

The Australian Shepherd is the perfect breed to have if you want a dog with low maintenance.

They have a double coat that keeps them warm and needs very little trimming. Australian Shepherds are hardy working dogs with thick double coats that keep them warm and protect them from sticks, burrs and the other hazards of corralling livestock. With proper care these dogs need very little trimming, but sometimes it is necessary to remove mats to resolve coat problems, for the dog's comfort or for the owner's convenience. Whether you choose to do a lot or a little depends on the reason behind the trimming.

FEET

Australian Shepherds tend to get long hair on their feet, and keeping this trimmed helps them to be more comfortable and to look neat. Carefully lift any hair from between the dog's toes and from inside the pads on the underside of the foot. To give the foot a clean appearance, trim the hair off the top of foot so it doesn't stick up above the toes. The hair should also not stick out beyond the end of the dog's toes, but should stop just at the edge of the toenails, giving the foot a compact, rounded look. Clip the nails short as well. Lift the dog's foot and scissor the hair underneath so that the length of the hair is even with the bottom of the pads to finish the foot.

EARS

Use thinning shears to remove any thick or long hair from around the dog's ears. By thinning, instead of just clipping the hair off, you get a result that looks blended, with no abrupt edges in the coat. The bottom area on the back of each ear is especially prone to matting, along with the section at the bottom directly in front of the ear opening. Carefully comb the hair in these areas and remove any hair that is overly long or thick.

FEATHERS

The term "feathers" refers to the long, silky hair on the backs of all four legs of an Australian Shepherd. These can become tangled or matted, and many owners choose to trim the feathers to minimize grooming requirements. While the feathers on the front legs and the lower part of the back legs are usually relatively thin, the hair that grows up the back legs and onto the dog's rear, often called the britches, can sometimes be quite thick and may require trimming to keep it clean. Use **thinning shears** to remove excess hair in the britches area, under the tail and below the anus, so that nothing sticks to it when the dog defecates.

BODY

While you can clip an Australian Shepherd's body hair, it generally isn't necessary unless the **dog's coat or skin is damaged** in some way. If you choose to trim the coat, use electric clippers and cut along the dog's back and sides, moving the clippers in the direction the hair is growing. Leave at least an inch of hair on Aussies, to protect their skin and to help them avoid problems such as **sunburn**. The double coat of an Australian Shepherd also may not grow back right if you cut it too short.