



## How to Properly Groom Your Pug

by Eva Hart

If you're reading this, then you know that your pug is your best friend! Just like you wouldn't let your human best friend walk around with unbrushed teeth, ratted hair and long gangly nails, don't let your pug best friend do it either. Like humans, pugs require grooming and care. So let's go over the steps you need to take to make sure your best friend looks and feels his best. Grooming a pug is actually very enjoyable! Pugs love attention and appreciate being handled by the person they love the most—you! Some grooming tasks are easier and more fun than others, but all are important.

Since pugs tend to shed—a lot—they need brushing to help minimize shedding and keep their coats glossy and healthy. Pugs have those cute facial folds that can get infected or stinky if not cleaned regularly. Like any other dog, pugs need their nails trimmed. Pugs also are prone to having their anal sacs fill, and if your pug isn't able to drain them while taking care of business, then a groomer can help. Where to start? Here are 11 steps to take in making sure your pug is well groomed and happy:

1. Pugs stay fairly clean and generally need no more than about one bath a month. Frequent baths can dry and irritate their sensitive skin and dry out their coats. In warmer weather, your pug might need more baths than in cooler weather. You should keep to a bathing schedule so you are not over- or under-bathing them. Of course, feel free to break the schedule if they get dirty from playing in the mud or smelly from rolling in dead fish. (It's happened to us, don't laugh!)
2. Shampoo and condition your pug's coat during each bath. Remember to avoid the top of the pug's head! Water in the ears leads to infections. If drying or itching occurs after your pug's bath, switch products. Stay away from using human products on dogs. Some of us prefer good botanical shampoos and leave-in conditioners such as those available in local pet shops. Pug Pals members like to support local shops such as H3, Northwest Pets, Toby & Omar's, Zamzow's, and D&B Supply, but there are also national chain stores in the area.
3. Dry your pug thoroughly; use your hand or towel to remove shedding hair. Groomers use a blow dryer on the low and cool setting to dry your pug. This is a good idea that some pug owners use, while others prefer to let their pugs air-dry. Some sources say that leaving your pug wet after their bath can cause fungal infections on their skin and can also ruin furniture. If your pug is especially wrinkly, overweight, or is prone to allergic reactions, you might consider the blow dryer. In the summer, though, a lot of folks let the pug run around and dry naturally. The choice is yours!
4. Clean your pug's facial folds with a thin, moist washcloth, unscented baby wipe, or cotton gauze. Deep-wrinkled pugs may require daily wrinkle cleaning. Be sure to dry the area after cleaning to avoid infections or fungus. If your pug is prone to infections, medications can be

prescribed by your vet.

5. Look at your pug's belly, armpits and under the tail during grooming to check for rashes. Some pugs are prone to contact allergies from grass, even in your own back yard. If your pug develops a rash, ask your vet for ways you might treat it since rashes develop from so many things—from food to backyard allergens. Here are some good sites that address dog rashes:  
[Dog Allergies](#)  
[Dog Food Allergies](#)  
[Canine Skin Allergies](#)
6. If you hear tapping on hardwood floors or tile as your pug walks, then it is time to trim her nails. Pug's nails usually have to be trimmed about every two weeks, but this depends on your pug's activity level. Many pug owners prefer having the vet or groomer do nail trims, not only because most pugs hate having their nails trimmed, but also because the black nails make it difficult to see the quick. If you wish to trim your pug's nails at home, have a professional show you how to do it properly first. Fair warning: If you cut the quick, the toenail will bleed a lot, and it will be painful for your pug. When trimming your pug's nails always have styptic powder available. Styptic powder is the remedy of choice because it has both anti-bacterial and pain-relieving ingredients in addition to coagulating properties. If you don't have styptic powder, you can use corn starch, flour, baking soda or unscented baby powder.
7. Check your pug's ears frequently and gently remove any wax buildup with a thin, soft cloth or cotton gauze. We don't recommend using cotton swabs since it is very easy to hurt your pug with them. If there is excessive wax, or if you notice a foul odor, speak to your vet about prescribing an ear wash or drops. If the buildup is brownish-red, it is yeast; talk to your vet when this happens. Here is a good website on cleaning pugs' ears:  
<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/caring-for-a-pugs-ears-and-wrinkles.html>
8. Brush your pug's teeth using a pet toothbrush and a dog-safe paste. You can start getting a pug used to teeth brushing by putting some peanut butter on your finger and rubbing their teeth and gums. Once the pug accepts this cleaning ritual, it is time to work up to doggie toothpaste (which often smells and tastes like chicken!). Lift the cheek flaps to get the back teeth. Some pug owners prefer to use the soft rubber "finger gloves" (which fit over the index finger) when brushing teeth. A local vet tech suggests saving the used toothbrush heads from Sonicare or electric toothbrushes, and using those for your dog's teeth. Whatever works is what is best for you and your pug! The important thing is to do it. If you brush your pug's teeth regularly, it will become easier for both you and your pug.
9. Does your pug scoot her bottom along your carpet, the driveway, or the grass in the park? This usually doesn't mean worms; instead it often indicates full anal sacs. Some pugs need their anal glands expressed (squeezed by hand) regularly. Most of us really don't even want to learn how to do this for a couple of reasons—mainly because it smells horrible—so we take our pugs to the groomer. If you really want to learn how to express your pug's anal glands, have your groomer or vet show you how, or look at a good YouTube instructional video.
10. Pugs can get a buildup of dried "stuff" on their nose. The technical term for this is nasodigital hyperkeratosis, or thickening of the keratin (upper layer of the nose). It's like the rough skin that shows up on your heels during the summer months. An easy way to remove it is by applying Bag Balm (which the pug is less likely to lick off) or Vaseline on the top of the nose and wiping gently, repeating again the next day. One of our vets recommends using an unfragranced vitamin E/aloe lotion or cream because some pugs resist the smell of bag balm or other creams. Then your pug will have a shiny black nose for pug play dates. [Pugvillage.com](#) addressed this issue in a recent [forum](#).
11. Face it: Pugs shed! If your pug has an excessive shedding problem, there are a few different ways to deal with it. For example, a good rub-down with a rubber glove every day can help.

Using a de-shedding brush or tool such as a Furminator to finish removing excess hair when your pug is dry can help with her shedding problem. Groomers offer a bath & brush-out, which helps thin a pug's coat more than one would think.

Our pugs rely on us to help keep them healthy and happy. While some of these grooming steps are easily done at home, many pug owners take their pugs to the groomer or vet instead for the more involved tasks. Most local groomers will bathe, clean ears and facial wrinkles, express anal glands, and trim nails for a very reasonable fee. Even if your pug doesn't like every single one of these steps, she will get more accustomed to regular grooming over time and will even come to enjoy it! Happy grooming!