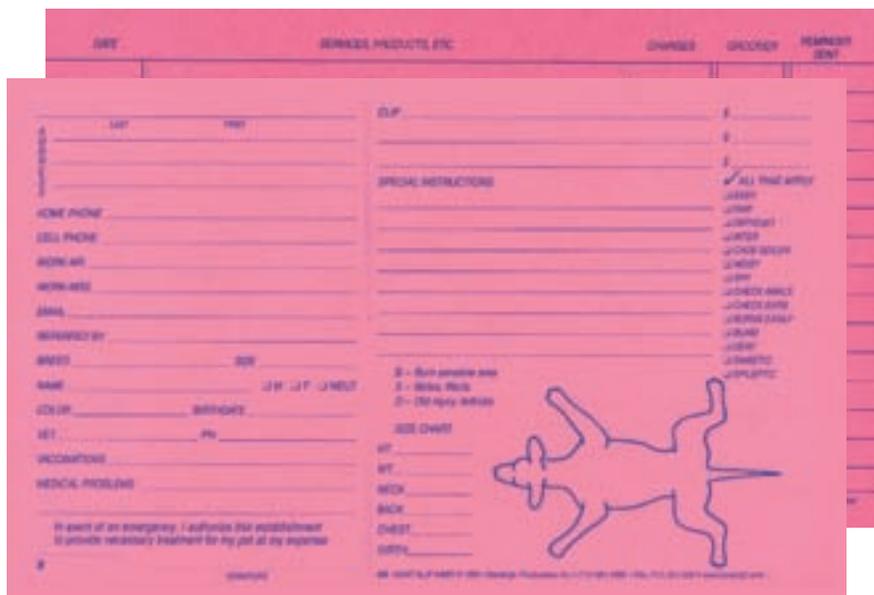
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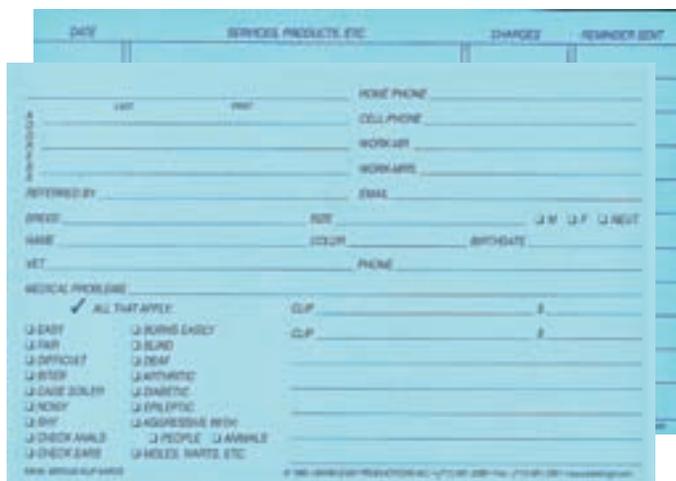
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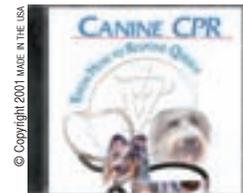
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