

How to brush *your cat*

Grooming not only keeps your kitty looking fabulous, it's also a good way to check on her and see if she's feeling feline fine—and watch for lumps, bumps, wounds, sores, fleas or those icky black specks that are actually flea dirt (flea feces).

1

Pick the right location. You're looking for somewhere stable where your cat feels safe, whether that's on her kitty climber or on your lap on the floor or the sofa.

2

Use the right tools. You might need:

- A flea comb
- A slicker brush
- Another type of brush. For example, bristle brushes aren't usually effective in getting through the coat, but they may remove loose hair and your cat may enjoy the sensation.
- Synthetic feline facial pheromone to soothe your kitty. Spray your implements with the pheromone and leave them out to dry for 30 minutes before you use them.

3

Start with rewards. Offer treats near the grooming location and tools. Choose a consistent time of day to practice grooming. After you've given treats in this area for several days, you can introduce the brush.

4

Ease into it. You want your cat to willingly approach the brush, and then reward the behavior with a treat. Gradually increase your interaction until your cat will let you brush or comb her head. After a few sessions you can try to start grooming down her neck and to other parts of her body. Keeping constant and firm contact with your cat will provide her a sense of security.

5

Start to decrease the number of rewards you offer once you've polished your routine. Just remember to wrap each grooming session with a tasty treat!



Tip for shorthaired cats

Start working with a comb, moving from head to tail. Then move on to a bristle or rubber brush to remove the loose hair.



Tip for longhaired cats

Work from the long hair on the legs to remove tangles and brush upward to remove the loose hair.



Note: If you and your kitty can't quite make home grooming work, your veterinary team can make a grooming recommendation to have your pet groomed at our practice or at a trusted groomer. Anti-anxiety support in the form of nutraceuticals, foods and other over-the-counter products your veterinarian recommends—and in some cases the use of prescription medications or even short-acting anesthetics—may be in the best interest of your cat.