



Grooming Your Griffons

Part 4- Clipping the Rough Griffon Bruxellois.

A Guide for Pet owners and Groomers

This article is designed to help pet owners who do not want to hand strip their Griffon but still want it to look neat and tidy and keep its unique Griffon outline and appearance.

It is also designed to help professional Groomers who are not familiar with the Griffon and are unsure of the correct shape and trim needed for a Rough Griffon.

A word of advice however; if you plan on showing your Griffon you cannot clip it as this will soften the coat and can change the colour. Show Griffons need to be hand stripped in order to maintain the correct coat texture and colour.

- **Why Clip your Griffon?** Rough coated Griffons do not shed coat which is why they are often popular as pets with people who have allergies. But like every single dog breed in existence, they do change coat. This is how a dog regulates their body from summer to winter. At the end of summer, beginning of Autumn they will change from their summer coat into the heavier winter coat. At the end of winter and early Spring, they will change from the heavy winter coat into a lighter summer coat. In most dogs this is when the coat is shed as they change coat.



- **How does this happen?** In order to change coat the old coat dies off so that a new coat can grow through. In dogs that shed the dead old coat simply falls out. In a non-shedding breed like a rough Griffon the old coat remains in and usually changes colour so that it can be differentiated from the new coat. If the Griffon is never clipped or trimmed the coat will just continue to grow and get shaggier and shaggier.

A shaggy unclipped Griffon showing the lighter coloured dead coat

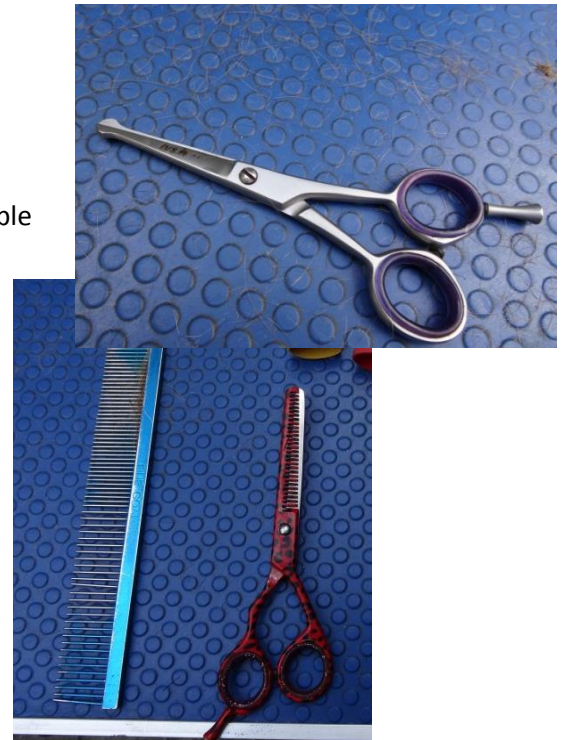
- **Is this a problem?** Yes because in order for the new coat to come through as a healthy coat the dead coat needs to come out so that it is not blocking the follicle. If the dead coat is left in the dog can get itchy skin and skin irritations and even rashes from the remaining dead coat. Even after a clip it is important to give the dog some vigorous brushing to loosen any dead hairs remaining. Washing the Griffon and giving a vigorous massage as you lather can also be beneficial to loosen the dead coat and promote healthy new coat growth. The following pages show the process of a Griffon clip with Professional Groomer, Ashleigh Barber of AB's Grooming. Ashleigh is also a Griffon owner

You will Need

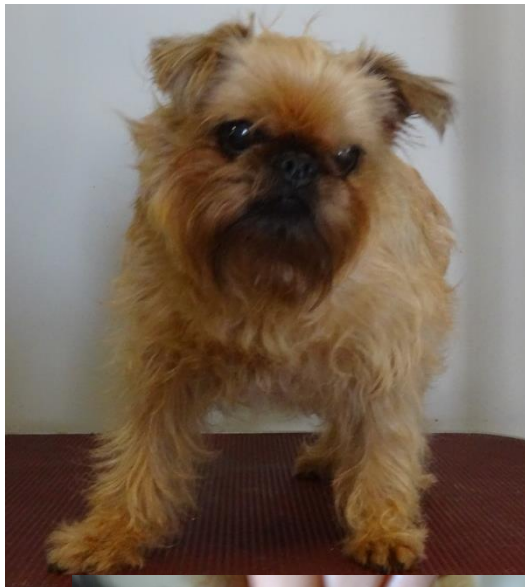
- Comb with wide and narrow teeth
- Thinning scissors one sided with teeth as narrow as possible
- Sharp straight blade scissors
- Electric clippers with no 5 blade (or equivalent)
- A table or surface that is waist high so that you can comfortably clip the Griffon

To Begin

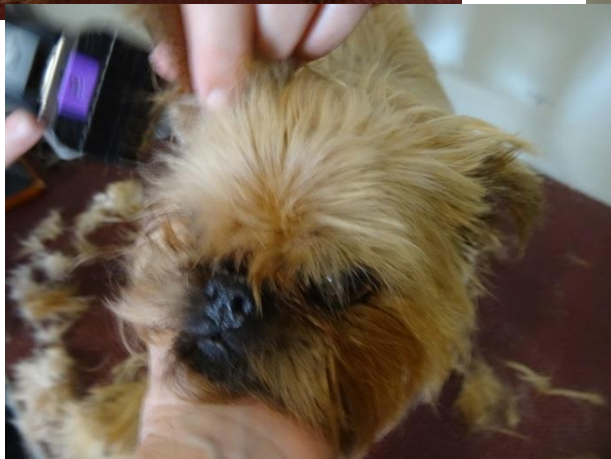
- When clipping it is better to have a clean coat (unlike hand stripping) as the clipper blades will cut more evenly. Therefore you need to wash and thoroughly dry the Griffon. Never clipper a damp coat as you will get gaps
- Once you have a clean dry Griffon you need to comb out the coat to ensure that there are no knots or tangles. Then you can start to clip



Clipping the Griffon



1. Start with a shaggy Griffon. Here is our model Teasel. She is 10 years old and has been clipped regularly for the past 5 years since retiring from the show ring. She has been let get very shaggy for the purpose of this information sheet. The three photos show her from the side, front and a close up of her head.



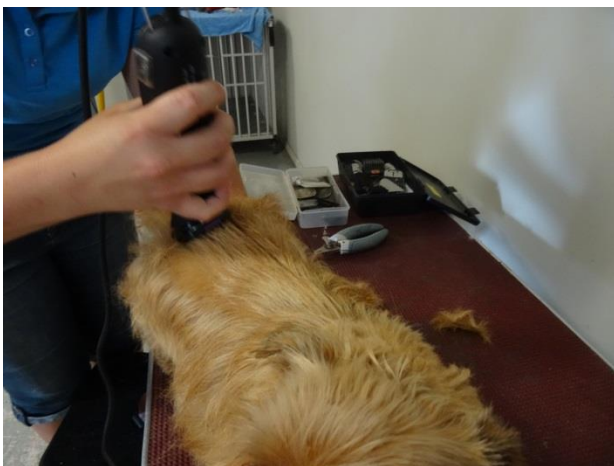


2. Using a number 5 clipper blade or equivalent, start to run the clippers down the dogs back in the direction of the hair growth. Never clip against the growth.

3. Start in the middle of the back, at the back of the head and run the clipper blade down in a smooth line. Do not press to hard but keep an even pressure on the blade in order to get an even finish.



4. Continue to run the blade down the dogs back in smooth even strokes until the hair on the back is shorter.



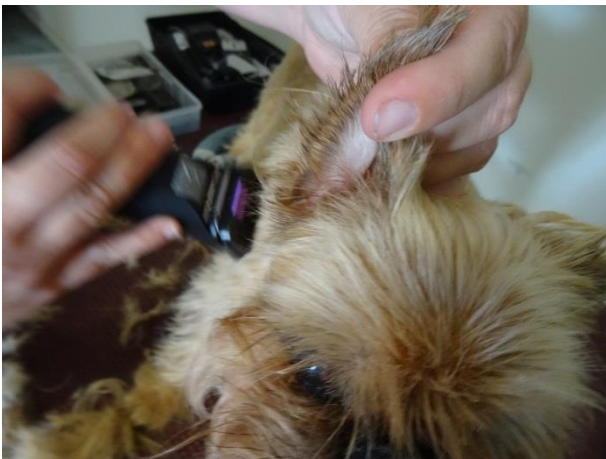
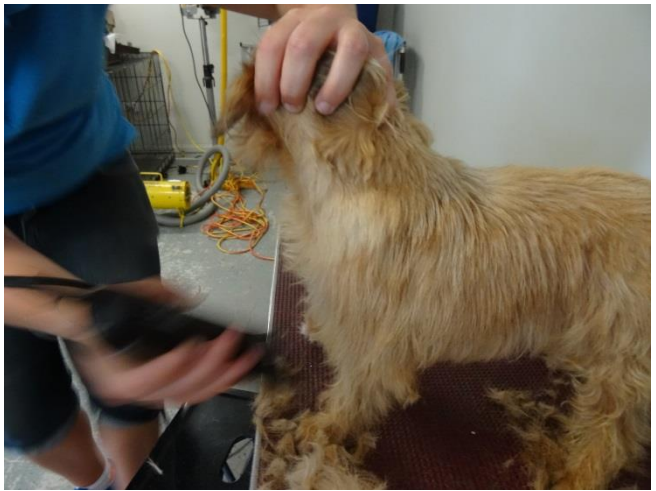
5. When you finish the back it will look like this with shorter hair on the back and body but longer hair still on the rest of the dog





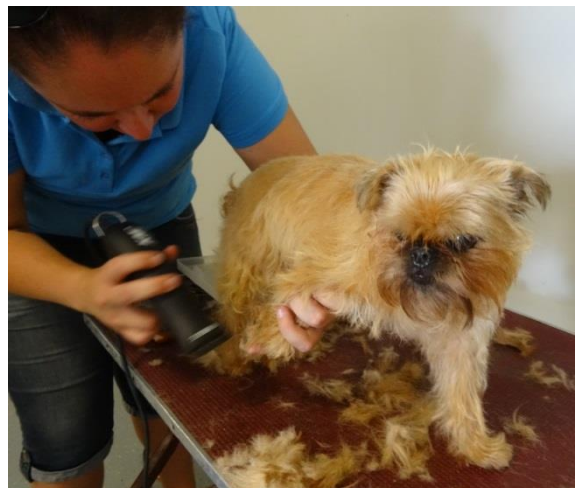
6. When the back has been roughed out then the belly needs to be clipped. If the dog is relaxed it can lie on its back but if it is unsure then the easiest way is to support the dog's front legs and clipper the belly as shown on the photo.

7. When the belly is finished the throat is trimmed next. Hold the dog's head under the chin and pull the beard out of the way so that is not accidentally clipped. Again, clipper down in the direction of the coat growth.



8. From the throat clipper up the sides of the neck and blend in with the ears. Clipper the ears underneath and on top of the leather. This not only tidies up the ears but also removes hair allowing air to circulate more effectively in the ear, thus reducing the risk of yeast or fungal infections caused by moist ears

9. When the ears and neck is roughed out then the back legs are trimmed by running the blade down the side of the thighs. Trim also the sides of the dog moving the clipper blade down in the direction of the hair





10. This completes stage one of the clip- the roughing out process. The dog will look like this at this stage. The basic shape can now be seen but the coat still needs tidying.

11. Stage two begins with another bath. In this bath the coat is given a vigorous massage to loosen any dead or clipped hair and to stimulate the follicles for healthy coat growth. The coat is washed with a good quality shampoo that will not dry



the coat out



12. After shampooing, the coat is thoroughly rinsed making sure no shampoo is left in to irritate the skin.

13. After the bath to coat is blow dried and brushed during the drying process to get all loose hair out and to bring the coat up off the body





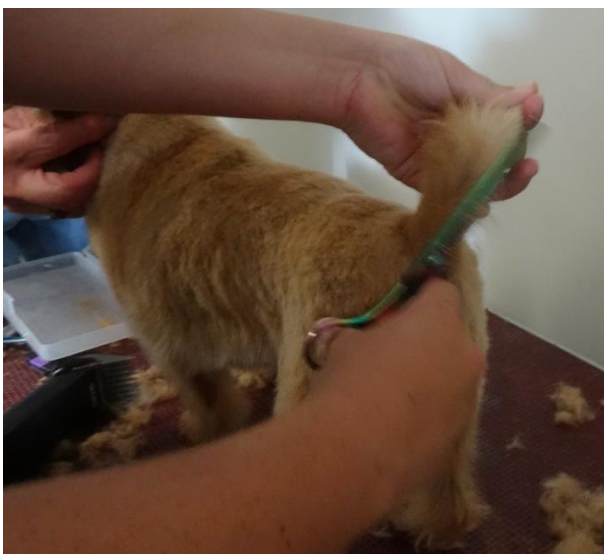
14. It is important to ensure that the head and ears are also dried thoroughly

15. After drying the nose roll and head is trimmed with thinning scissors. When using the thinning scissors to trim the nose always trim upwards from under the eyes so that you do not alarm the dog. They can be unsure if they see scissor blades coming from above them. For more information on trimming the nose roll see Article 1 on the website.

16. At this stage any longer wispy hairs on top of the head can also be combed up and trimmed with thinning scissors.



17. When trimming a Griffon's head the hair is short between the ears and down to eye level. The beard starts at the sides of the head, level with the bottom of the eye. The hair on the ears is also very short.



18. From the head you now go to the tail and trim it with the thinning scissors. You need to comb the hair down into a flag under the tail and then hold the tail up in the air. With the thinning scissors trim upwards from the base of the tail in the direction of the hair growth. Use the comb frequently to comb any hair down so that you get an even finish. Most of the trimming will come from underneath the tail with perhaps just a bit of tidying up on the top. You are aiming to get a carrot shaped tail, wider at the base and pointy at the tip.



19. With the clippers again, go back to the body and clip the side of the body and just under the chest to take off any wispy hairs. This is again a light trim with a no 5 blade or equivalent. When trimming the sides trim downwards in the direction of the hair growth.

20. Using the clippers tidy up the back of the rear legs and under the tail. See article two on the website for a more detailed explanation of how to trim this area.



21. From here on it is almost all scissor work. The front legs are scissored to even up the coat. They are not trimmed back hard but are left with some slightly longer coat (similar to a schnauzer leg). The hair is combed out from the leg at the front, back and sides and then lightly scissored with the thinning scissors so that it forms an even tube like shape down the leg to the foot.

22. The rear legs are then scissored in the same way to even up the hair but to leave a little length on them





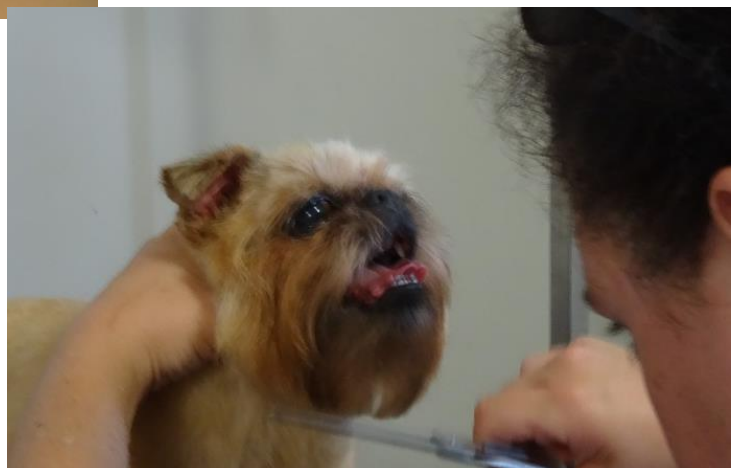
23. Then any wispy hairs that have been left under the belly are trimmed off with scissors. The hair should be just below the level of the chest. A Griffon should not have a long fringe of hair under the belly. The hair is trimmed at an angle from the chest up to the belly. See the direction of the scissors in this photo

24. Using either clippers or scissors the throat and the sides of the elbows are tidied to blend the elbow hair into the neck and legs



25. Using the single bladed scissors the ears are then trimmed to show the natural shape without any long hairs

26. The beard is now lightly trimmed to even it up and to make it a round shape. After trimming the beard should still look natural. It should not be scissored so heavily that it looks obviously scissored.





27. By now Teasel says “being beautiful is such a bore darling!!”

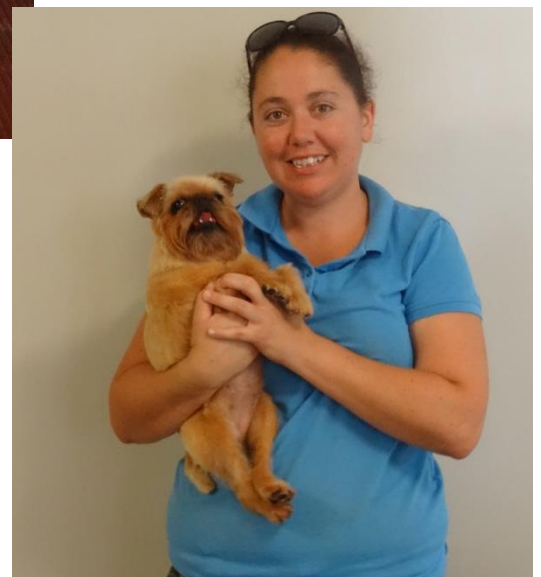
28. And here is the finished Griffon, looking beautiful. The head and the body can be seen here. Compare this to the photos at the beginning of the article.



And a big smile from Teasel and Ashleigh her groomer. Ashleigh took an hour to transform Teasel.



Ashleigh owns and runs AB's Grooming



In Summary

- In order to get the smooth even coat finish shown here a groomer needs to do a double clip.
- The first clip is to get the outline and remove the bulk
- Then the dog is washed, massaged thoroughly and completely blow dried to remove any loose hair. The blow drying process also gets the hair to stand up away from the body.
- Then the second clip and scissoring is completed. It is during this clip that the dog is shaped and tidied to give a smooth and even finish without any gaps in the coat or uneven hair length.
- If a groomer tries to skimp with only a single clip then it will be obvious from the way the coat will lay.
- If you go to a professional Groomer to get your Griffon clipped, ask them if they do a double clip and if they don't – or do not know what you mean then tell them to look at this article.



Here is a Griffon who has had a single clip. Note it is shorter, less even and shows more gaps

Compare the finish of the single clip coat to Teasel below who has had the double clip done

