

Why you SHOULD NOT shave your Golden Retrievers Coat

Some people mistakenly believe that shaving or severely clipping their Golden is a wonderful way to keep the dog cool and comfortable in warm weather. What they don't realize is that they're actually putting the dog at greater risk of health problems like skin cancer. Here's why:

A Golden is a double-coat breed. Its coat is made up of two parts – the long and smooth outer coat, and the soft and fuzzy undercoat. These two layers work together to protect the skin from sun, heat, cold and moisture. The fur acts as an insulator against ALL weather conditions. Double coated breeds were meant to work outside in all kinds of weather, and removing that coat does not make them cooler, but compromises their body's protection.

Dogs do not release heat through their skin. They "sweat" through the pads and feet, and release heat via panting. Removing their coat does not make them cooler, but rather exposes more of the skin's surface area to the sun and heat, making it more difficult to cool down. Furthermore, Golden Retrievers were bred to retrieve water fowl, the Golden's coat also acts as a water repellent and is designed so that dirt and debris is kept from the skin and brushes off easily.

Some people think shaving their Golden protects it against fleas and ticks, reduces shedding, and eliminates hot spots. Not true! The Golden will still shed, fleas and ticks are better controlled with a spot-on preventive, and hot spots can be controlled with a premium diet and supplements.

Simply put, there really isn't a good reason to shave your Golden. Instead of shaving away your Golden's natural protection, vigilantly guard your Golden's activity in the hot summer and follow the basic grooming steps below.

- **Brushing:** Provide regular brushing with a quality bristle brush, and if necessary, an undercoat rake. This simple act will significantly reduce shedding, and definitely promote family bonding.
- **Nails:** The Golden's nails grow fast and should be trimmed regularly. Long nails are uncomfortable for the dog and if left too long, interfere with proper walking ability. By trimming regularly, you need only clip off the tip of the nail using dog nail clippers. Don't take off too much or you will hit the inside quick and the nail will bleed. If it does bleed, the use of Kwik Stop Styptic Powder (with benzocaine) for dogs, cats, and birds is wonderful. Use of a nail file when complete will take off rough edges, protecting inside furnishings and your skin should they want to place their paw on you.
- **Feet:** Using round nose grooming shears, trim the hair around the pads, keeping the length even with the pads. Golden Retrievers tend to grow "slippers" – fuzzy hair that protrudes from the top and sides of the feet. Keeping this hair trimmed will provide better traction as well as reduce matting and tracking in sand and dirt.
- **Ears:** Golden Retrievers ears require some general grooming on the inside and outside. The hair on the inside of the ear should be kept thin with the use of round nose thinning shears and grooming shears. Hair covering the outer part of the ear and along the edges should also be kept neat. The inside of the ear should be checked and cleaned regularly. Golden Retrievers have a tendency to get ear infections. To prevent this from occurring, clean the ears weekly with a quality ear cleansing solution. (Purple Solution)
- **Tail:** The Golden Retrievers tail should be groomed to look like a fan when extended. The best way is to twist the end, put your thumb just below the end of the tail bone and trim the end near your thumb. Then, working from the end, carefully form a fan toward the base of the tail.