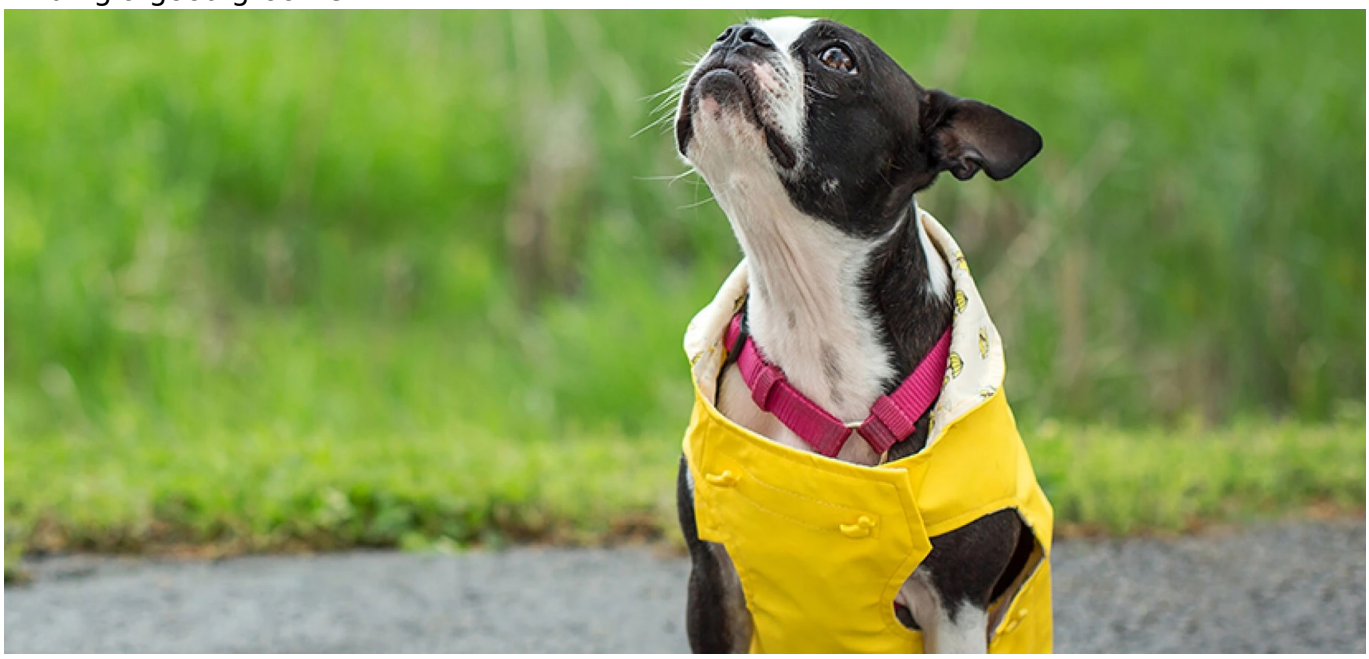
Finding a good groomer



Grooming resources

Finding a good groomer

Visits to the groomer on a regular basis are a fact of life for many puppies, and finding a good groomer can make this outing something your puppy learns to enjoy (rather than dread). Let's look at our tips for finding a suitable groomer for your dog.

Get referals.

Word of mouth is a great place to start. Ask your veterinarian for recommendations. Ask other dog parents where they go. A call to other pet professionals, such as trainers, boarding kennels and pet sitters may also give you some good leads.

Visit the salon.

What sort of atmosphere does the facility have? It may be busy and there will probably be a dog or two barking but there should still be a certain calm about the place. Hectic racing about means something isn't right.

How do they handle the dogs?

Most groomers are quite matter-of-fact because that is an effective way to handle puppies, but matter-of-fact does not imply harsh or mean. You're looking for a groomer who will use gentle persistence with fidgety puppies, and who obviously adores puppies and doesn't get impatient or unduly stressed. A large window in the grooming area is an excellent sign; it means the groomer has nothing to hide. Absence of a window doesn't imply that there is anything wrong but, given a choice between equally well-recommended facilities, the window is a selling point.

One thing you don't ever want to see is a puppy standing alone on the table with a grooming noose on. This is a loop that hangs from an arm above the pup's head and it is a normal piece of equipment. It allows the groomer to control the pup and do their work. But, leaving a pup unattended in a grooming noose and doing other things? Never!

Ask questions. How many dogs per day does the groomer book? If they try to schedule too many dogs in per day they may be forced to rush to get things done.

Rushing is not the way to handle an anxious puppy, and most puppies are anxious during their first few visits. Discuss pricing. Go ahead, pay a bit more for a groomer who does fewer dogs a day and who will have a bit more time for your puppy.

The first couple of grooming experiences your puppy has will largely determine how they feel about groomers in the future. So make every effort to ensure your puppy has a pleasant time. If you've allowed your puppy to get matted, then the first visit will take longer and cost more. If your puppy is very matted then shaving may be the only option. If this is the case don't blame the groomer. Instead have them teach you how to maintain your pup's coat properly so this will never be necessary again.

Have they groomed your puppy's breed before?

Some groomers will groom to each breed standard, and some groom to their own preference. Asking to look at photos of similar grooming jobs is a way to see, ahead of time, if this groomer's style is appealing to you or not. After all this research, make your choice. Chances are good you'll be in excellent hands. Once you find someone who likes your pup and does a fine job, take extra good care of that person. He or she will be someone you see every few months for the life of your puppy.

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