



## Tips for Bathing your Frenchie

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Regular bathing is important, but what if he freaks out every time you try to get him in the tub? These techniques help make bath time more relaxing.

Some dogs love having a bath; to them, it's just another romp in the water. Others tremble and whine, shivering pitifully or struggling to escape until the ordeal is over. If your dog falls into the latter category, you might be tempted to avoid the problem by just never bathing your dog. But most pooches eventually do need a bath. So how do you make the experience more tolerable and comfortable?

### How often should he be bathed?

There's no right answer to how often a dog needs a bath. It depends on many factors, such as his lifestyle and coat type.

If your dog spends lots of time exploring woods and ponds, or meeting interesting animals such as skunks, he's going to need a bath more often than the dog who only ventures outdoors for leashed walks. Dogs with long or thick coats tend to collect more dirt on their travels and therefore require more frequent bathing.

Some dogs, meanwhile, have skin conditions that may warrant regular bathing with special shampoos or other treatments.

"A full bath at shedding season – spring and fall/winter – helps bring in the new coat," adds veterinarian Dr. Mark Newkirk.

### What's actually scaring him?

If your dog makes a run for it whenever it's bath time, start by trying to evaluate what might be making him anxious.



- Make sure you are using a soap and shampoo formulated especially for dogs; human products can be too harsh and can cause skin irritation that may leave the dog feeling itchy, uncomfortable and even more anxious after the bath. Natural shampoos, such as Pure Pooch All Natural Shampoo for Dogs are much gentler and easier on the skin than commercial products. Pure Pooch lathers quickly and rinses easily, minimizing time spent in the tub – and consequently reducing bath stress. A shampoo that leaves your dog's skin feeling good will help him feel calmer about being bathed.
- Check that your dog is comfortable in the basin or tub you are using. It should be large enough that he can turn around, but small enough that he doesn't feel overwhelmed. Try different basins, tubs or sinks to see if he has a preference. Always place a rubber mat on the bottom, so the dog has solid footing.
- It's also important to make sure your dog has secure footing on surfaces around the bathing area, such as tile or stainless steel. The Ezee-Visit Pet Vet Mat, for example, has an oilcloth top and an antimicrobial nonskid padded bottom that gives dogs safe and stable footing on potentially slippery surfaces. A dog that feels physically secure will also feel more emotionally secure.
- Consider the possibility that something in the bathing environment might be frightening him – it may be the sound of water running or draining, the unfamiliar surroundings of the bathroom or laundry room, or even the lighting or the way your voice echoes in a tub or shower area.

- Make sure he's exposed to water outside of bath time. Walk around a lake or along a creek and encourage him get his paws wet. On warm days, fill a kiddie pool with an inch or two of water and add squeaky toys for playtime. Or encourage a game of fetch around a sprinkler.

### Back to square one

Another technique is to simply try giving the bath experience a fresh start. You need to make it pleasant rather than something to be afraid of, and that takes time, so be patient.

1. First, coax your dog to visit the empty tub or basin when there's no water in it. Scatter a few toys or treats inside and encourage him to jump in to retrieve them.
2. As he gets more confident, add just enough water to cover his feet. Don't use soap or shampoo at this point; just make it fun for him to get in the tub, splash around, and get out.
3. Gradually work your way up to an actual bath. Always have plenty of treats on hand, and keep the sessions brief.
4. Remain calm and reassuring – your dog will pick up on any anxiety you may be feeling. Quiet music may help.
5. Enlist a helper so one of you can secure the dog and tend to his well being while the other gets the bathing done. If you don't have another set of hands, look for products such as the Pet Wash. It attaches to the wall to keep your dog comfortably secure during bathing. "It safely holds the animal in place and at arms' reach under the shower head or tub faucet without harming him," says marketing representative Maitte Van Arsdelm. "[Having both hands free] makes the owner more relaxed, and that confidence is passed along to the animal, making the whole experience easy and fun."

### Keep him clean in between

To minimize the number of baths your dog needs, take simple steps to keep him clean between times.

- Brush your dog frequently to remove dirt, undercoat or sticky substances that may have dried on his hair. Carefully remove mats or tangles before they become unmanageable.
- Vacuum the house frequently and keep your dog's bedding laundered to minimize doggie odor.
- Doggie wipes, such as Omega Paw Solutions' Paw & Body Sanitizing Wipes, are useful to have on hand. "Wipes are a good in-between bath solution for when you just want to

freshen up your dog," says Sales and Marketing Associate Ashley Price. "They're moist and durable enough to clean and sanitize all four paws – plus they have a pleasant lavender scent."

### From the inside out

Allergies, dry itchy skin, hot spots and other skin conditions can leave your dog feeling anxious much of the time, let alone during a bath. Consider what you are putting into his body. A high quality diet and supplementation with essential fatty acids will help keep his coat and skin healthy.

Biotin is another essential nutrient for skin health. It helps with the synthesis of fatty acids and aids in metabolizing carbohydrates and proteins, maximizing the nutritional value of the dog's diet. BioCoat from Nickers International is rich in biotin and good for dry skin, scratching and poor coat quality.

Calming solutions may also help. Dr. Newkirk suggests valerian root and skullcap, two natural remedies for relieving anxiety. Check with a holistic practitioner to determine the dosage for your dog. "Bach flowers, such as Rescue Remedy, are helpful too," he adds.

### Seek help

If all else fails, consider turning bathtime over to a groomer. The professional equipment and handling may help your dog feel more comfortable. Groomers are also experienced in working with different canine personalities. Screen your groomer carefully and choose one who is good with anxious dogs, and who uses holistic products.

No dog should be afraid of baths. By eliminating or minimizing potential fear triggers, using soothing natural products, offering praise and treats, and staying calm and reassuring, your dog should soon start to feel more comfortable and secure.

