

## Rabbit Grooming Guide

Grooming your pet rabbit is an important part of their care routine, as it helps maintain their health and appearance and helps to keep them comfortable.

Rabbits usually have two large moults yearly to shed their winter and summer coats, with smaller moults in between. However, rabbits that are kept indoors tend to moult all year round.

Due to the regular moulting, we as owners need to assist in removing the loose coat through brushing regularly, as this can greatly help reduce the amount of fur consumed by your rabbit when grooming themselves. Bloating in bunnies is a very serious condition. It can be caused by fur ingesting, especially during moulting seasons, so it is essential that brushing is done on a regular schedule.

Grooming also helps us to create a bond with our pets, practice safe handling and to keep an eye on their general health such as looking out for:

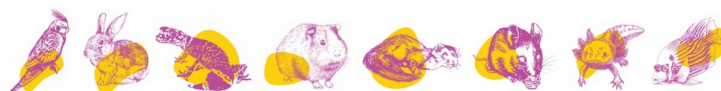
- Any weight loss
- Lumps and bumps
- Wounds and injuries are hidden by fur
- Uncomfortable matting
- Messy bottoms

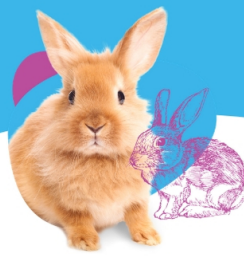


### How to introduce your rabbit to grooming

Most bunnies strongly dislike being handled and groomed; however, it is essential to keep them healthy and comfortable. When you begin grooming for the first time, you should start nice and slow and keep the sessions short while gradually extending the length of each session.

Always have treats within close reach to reward your bunny every step of the way and make for a positive experience. Lots of hard work and time can be quickly undone by a negative experience.










- It helps to place your rabbit on a high surface, such as a bench, with a towel, blanket or bathmat underneath them to aid traction. It can be very scary for a bunny to be on a slippery surface. They tend to run away when kept on the floor as they can easily see ways to escape.
- If using a brush right away is too scary, start by using your hands to gently 'brush' off the loose coat and gently pluck any large, obvious clumps of fur.
- Gradually increase each session. If your bunny tolerates it, start to add in different brushes.

### What do I do about matting?

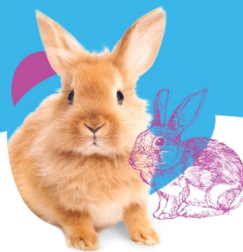
If you find any mats on your bunny, they can be difficult to remove, and they are very uncomfortable as they create tension on the skin and do not allow for proper movement. Please avoid using scissors to remove the mats, as you can risk unintentionally cutting your bunnies' skin. It is best to contact an experienced bunny groomer in your area to help remove the mats by shaving them or contact your local Unusual Pets Vets clinic to book a quick clip to remove them. Bunnies have very delicate skin, so you can run the risk of cutting their skin when using electric clippers at home if you are inexperienced.

### Tools, brushes, and their uses

Understanding what brush or comb your rabbit needs will help make the grooming process easier and for both you and your rabbit.

<b>Slicker Brush</b>	Good for maintaining the coat and brushing through looser tangles. Wont help to remove matting.	
<b>Comb</b>	Helpful for maintaining a tangle free coat and checking for matting at the skin (especially useful for longer coated breeds)	
<b>Furminator or similar</b>	Can help with removing a large amount of loose undercoat, wouldn't recommend for longer coated breeds as can damage the top coat. Very easy to create bald spots.	
<b>Furbuster Comb</b>	A simple comb with rubber band that is great for catching large clumps of loose fur. DIY version using a rubber band and a dog grooming comb.	
<b>Hands</b>	Using just your hands can be helpful with very shy and nervous bunnies. Manual plucking can be done to remove obviously loose clumps of fur, however it is very easy to over pluck and cause bald spots.	



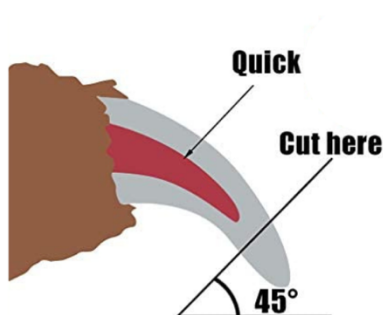


## Other handy equipment

- Nail clippers
- Potassium permanganate + cotton tips (for nail clipping, available at the chemist)
- Nutritious treats
- Towel, blanket or bath matt

## How to cut your rabbits nails

Rabbit's nails can grow quickly and become sharp, so it's important to trim them regularly; this, however, can be a daunting experience. Watching a video tutorial or booking an appointment with one of our experienced nurses to demonstrate how to cut nails can be helpful.



The most important part of nail clipping is to ensure you do not cut the nail too short and cut the quick (the blood vessel inside the nail) as you can make them bleed. If you cut the quick and the nail bleeds, you can dampen a cotton tip, dip it into potassium permanganate, and press it into the bleeding nail, which will stem the bleeding.

**Pro tip:** *prepare this before you begin trimming, and try not to spill the powder, as it can stain skin and surfaces when wet.*

Begin slowly. You don't have to cut all your rabbits' nails in one session. The best way to hold them is to cradle them like a baby and to have a second person cut the nails for you, or you can do this on your own if you are confident. Alternatively, you can leave your bunny standing on a towel on the bench, gently expose each paw whilst leaning over the top of them, hugging them into your body and trim slowly.

Remember to always be gentle and patient when grooming your rabbit, and never force them to do anything that will make them uncomfortable. If you have concerns about your rabbit's health or grooming needs, consult with your [Unusual Pet Vets](http://www.unusualpetvets.com.au) team.

