

Show Presentation & Maintenance Grooming of an Alaskan Malamute

My grooming regime is as follows:- For general maintenance, (and there is a lot of that in my kennels with the Stage 5 water restrictions in the Yass area,) we like to bath our dogs on a regular basis using a gentle type shampoo, preferably soap free. I do use a hydro bath and I use only cold water in summer and winter, this brings up the shine in their coats like nothing else can. I will always apply a leave in conditioner on my maintenance baths, although the Malamutes need to have a course guard coat they also need to have moisture fed into their coats to keep them in good condition. I start off by back brushing my dogs with a long tooth pin brush, to loosen up and separate all the hair and to allow the shampoo to penetrate into that thick dense coat they have. This is an important part of grooming this type of coat. Then, into the cold water hydro bath I use a quality soap free shampoo straight into the hydro bath, about that of a 50c piece. I finish with a through rinse with fresh water. I dilute my leave in conditioner about 2 cm into a spray bottle and mix with warm water and spray all over the dog and back brushing into the coat. This keeps my coats in great condition in-between shows and is left in till the following bath. I am careful to use a products that does not change my dog coat texture and is also silicone free to avoid any build up. I then place my dog on a table and blow dry the conditioner into the coat allowing it to work at feeding my dogs coats till their next bath, be it for a show or just maintenance.

To get ready for a show, I trim nails and back brush the coat with a long toothed pin brush to loosen up and separate the hair. Much the same as my maintenance washes. Then, summer or winter the malamutes go into a cold hydro bath, remember the cold water really brings up the shine like nothing else can. I use my whitening shampoo in the same manner as I do for my maintenance baths, straight into the hydro bath, about that of a 50c piece. I wash my dogs starting on the white legs, pants, tail head and underbelly and finish with the body. This gives a bit more time for the shampoo to sit on the whites and brighten them up. This is done more so for show day preparation as I want them to look their absolute best. I rinse with fresh tap water thoroughly, all quality whitening shampoos do need to be rinsed thoroughly. My shampoo gives me the best results on whites and the guard hairs glisten without drying the coat a out or stripping natural oils out of it. I always get comments on how "white" my dogs are. After my bathing routine I allow the dog to shake off excess water then up on the grooming table. I towel them off and spray them with a quality coat spray to make my brushing easier and to avoid static and most of all I do not want a product to soften my dogs coats so I choose carefully, I then blow drying. While blow drying I also back brush and comb at the same time to get the best volume I can out of my dogs coats.

After blow drying completely dry and backcombing along the way, I then use a gel to hold their coats in place and to help give me a little more fullness if needed in certain places, like the neck, cheeks, chest, shoulders, down the topline, sides, rear, pants and tail. I then back brush the product and blow dry again which does not take much time at all. You will not feel a quality gel in the dogs coat and you certainly do not want one that changes the texture you want one that just gives volume and a wonderful sheen. On show day, I use my Gel to hold Chalk into the legs and give the dogs a quick spray of watered down Gel in a spray bottle and back brush for show preparation.

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Testimonial :- Over the past 15 years I have tried just about every shampoo and product available on the market to make my Malamutes look their best, for years I would only use an imported product from the USA (Jardine's Secret) for my show bath preparation believing it was the best for whitening and keeping the correct texture of the Alaskan Malamute's coarse guard coat.

Until a few years ago when I was introduced to Animal House products.

I will openly admit that I was very skeptical at first, I started with the Mighty White N Brite shampoo..... I thought the outstanding results I got were just beginners luck, I continued to use the product still a little skeptical and waiting for the crash to happen, but the excellent results continued and no crash and burn happened at all.

Now I am fully converted to the Animal House products along with Tenda-Care shampoo for maintenance baths, Leave In Lustre for my leave in conditioning treatment, Volhold gel for hold and volume and Coat Magic for all my brushing and show day preparation.

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THE SIBERIAN COAT AND TRIMMING

The Standard describes the Siberian Husky Coat as follows:

The coat of the Siberian Husky is double and medium in length, giving a well-furred appearance, but is never so long as to obscure the clean-cut outline of the dog. The undercoat is soft and dense and of sufficient length to support the outer coat. The guard hairs of the outer coat are straight and somewhat smooth lying, never harsh nor standing straight off from the body. It should be noted that the absence of the undercoat during the shedding season is normal.

Trimming of whiskers and fur between the toes and around the feet to present a neater appearance is permissible. Trimming the fur on any other part of the dog is not to be condoned and should be severely penalised.

Faults: Long, rough, or shaggy coat; texture too harsh or too silky; trimming of the coat, except as permitted above.

Michael Jennings further went on to describe the Siberian Coat in 'The Complete Siberian Husky', 1978, saying that 'the Siberian coat is unique among Arctic breeds because of its medium length, both the Malamute and the Samoyed having a somewhat longer, shaggier coat.

The reason for the difference lies primarily in the difference in the climates in which these dogs were originally bred.

In the case of the Siberian, the specific conditions of climate and terrain found in his homeland made the formation of ice balls in a long coat an ever present danger.

Thus, consciously or unconsciously, the Chukchi developed a coat on their dogs that could both withstand the Arctic cold

and prevent the formation of ice balls.

And it is for this reason that the long, shaggy, or coarse coat is specifically faulted by the Standard.

Nevertheless, there does exist a certain range of coat length, probably from about one inch to three inches, that is considered typically Siberian so long as the outline of the dog remains unobscured and the texture is correct.

Trimming is faulted in an attempt to maintain 'naturalness' in the breed.'

In recent years it has been brought to the attention of those of us running Breed Speciality shows that the judges we have appointed from both within or outside of the country have had their hands on trimmed coats during their judging.

This just isn't good enough and the last thing Australia needs to be known for by international Specialists or any judge for that matter - is having the trimmed Siberian in the ring.

The Siberian is one of the most natural breeds of dog, let's not mess with mother nature nor with our Standard.

What can be done about it? Well it's up to judges to adhere to judging the Siberian by what the Standard asks for. If you come across a trimmed dog, do what the Standard asks and severely penalise it.

Remembering if you dropped the trimmed coated Siberian into the arctic would it survive? Highly questionable. These

The Siberian Husky Coat

Siberian Husky is my own breed. Since I acquired my first Siberian husky pet 11 years ago, I have tried a variety of grooming products throughout these years. Siberian husky is a breed that needs regular grooming.

Siberian Huskies are a double-coated breed. They have soft undercoat and harsh guard hairs as the outer coat. The function of their double coat is to insulate them from heat and cold and hence it is important that their coat should never be trimmed or shaved. Shedding usually happens twice a year for bitches and at least once a year for dogs.

At the time when they start to shed their coat, daily brushing with a comb and a bristle brush is what I do for my Siberians so as to brush out their dead coat. I do not brush on their dry coat but spray a diluted "EAU DE QUINNE" hair tonic on their coat before I brush them. I also like to give them a weekly warm bath with heavy conditioning, combined with a slicker brush, as the old hair can come out much quicker. The conditioner I would recommend is Animal House's Purely Silk. Usually the coat during the shedding period becomes a bit dry but this conditioner will leave the coat truly conditioned. Then, I will blow dry them with a strong dryer such as a double-switch cattle dryer. I find following these steps can really shorten the shedding period for my Siberians! Outside the shedding period, I still like to brush my Siberians 2 - 3 times during the week with the diluted hair tonic which can brush out their dirt and knots and also give them fresh look all the time! Other regular grooming includes nail trimming and ear cleaning.

During hot weather, some dogs like my Gigi, Winnie and the young dogs just like to play the water and even put their legs in the water buckets/bowls to keep cool. I always call them "water rats"! It is funny to see how they play the water but this also comes to my attention that may leave red stain on their elbows if their legs are always wet. So, I always have to dry them after their water play time. I know that means more work have to do but no choice as they are my lovely kids!

When SHOW time comes, I usually bath my Siberians a day before the show. I use Animal House's Mighty White and Bright as the first step. Most whitening shampoos nowadays are able to make the dogs look white and clean but why I like to use this shampoo because it can even make the dogs look bright, not just white! The dogs can really stand out themselves when they stand in the ring. If the dogs are very filthy (like my young dogs), I will bath them twice with this shampoo. Then, depending on whether the dogs are in full coat or not, if not, I like using Thick N Thicker Volume Response Foaming Protein. Then, I use After Bath as the last step.

Like this time of the year, my dogs are either losing coat or coming back in coat. If I would still like them to be shown, Animal House's Volhold is always my favourite to use before blow-drying them. I apply this creamy gel all over my dogs' bodies and then comb through their hair. This product can indeed add so much volume to my dogs' coat! Then, I blow dry my dogs to completely dry along with a brush. After my dogs are completely blow-dried, I trim their nails and also their feet. Feet and whiskers are the only two areas that Siberians are allowed to be trimmed. However, I personally do not trim my dogs' whiskers but I like to trim their feet to make their feet look neat.

On the day of dog show, I usually allow an hour to prepare my dogs for the ring. I know that some people may think I am too slow but I treat this as a quality time to bond with my dogs! I start with a waterless blueing shampoo such as "Show Off" on my dogs' legs and dry the legs with a clean towel. Then, I rub a small amount of Kolestral and chalk on my hands and lightly run them upwards over the leg furnishings to apply it. Brush out the excessive chalk before going to the ring.

For the body, I spray Animal House's Coat Magic on the body and then comb the coat. It repels dirt and dust and also gives shine on my dogs' coat. If necessary, I also spray a diluted Volhold to add volume to their coat.

The above are the regular grooming and show preparation I do for my Siberians, and I hope you will find them useful!

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And, from the innovative Cracar Siberians website, (<http://www.cracarsiberians.com/>) The coat of the Siberian Husky is medium length and consists of the outer coat and a shorter, denser undercoat. The outer coat should be straight and no trimming/clipping is required. Grooming, unless they are shedding, is simple with a brush and comb once or twice a week. Shedding usually occurs 2 to 3 times a year depending on the climate and can be quite profuse. A warm bath will help to loosen coat and with a good brushing daily during this time, the shed will be complete in about 2 weeks. As the double-coat of the Siberian insulates it against the cold of winter, it also insulates them in the summer months, therefore the Siberian can, and will, acclimate to any climate and should never be shaved. The Siberian Husky does not have the usual "doggy" odor and is a relatively clean animal, seldom needing a bath to rid them of odors. Many allergy sufferers have found that they can include a Siberian Husky in their family.

"Spring (USA) is a good time to talk about grooming as most of our beautiful Siberians are blowing coat. This is the time of year when Sibe owners become more bonded to our vacuum cleaners than we are to our children and spouse"

dogs need a correct coat to survive in the conditions they were bred for. Keep that in the back of your minds when you come across a trimmed coat.

Quote from Peggy Koehler (Chair of the Siberian Husky Education Committee, USA):

"The Standard clearly states that trimming of the fur on any part of the dog other than the feet and whiskers should be severely penalised."

As judges we owe a responsibility to the breeds we judge. That responsibility is to adhere to the Standard of that breed. We must not be influenced by the whims or fads of breeders. If we reward those dogs ... we are doing an injustice to the breed. For if they continue to win, it can be destructive to the breed; for exhibitors tend to breed for and copy what is winning in the ring.'

Preserve the natural wonder this breed is. Siberians DON'T need hair cuts!!!

JUSTINE COLLINS, Show Secretary, SHCV Inc.