

Giant Show Grooming

A Basic How to Show Groom your Giant Equipment:

- Table and grooming arm
- Cold air high volume blower
- Hot air human hair dryer
- Harsh grooming powder
- 8" Straight scissors
- 8" Curved scissors
- Quality pair of thinning scissors
- Cheap Volumising Mousse (Heat activated preferred)
- Clippers with a #15, #10 and #8 blade
- Slicker Brush or good pin brush
- Quality 8" or 10" comb
- Terrier / Harsh Coated Breeds Shampoo
- Classic Stripping Knives (Fine and Coarse)
- Classic Face Stripping Knife
- McClellan Stripping Knives
- Mars Coat King (Teeth Count to suit coat type (eg 10 -12 teeth for fuller coated dog's 20-26 for Harsher Coated Dog's)

Disclaimer: This document is based on the premise that you have basically maintained your dog's coat and are preparing for an upcoming show. Basic means your dog's jacket isn't too long.

As I said this is a basic 'how to' and to try to get you started in the right direction, grooming varies from country to country with styles of dogs and styles in grooming but I personally love the typical presentation of the American Giants with their sharp terrier style grooming and fuller coat types with body and leg furnishings. This once again isn't a document arguing the pros or cons of the more correct type of coat it is simply a document for the new or novice groomer to use as a guide. If you are in doubt seek advice from your breeder or an accomplished groomer but you need to commit time, ongoing effort and always remember if you make a mistake the hair will grow back!!!!

The Start and other bits: Over the years I have been involved with Giants I have met and got to know some truly awesome groomers and I have learnt that everyone treats and grooms their dogs differently and as such you will need to try and experiment with what works best for you and your dog's, coat type, structure etc which do make a difference to what you do but remember if you have a question ask someone !!! Most people will help you and when you find someone who will ...Your dog will look a lot better for you asking, trying and experimenting.

Preparing the dog's jacket: What we are trying to do here is get the dog's jacket worked down and flat basically removing excess undercoat and long jacket hair. (The undercoat will grow back quickly usually within a week or two depending on the coat type)

Set your dog up on the grooming table and put the grooming noose on him/her.

Have your harsh grooming powder and a bristle bush for applying it and pat your brush in the powder (I have my powder in a square lidded plastic container) loading it up and start brushing it against the lay of the coat so it penetrates all the way down to the skin..

Now this is the only time I use my Coat King - I pull it though the dog's jacket to help break up the undercoat only. You will find that doing this ONCE all over the jacket will make it easier to work the jacket. I have seen people use the Coat King and only that for grooming their dogs and what it does is soften the texture of the coat. (you have to remember it has cutting edges on it and it cuts both undercoat and outer coat)

Now initially with your Classic coarse knife work small sections of the dog's jacket until you have gone over the dog completely and can see that most of the undercoat is gone (this will take time and it's like everything else you do .. good preparation work is the key).

(Hint) You will find holding the dog's jacket in your hand and making the skin tight will make it easier, short strokes and all over evenly.. The knife has to be held at 90 degrees to the coat and the flat of the blade pulling back towards you in the direction of lay of the hair. I use the Classic Face Knife for the loin as its beautifully shaped for that area.

What you will notice is the undercoat is coming out and your dog's jacket will lay flatter and tighter to the body. We need to work this and the areas that kick up etc and to keep that jacket looking tight and flat.

After you have removed most of the undercoat push the dog's hair up against how it normally lies on the dog (in other words stand it up) and you will notice that some hair is longer, using the McClelland knife, grab the long hair between your thumb and knife and pull the hair straight out in a nice clean movement..

(Hint) You should see the hair after its been pulled out and it should be straight and it should have hair past where the edge of the McClelland knife's edge is . This is showing you that the hair has pulled out and not simply been cut.

Work all the areas of the coat until you are satisfied that the long hair has been pulled out, leaving your dog in a much shorter and tighter jacket than you started with, the ideal is to do this over a month to 6 weeks and slowly work the jacket back.

This is a great way to keep your dog in a nice jacket for extended periods for showing, areas that kick up, twist or curl should be worked down with the knife then hand striped over time till the kink, curl or twist is eliminated, once again use common sense and do this over a period of time so your dog doesn't have a hole in its jacket where you have pulled out all the hair.

Now don't worry about the harsh grooming powder in the coat it will slowly work its way out and it keeps the dog's skin clean and healthy. Come wash day, blow the jacket out with your cold air blower before you wash.

(Hint) Do the coat work a few times a week, this truly makes it an easy task to maintain the coat.

Clipping: Some people clip the relevant areas of their dog a week before a show, some people will clip on the day of the show, find what works best for your dog by experimenting but typically the harsher the coat of the dog the longer before the show you will need for the clipped areas to come back in but also remember the more often you clip the dog the less white spotting will occur so its a good habit to do it regularly.

Now starting with the head use a #10 blade and go from the corner of the eye to the corner of the ear and clip down. This will leave a line (between the eye and ear) as you can see in the drawing (Head, side diagram) but blend that in with the thinning scissors and make it a smooth transition (See DosEuqis photo.).

(Hint) I find using the thinning scissors upwards into the hair works best for blending those lines.



Next go from the bottom corner of the ear and in a gradual curve (creating a curve enhances the arch in the neck of your dog) work your clippers down to the breast bone of the dog. (See Head, side diagram & Front diagram)

From the lines you now have on your dog's head you need to take the hair off the cheeks of the dog's face., you will need to work your clipper towards the beard of the dog and as you get close lift the beard and clip in under the beard slightly.

(Hint) The reason we clip under the beard is that we want to retain as much length on the beard as we can, but we need to take out some of the 'under-beard'.

(Hint) Whilst the beard is lifted, clip from the corner of the mouth towards the muzzle for about 1/2" and take out that hair above the lip, this will stop the beard flaring when the dog's mouth is open.

The head presents some interesting points on the dog. The ideal is to make the dog's head look as long as we can, you will need to take many things into consideration with regards to eyebrows, eye shape and colour. I (personally) brush the eyebrows outwards/sideways before I cut them.

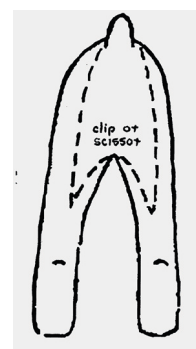
On the 'under-jaw' of your dog clip about 1/4" forward of the corner of the mouth or to the little mole you will find on your dog's under jaw.

Carefully clip the ears, use a fine blade (the higher the number the closer it cuts or more hair it removes) I use a 10 or 15 blade to minimise the risk of cutting the ear leather. You will need to use a pair of straight scissors to trim around the outside of the ear, use your finger and thumb and grasp the outside edge of the ear and CAREFULLY and slowly trim the hair.

Now to the rear of the dog, clip the underside of the tail, the perianal area and down the inside of the back leg, remember not too far down, use Rear diagram as a guide. (I typically use a #10 blade on the fuller coated dogs and a #8 on the more harsher coated dogs)

A good guide for width on a Giant is to clip to the hair swirl marks on the upper-rear surfaces of the back legs.

With all your clipping work you will need to typically go over all the areas of transition and blend them in with the thinning scissors.



The desired effect is to have a dog that looks like the hair grew that way.

To total wash or not to wash?: In my own personal experience, I have met some people who wash their entire dog the week or a fortnight before the show and others who will only wash the dog's furnishings for the show, the reasoning for this is that washing does soften some coats. I typically do not body wash my dog's jacket if I am showing my dog, but their furnishings and beards are washed the day before the show and then again at the show just prior to

going into the ring. There are always exceptions to this rule, eg., dog rolls in or has something in its coat.

If you do wash the dog's jacket remember to use your cold air blower to dry it. Blow and always brush the jacket in the direction of the lay of the coat. (what you are doing is 'training' the hair to lie flat and stay flat).

Use a good quality Harsh Coat Breed Shampoo and remember to wash it all out and when you think it's washed out, wash it out again to make sure.

(Hint) I have found a great shampoo here in Australia called White Pride (I don't know if it's available overseas) I have found it really blackens and takes out any redness from sun bleaching and doesn't seem to take away a lot of texture.

Furnishings: I do the major work the day before the show to get the basic outline and major scissoring work done and then redo it at the show .. I find this basically leaves minor touch up work at the show. While your dog's furnishings are still wet get the cold air blower and semi dry the furnishings (blow in the direction you want the air to go eg: up on the legs) then get your volumising mousse and spread across your hands and work it into the dog's front legs making sure that it's spread evenly and lightly though the hair, do the same with the belly furnishings and rear furnishings, I also apply it to the dog's beard and eyebrows whilst they are wet and basically let that air dry and while I am working on the dog's other areas and just go back every now and then with the comb and continue to work it in the position I want the eyebrows and beard to stay in. The reason for the mousse is to hold the hair where I want so I can scissor the furnishings etc .

I then lay a towel or a chamois over the dog's jacket while I am working on the furnishings, I normally lay it along the dog's back so it covers from the neck to the tail and it overlaps over the sides of the dog (this will help lay the jacket flat and tight)

(Hint) Lay a slightly moist chamois on the jacket at a show prior to going in will flatten the coat beautifully.. It has to be only very, very slightly moist.

The front legs are the place to start. Have your dog set up on the table, noosed and with a normal hair dryer on a low heat setting and a slicker brush start blowing and brushing the hair up (you really need the hair standing up) I continue to work from the bottom of the foot up to the top of the leg and then go to another part along side of where I have dried the hair and work it up as well. Continue on till you have both front legs dry. You will see that the dog's hair typically will hang out past the body outline .. what we do then is cut and blend the hair down to make it level with the body - note in the Front diagram and Rear diagram, there is ideally, no 'break' to the line running up the outsides of the legs and onto the shoulder and hip short/flat hair areas. Why? So there isn't any hair flapping about or breaking up the dog's outline, we want smooth lines and a natural look to the hair meeting the body jacket and once again I find that when they have too much hair on the legs they look like they have borrowed their big brother's pants and it looks quite disproportional.

The best way to scissor the legs is in a downwards direction for the front legs (this leaves less scissor marks) and basically first off



you turn the leg into what would look like a 4 sided post, and then slowly round off the edges until the leg is essentially round in cross-section, as seen in the photograph of Alee. If you feel unsure about what you are doing then use your thinning

scissors as they are less dangerous on hair in the hands of a beginner but leave a great finish on the leg. Remember small slow cuts with scissors in the direction of the natural lay of the hair.

(Hint) Things to be aware of with the front legs .. Make sure you take the hair off the elbows (the area on the back of the front leg that tucks into the body) this seems to be an area a lot of people miss and when their dogs move all you see is the elbow hair flapping and giving the illusion that the dog is out in elbow.

Be careful how you trim around the foot and don't turn the foot into a shape resembling a rectangle with round ends. You want the leg blending down into the foot and it should be circular to look at. It all has to look natural and blended, the rounded scissors are great on the feet. See the ideal, stylised appearance in the above diagrams.

(Hint) To accentuate the chest of the dog you can make sure the furnishings are shorter on the front of the leg and then to make the dog look shorter in body, keep more hair on the back of the front leg - but always try to make it look balanced !!!!

Also remember that the dog needs to be naturally standing when you are scissoring, it is no good if you trim the legs and you have put the dog in a position it wont be standing in normally.

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