Guide to Grooming the Puli
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INTRODUCTION

The most striking characteristic of the Puli is his unusual coat. This cabled coat is only found in two other breeds, the Komondor and the Poodle. This shaggy coat consists of a coarse outercoat and a fine, dense, wooly undercoat. The two types of hair combine to form felt-like cords.

The Puli coat can be brushed, cabled or clipped. Consider your lifestyle, time constraints etc., when deciding which coat style is for you and your Puli. This decision should be made by the time the Puli is six to eight months of age. Whichever you choose, this bouncy, active dog is still a Puli. The most important thing is that you and your Puli are happy and comfortable.

Most problems with the Puli coat are preventable. Grooming sessions and baths should be scheduled at regular intervals, so that problems can be attended to while they are still small. Puppies need to be trained to lie still during grooming sessions. Gradually, the duration of the sessions can be increased. When approached in a positive, upbeat manner, grooming time will become a special, private time between you and your Puli.
GENERAL

Nails - The Puli generally needs his front nails trimmed every two weeks and his back nails trimmed every six to eight weeks. This is easily done if you insist upon it and do it frequently enough that you do not cause every nail to bleed. Nails done this way often only need to be tipped, thus reducing the chances of cutting into the quick. If the nail does bleed, do not panic. Simply apply a styptic powder and a little pressure. Contrary to what the Puli is telling you, it is no worse than cutting yourself when you shave.

Eyes - Matter/mucous which collects in the corner of the Puli’s eyes can be removed with a damp washcloth or with one of the commercial eye products.

Ears - The hair should be removed from the Puli’s ears monthly. Using ear powder, gently pull the hair from the inside of the ear canal with your fingers. Done on a regular basis this will help prevent ear infections.

Teeth - Hard food, Nylabones, and hard dog biscuits will all help discourage the formation of tartar on your Puli’s teeth. Begin training him at an early age to allow you to brush his teeth either with a piece of gauze or a toothbrush. Once he is trained to allow you to work on his mouth, you can remove any tartar using a tooth scaler and eliminate the need for anesthesia in the vet’s office.

Anal glands - Most active dogs express their anal glands naturally. Check for odor, swelling or discomfort. This may indicate impaction or infection and should be seen by a veterinarian. Your vet can show you how to express your Puli’s anal glands yourself. (This should be done in the tub just prior to the bath.)

BATH (Brushed or corded coat)

Equipment - The Puli should be immersed in a tub to saturate the cords and properly clean the coat. A raised tub (preferably a laundry tub) is the kindest to your back, but your bathtub will certainly do. If you do not have a tub, you can purchase a plastic utility tub on a stand, cover the metal legs and place it in your shower. You will also need a hand held shower sprayer to thoroughly rinse your Puli.

Shampoo - Fill the tub with two inches of warm water and add one cup of shampoo. Lay the Puli down in the sudsy water and ladle it over him. Knead the soapy water through the coat, as you would wash a sweater. Pay special attention to the face and genitals. Add more of the water/shampoo mixture to the dirtiest parts of the coat.
**Rinse, Rinse, Rinse** - When the Puli is completely soaked, drain the water and begin to rinse, moving from head to tail. When the water runs clear start all over again, head to tail. Fill the tub with several inches of warm water and lay him down again, making sure that all shampoo has been removed.

**Creme Rinse** - Depending on the coat texture of your Puli and your climate, you may want to protect the coat by applying a creme rinse to replace the natural oils that bathing removes. Dilute the creme rinse in water. Oil may be added to the rinse water for the corded coat. Ladle the creme rinse mixture over the coat making sure that the whole coat is covered, paying special attention to 'hardened' muzzle cords. Rinse the corded coat only to even out the creme rinse and the brushed coat for about one more minute. Evaluate the feel of the coat after it dries. It should not feel greasy, nor be too soft.

**DRYING**

Gently pat the excess water off and put the Puli on towels to drip. Replace wet towels with dry ones.

A brushed dog should be blown dry after he has dripped approximately one hour. This will allow the coat to begin drying with some curl to it. If the Puli were to be blown dry from wet, the coat would dry very straight like a Poodle. On a corded dog, the cords can be separated at any time while the Puli is still wet.

Continue to replace towels until the corded dog is completely dry. The use of fans or cool air dryers will aid in the drying process. The use of dryers will do just that - dry the coat. Use dryers as little as possible. In extremely humid climates their use may be unavoidable. Cords may seem dry to the touch, but unless the cord is thoroughly dry, dampness at the core of the cord will seep out and can cause a mildew smell.

**COAT CARE**

**Corded** - A corded Puli is not un-groomed. A newly cording coat requires the largest expenditure of time. Once the whole coat is separated, it will only require work when you bathe the dog. From eight months to a year, depending on the type of coat and climate, the cording process begins. When your Puli's coat has clumped together and he looks like nobody loves him, it is time to begin separating cords. Take care not to force the coat into cords prematurely as you could injure the skin below.

The simplest way to tear the cords is to put the Puli in the tub and thoroughly wet him down. Begin to tear the cords down while he is still wet. If it is not practical to wet the Puli down, you can use a misting bottle with water and spray a section at a time. With the Puli damp, you can easily see the natural cord divisions as well as the excess undercoat that must be removed from around the base of each cord. Grasp the ends of these divisions (or what will soon become cords)
with your fingers, carefully tear the two divisions/cords apart from the ends down to the skin. This frees the soft excess undercoat which will fall out or can be pulled from around the base of the cord. Try to keep the natural separation of about one inch diameter at the base of each cord. Do not separate the cords too small, as this makes them very fragile. Use extreme care when separating the ear cords. Start at the ear and work out to avoid tearing the leather. As the coat lengthens, the cords will be more pronounced and dense. When the Puli is almost dry, check to see if any more separating is necessary.

It is extremely important that the ends of the cords be kept open. If the end of a cord is allowed to curl back into itself, it gives a matted, club-like appearance. The hair will begin to grow back into the cord instead of growing in length. To prevent this, brush the end of the cord with a slicker brush, pulling the end of the cord out to give a neat, well-groomed appearance.

**Brushed** - The brushed coat requires constant attention. It can be done as long as you keep a regular and disciplined schedule. If you fail to keep the grooming schedule, the Puli will mat. It is not fair to put a Puli through tortured hours of de-matting only because you failed to do your part. To keep a Puli brushed, you need a misting bottle with water, a good quality pin brush and a soft slicker brush. Lay the Puli down on his side and mist lightly. Make a line in the hair the length of the dog. Brush small sections away from the line, making sure that you can always see the skin. When brushing, your elbow should be still against your side and the brush should be moved only with a wrist action. Dampen the hair to help keep the line and to prevent breakage. This should be done on each side and then lay the Puli on his stomach and do the same only from the tail to head, paying special attention to the areas where the dog tends to mat first - armpits, behind the ears and the insides of legs. Remember, always brush a damp coat and always keep the skin visible.
The frequency of these grooming sessions depends on your Puli's coat type. Generally, a brushed dog will need to be bathed and blown dry every two weeks with one to two other brushing sessions in between.

If your Puli does become matted, a matting comb and a little patience will help remedy this. Try to comb through the mat without forcing it. Gently separate sections of the matted area with your fingers to allow the matting comb to more easily comb through the matted area.

**Clipped** - The clipped Puli can be brushed quickly and easily using a slicker brush or you can follow the instructions for the brushed coat.

**TRIMMING**

**Brushed and Corded**

**Personal Hygiene** - To keep the male smelling fresh, trim the hair from his stomach and penis area either with clippers or scissors. Trim the hair from around the female's vulva.

**Feet** - To prevent mats from forming, trim the hair from the bottom and between the pads of the feet using clippers or blunt-nosed scissors. Trim close to the foot, tapering slightly up and away from the foot on the table. When finished the leg should appear like a column.

**Face** - Trim the hair to the end of the nose so that the head appears roundish and to keep free of food and debris.

**Show Trimming**

Trimming for the show ring is a matter of personal preference. Here are some methods that you may wish to use.

**Corded** - Starting with a clean, dry coat, pull the cords forward from the top half of the head and trim even with the nose. When you release the hair, it should fall over the head like an umbrella. Let the Puli stand naturally on the table and trim the feet round. Trim the front of the dog blending into the chin hair. After trimming, the cords should be various lengths with no discernable line. Separate the topline and either trim the short fuzzy hair flat to the topline or "grease" it down with a coat preparation such as VO-5. You may trim the base of the tail to the skin to shorten the overall look of the Puli. Trim the coat slightly above the ground so the Puli can move freely.

**Brushed** - Trimming should be done on a fairly clean coat before the show bath. Only minor trimming or tidying should be done after the bath. All scissoring can be done with either a straight edge scissors or thinning shears. Trim the ears to about one inch from the leather, then blend the head into the ears to create a rounded effect. When finished, the hair will be about two to two and one-half inches long. Trim the hair to about one-half inch long around the base of the tail. Leave the rest natural. Trim a gradual slope in the topline from the base of the tail to the
head and neck area. Leave the hair as long as you can but not so long that it parts. Trim and blend the chest hair, the rump hair and the area below the tail so that it is about 2" long. Trim and blend the sides into the rest of the coat. The hair under the Puli should not be longer than three inches. With the Puli standing naturally, trim the feet and legs. The front should have a column effect and the rear should accent his angulation.

**Damaged Coat** - If your Puli has scratched out or damaged his coat, refer to the illustration 'Before & After Damaged Coat'. Trim the top layer of cords 6-8", slightly longer in front following the line in the illustration.

![Damaged Coat](image)

Before - damaged coat  
After - Layered Clip  
Typical grown-out layered look

**Pet Trimming**

**Clipped** - Your Puli will always be a Puli, hair or no hair. What makes a Puli different is his innate intelligence and unique temperament. If your lifestyle does not allow enough time to take proper care of your Puli's coat, cut it off! A Puli cut down with an Oster #7F or #5F or #4F blade will keep the coat short and very easy to maintain. If the condition of the coat is too bad, whether brushed or corded, for the Puli's sake, clip him down and start again.

**Short Cords** - Short cords provide a practical, low-maintenance way to enjoy the unique Puli coat. The Puli will dry quicker and collect less debris. Cut all cords to a length of 4" or more, beginning with the top layer. You may want to cut the legs a bit shorter.

![Clipped Puli](image)

Before - scruffy uneven coat  
After - short even cords
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

White Coats - Select a shampoo with bluing to enhance the white color.

Male/Female - Some males will bite off the ends of cords that they have urinated on, so they may need a rinse or partial bath between full baths. Cords may be tied up using covered rubber bands or fabric ponytail holders to prevent soiling.

Itching/Chewing - There is always a reason why a dog scratches or chews - a bit of shampoo left in the coat, fleas, food allergy, contact allergy, etc. Often what started out as a reaction to a cause becomes a habit. Eliminate the obvious causes first, and if he still is scratching, contact your veterinarian.

Fleas and Ticks - Think prevention. If you see a flea, you must treat all dogs, the house/kennel/vehicle and the yard or run. This should be repeated in seven to ten days.

Flea/tick products - There are many good products on the market now which contain D-Limonene or extracts of Pennyroyal, Citronella, Eucalyptus, Peppermint or other herbs. These products, as well as Avon's Skin-So-Soft, act as a very good preventives.

CONCLUSION.

Corded or brushed, in the show ring or out, present your Puli proudly - clean and groomed to the best of your ability.