

THE DIFFERENT TYPE OF COATS IN DOGS:

There are over 400 breeds of dogs. Between them, there are literally dozens of coat types.

Coat Length

Long, medium and short. For example, both Old English sheep dogs and Afghans have long coats; however, the two breeds could not have grooming requirements that are more different. Even short-coated breeds can have different grooming requirements. The Labrador retriever and Miniature Pinscher are both shorthaired, but the first has a dense and oily coat, while the second coat is hard and close lying to the skin. Some dogs have coats between these two extremes. The Papillon, with its wavy coat and attractive frills on its ears, tail, and ruff, has a medium-length coat.

Hair Type

There are three types of hair types: straight, wire, and curly. Straight coats are perhaps the most familiar. The short-coated Whippet and the long-coated Rough Collie both have straight outer "guard hair" for their coats. Most of the Terrier's breeds have "wire" coats. The outer guard hairs that are straight in other breeds are harsh and kinked. Some sporting breeds to retrieve game from the water have curly oily coats. They can be soft or harsh, depending on the breed.

Coat Density

Coats are either single or double in density. Double coats consist of outer guard hairs, with an inner layer of shorter, finer coat called undercoat. This undercoat can be fine or downy, thick or thin. Dogs with single coats have the outer guard hairs, but lack the inner layer of undercoat. Most breeds with single coats also have long hair. Many single-coated dogs, like the Maltese, were developed to be decorative, rather than functional. Dogs from warm climates, like the Afghan hound also have single coats.

Grooming for Coat Type

Different coat types will have different grooming requirements briefly described below.

Short Coats: short straight coats are of course the easiest to care for, requiring occasional grooming with a slicker brush or a soft brush. However, those short-coated breeds with a dense undercoat will also require that undercoat to be groomed out on occasion. Using a brush known as a shedding rake like [Untangle Shedding Rake](#) to rid the dog from dead hair in the undercoat will prevent mats from forming. If mats form underneath the guard hairs and remain for any length of time, sores and hair loss, known as "hot spots" can occur. Some dogs, such as Alaskan Malamutes and German Shepherds, have such thick undercoats that they require frequent, if not daily, grooming to prevent these mats from forming in sensitive areas. Removing this dead undercoat will also cut down on the dog shedding his coat all over your house.

Wire Coats: wire-coated dogs have unique grooming needs. Each different breed of Terriers will have a little different trim on the head and body, but most will have a process called "stripping" which is done by hand or the aid of a stripping knife a couple times a year. Dead guard hairs are plucked for the dog's coat. Their hairs are loose and about to drop out so removing them does not cause the dog pain. This allows fresh new coat to grow in, along with preventing a lot of excess shedding.

Long Coats; long coats require a lot of attention. Their coats must be groomed several times a week, if not daily, to ensure that they remain free of tangles and mats. Bathing once a week and thoroughly brushing and combing through the dogs coat will help to keep the matting under control. Long coated dogs with double coats require the same attention as double-coated shorthaired dogs.

Single-coated long coated dogs have special grooming needs. Dogs with these kinds of coats, such as Afghan hounds and Maltese, should never be groomed when their coats are dry. Spray the coat first with water or conditioner such as [Summerwinds Fine L Shine Cream Rinse](#) or [Summerwinds Stat A Way Spray](#) before brushing or combing to prevent the coat from breakage. Matting in Single-coated breeds is a big problem and in order to keep the coats mat free they must be monitored frequently to prevent this from happening.

Unique Coats

Corded Coats; are breeds that have curly hair and are allowed to mat forming “cords”, similar to dreadlocks. The "cords" that form this kind of coat are specialized mats. They create a weather-resistant shield in herding and some hunting breeds. Dogs with corded coats require baths to keep their coats clean and order free. Corded coats take hours to dry following each bath.

Hairless Breeds; have no coats. The American Hairless terrier and the Chinese Crested dogs are examples of hairless dogs. Their skin must be maintained, just as other dogs' coats are groomed. They need regular baths and moisturizer and sunscreen must be applied for their skin.