

Grooming the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

By Mike Wells <wellsgriffons@gmail.com>

There has been an ongoing and endless discussion about grooming and maintaining the Griffons coat for as long as the Griffon has been around. There is a ton of confusion and a lot of bad information out there.

Let's talk about grooming at home.

This has been an ongoing topic for countless years. Regardless of what anyone says, there is only one CORRECT method of care for any wirehair coat; and that is by stripping the coat. (Pulling the dead hair from the root) Shaving a Griffon should absolutely never be considered an option, as that is a sure-fire way to completely destroy your Griffons wirehair coat.

I find that many people are confused by what hand stripping actually consists of. The truth is, it is very simple and there is no need to over complicate it; but first, it is extremely important to know the difference between **stripping** (pulling dead hair from the root) and cutting hair off the dog; **that is not stripping**.

It is very important to know the damage that is caused by cutting the hair of a wirehair coat, rather than stripping the dead hair out. Doing this (cutting the hair from the dog) will ruin the integrity of a wirehair coat; in turn the hair will grown back of a lesser softer quality and will mat and pick up burs extremely easily (think soft Velcro). Continued miss-care by cutting hair off the dog will further and further destroy your dog's coat until it is no longer a wirehair coat.

So many people misuse the purpose of the **Mars Coat King**. It was never intended to be used as a stripping tool or a brush to brush your dog, simply put... **IT IS NOT A STRIPPING TOOL**. It is intended to cut through mats. It will cut through any and all hair that gets in its way.

The Mars Coat King cut a pile of hair off your dog the size of a Shihtzu, so it must work?? Yes it does in fact work very well at ruining a wirehair coat. That pile of shiny healthy hair on the ground is the hair that should be left on the dog.

The Coat King does have a great purpose and that is for cutting through mats. The armpit area, under the belly, legs and beard are the usual suspected areas for matting. Even then I would suggest using scissors to split the mat, then pull the rest out with a comb. This will avoid cutting more hair out than needed.

(The only area I ever cut hair from is the armpits. Face mats will pull out with a comb, but it can be difficult and your dog needs to be used to this.)

Mats on the body are dead hair build up that will be removed by stripping them out, (pulling them out) use a metal comb to pull those out.

Depending on your Griffon's coat type, there are different methods to make grooming at home easy. My favorite for people is a fine tooth metal comb, a micro metal comb, or a flea comb. All of which are very effective at removing dead hair.

The important thing to remember is, the metal combs are intended to remove dead hair, not to comb the hair or de-tangle the hair. If the hair is giving the comb resistance, that is the dead hair, pull harder and the comb will pull out the dead hair and leave the healthy hair. This works best if your dog is dirty or damp.

Depending on your dog's coat type will tell you which comb will work best. I use the smallest and tightest metal comb on all of my dogs, but they are very used to it and they know it doesn't hurt.

You can also use your fingers to hand strip your dog. This method is efficient but can be very time consuming if your dog has a lot of hair. Stripping knives also work well, but I don't advise using those unless you are taught how to properly use them.

Griffon people should never own a furminator, there is no reason whatsoever for that tool to be used on a Griffon. It also cuts hair and will quickly ruin a wirehair coat.

If you don't have the time to groom your dog at home a professional groomer is always an option.

Taking your Griffon to the groomer

If you decide to take your dog to a professional groomer, you need to be very specific in telling your groomer exactly what you want done.

Groomers who are educated or specialize in hand stripping are very few and far in between. You will be wrong to assume any groomer you take your dog to will automatically know how to correctly care for your Griffon. Very few groomers are trained in hand stripping.

It is important to tell your groomer not to cut any hair on your dog other than pads of the feet, around the feet and sanitary areas. Also ear hair pulled if preferred. (It's always good to leave a little hair there for protection) Your groomer should have ear cleaner. You will want to request the use of ear cleaner, the ear cleaner will evaporate any water that may have gotten in the ear canal from bathing, this will help avoid ear infections. If your Griffon has thick hair underneath the ear, you can request that be thinned out; for the ear to be able to breathe better. This also helps avoid ear infections.

You should feel very confident in knowing that your groomer knows exactly what you want done before leaving your dog. I've heard way to many horror stories of people returning to pick up their once beautiful, now shaved Griffon.

Don't let any groomer suggest an attachment blade to "take a little off the top", this is also cutting the hair and will ruin your dog's wirehair coat.

If your groomer is not experienced in hand stripping, which will likely be the case. Ask for a bath and blow out only. Done correctly this process will get rid of the majority of the dead hair.

This comb is larger will cover more area, it is good for weekly maintenance.

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B014QK743A/ref=mp_s_a_1_7?ie=UTF8&qid=1549912166&sr=8-7&keywords=fine+tooth+metal+grooming+comb&dpPI=1&dpID=41BtqSqqNpL&ref=plSrch

This comb is smaller and tighter, it is more efficient and will remove more dead hair, it is also great for face and beard.

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B0002AQUQG/ref=sxbs_sxwds-stvp_6?ie=UTF8&qid=1549912345&sr=6&th=1&psc=1

Both styles of combs on this page are a good option.

https://www.amazon.com/Conair-PGRDCMD-ConairPRO-Medium-Comb/dp/B005KSOASA/ref=sr_1_45?crid=4SBBYJLXSHM&keywords=metal%2Bgrooming%2Bcomb%2Bfor%2Bdogs&qid=1549918278&s=gateway&prefix=Metal%2Bgrooming%2Bcom%2Caps%2C230&sr=8-45&th=1