

Animal Friends Presents Rabbit Grooming Basics

Just like dogs and cats, regular brushing helps keep rabbits' fur in healthy condition. Brushing can also be a very enjoyable activity for you and your rabbit.

When you settle down to brush your bunny, be patient and give her praise and a special treat. Begin by just petting her. Then, let her get used to the brush a little at a time.

After your rabbit gets used to brushing, start a weekly brushing routine. This not only removes loose fur on a regular basis, but helps to get rabbits ready for those times of the year when they shed their fur, and daily or twice daily brushing is required.

Remember that rabbits have extremely delicate skin. Use a gentle touch when brushing, combing, or plucking out debris. We like to use rubber brushes or dampened hands for regular weekly grooming. During heavier seasonal sheds, you may need to switch to a sturdier (plastic or metal) comb or brush to remove loose fur. When using these tools, avoid brushing too deeply or forcefully. Keep one hand on your rabbit to avoid pulling the skin. We do not recommend using Furminator-type brushes, as these have been known to cause skin abrasions on rabbits.

Be sure to use gentle care when removing matted fur. Never remove a mat by cutting it unless you are 100% certain that it is just fur that you are cutting. Quite often, skin can be folded up within the mat and is difficult to detect. The safest way to eliminate a mat is to work the end of a rat-tailed comb gently into the coat to create a small opening that can then be picked apart using your fingers. Don't try to get it all at once, as it may take several tries to remove the matted fur completely. Do what your rabbit comfortably tolerates.

If you want to learn more about rabbit grooming, including the basics of nail trimming, ear cleaning and scent gland cleaning, join us for the Bunny Grooming Workshop at Animal Friends University! Visit www.ThinkingOutsideTheCage.org to find out when the next session is!

