

# Essential Grooming Tools

If you are planning on showing your dog or if you just want to keep your pet in tip top condition, getting the right grooming tools is an important consideration. Since Maltese has a long coat type, selecting the right equipment is somewhat challenging, but doesn't need to be impossible. Always buy the best quality equipment you can afford as it will last long and typically leaves a more professional look to your Maltese's coat and overall appearance.

The basic needs include brushes, dryers, grooming tables and general supplies. The following general rules apply to the selection of these four categories.

## Brushes and Combs

The most common grooming tools required include brushes and combs. When you go to the pet store there is an amazing and rather mind boggling array of various specialty brushes and grooming products, however all you really need are the basics. A key brush is a boars bristle brush that is an ideal tool for long-haired breeds. It can get through to the undercoat and is very useful in removing tangles and mats. For long-haired dogs another essential brush is a pin brush which is great for detangling and getting to the undercoat. A standard grooming comb is important for touching up the hair on the legs, around the ruff and even on the tail and hindquarters.

## Dryers

For long coated breeds like the Maltese a dryer of some kind is important. A floor dryer is a good option. It is similar to a cage dryer but it has a very long arm, ensuring that you can really get the hair to poof up. A cage dryer is important if you need to be able to contain the dog while the coat is drying. Hand held dog dryers are also popular to really add that extra detail to the ruff and the breeches.

## Grooming Tables

Having your dog at the right height to be able to work comfortably means that you will do a better job. Getting a grooming table is a good investment and will make show and routine grooming easier. A grooming post and loop is the attachment to keep the dog safe and secure on the table. Tables should be the correct height and size, typically about 30 by 50 cm for small breeds and should have a non-skid and slip rubberized surface.

Once you have the basics and are ready to expand into more detailed work and more clipping and show preparation, there are some additions required to upgrade your basic supplies.

## Brushes and Coat Tools

There are a great number of specialty brushes and dog coat care tools on the market today. A general sampling of what can be found in most professional groomers tool kits will include:

**Mat Comb:** A thick, heavy comb with relatively wide set teeth. This is used with significant mats in longer haired dogs.

**Pin brushes:** Beyond the staple, there are many different sizes of pin brushes that are ideal for regular grooming and coat care.

**Stripping Knives:** These very sharp, slightly curved blades can be used to remove dead hair as well as trimming around the face and other sensitive areas.

**Rubber brush:** This is a very handy brush for short-coated dogs as it grasps the dead hair and pulls it out of the coat. Most are oval in shape and fit in the palm of the hand.

**Shedding blade:** A long flexible metal blade with a blunt serrated edge, perfect for heavy shedding breeds.

**Oster Clippers:** Model A2 with changeable heads this clipper is very effective and can be used with several different sizes of blades for added flexibility. Typically sold in any pet store this is also the clipper used by many professional groomers.

**Oster Clipper:** Model A5 this is a good general clipper with one size head. For beginners or those clipping one particular breed or style this is a good option.

**Clipper blades:** While good care of the clipper blades will add life, it is important to have replacement blades on hand just in case. Most carrying cases for the Oster Clipper have additional compartments for spare blades and other supplies.

**Oil:** The electric clipper will require lubricant and coolant while running to keep the blades in good condition. Always follow the manufacturers recommendations for blade care.

### **Miscellaneous Tools**

**Scissors:** A few different sizes of scissors, some with blunt ends and some with sharper ends are important for trimming up stray hairs or tidying up the head and face area.

**Curved scissors or shears:** For rounded areas on specialty cuts and doggy styles.

**Nail Clippers:** Nail scissors, guillotine or pliers models will work, typically scissors are best on small breeds, guillotine on medium and pliers style on large breeds.

**Hydraulic lift table:** This is a specialty grooming table for any type of dog but is typically used with large breeds. The lift or tailgate lowers down and then can be raised up to grooming comfort level. This table, like the folding or portable tables, is covered with a ribbed rubber surface for safety.

*Keep in mind that grooming supplies usually last a lifetime with good care, so talk to other groomers and experiment with different tools before deciding what you want and need.*