

Grooming and Maintenance

Grooming Wool Breeds (Long Hair)



Tools needed: Pet Blower, Wide tooth pet comb, slicker brush, flea comb, spray bottle with water.

I can't say enough to INVEST in a BLOWER for your angoras! If you can't afford a pet blower get a decent shop vac with a reducer attachment. A hair dryer will not put out enough air to actually groom the bunny. I prefer a non-heated 4HP blower.

I start my grooming session with a light once over with my blower. This helps me find any matts I might need to pay special attention to and knocks the initial "bunny dust" off the rabbit. I start behind the ears, moved down the back, then both sides, and finish up at the rear. I don't spend too much time on this initial blowing unless I am getting quite a bit of dander or loose hair coming off. If I am getting quite a bit of loose hair, the coat may be changing or fixing to moult and I will be very careful to keep combing at a minimum. Even if you are ready to shear it is better to blow out the dander and tangles first so it's ready to use right off the rabbit. Using a powerful blower will also help move webbing away from the skin so it is easier to deal with .

Start at the bottom and work your way up. Matts are mostly likely to occur behind ears, behind legs, around tail area and under the chin/chest area. Pay attention to the underside of the rabbit. If the rabbit does not like to be held upside down for grooming, you can lay them in your lap with its ears between your knees. Make sure your knees are elevated so that the rabbit is not hanging head down.



Most of your grooming can be done with a comb with widely spaced teeth. Brush the hair back with your hand and work on the under coat a little bit at a time. Don't try to pull the comb just straight through. A gentle rocking motion will take out less hair. If you plan to show density of hair is important. The earlier webbing is removed the less hair you will loose. I alternate between using my Doggyman(Miller's forge) brand slicker brush and my wide toothed comb. Both are used with a light touch.

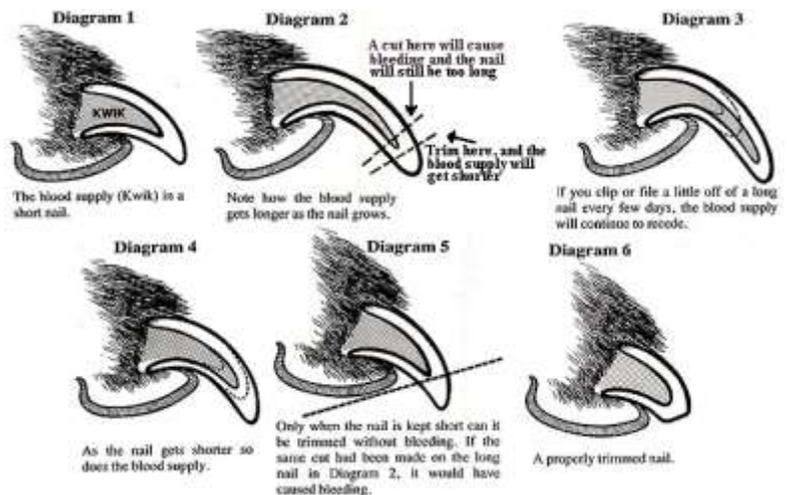
If you find a matt, hold it at the base while you work it out. Bunnies have delicate skin and you and easily rip a chunk off if you are just pulling at the matt itself. Don't try to just comb through a matt, grasp each side and pull it apart first. A seam ripper can be a useful tool if the wool is matted too tightly to pull apart. Insert it behind the matt and push outward slicing the matt. Then try to pull the matt apart again.

If you need a video on grooming Lil Peck of angorarabbit.com has a good one at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHgdoV5fBV0>

When bunny starts getting a bit restless, give them a bit of a break and a small treat. Grooming sessions should start short, and gradually work up longer so that the bunny learns some patience. Remember you can ONLY use water and NO colorants or coat improvers at a show. Use a wet wipe or a water dampened q-tip to clean the scent glands around the vent area. Wipe the ears clean inside with a wet wipe and double check to make sure the tattoo is readable.

Toenail clipping

Check your rabbit's toenails once a week to make sure they are not getting too long. Long toenails can catch in cage wire and pull out and when they come back in they are often white which will disqualify your rabbit from competition. In a worst case the rabbit can get a toenail caught and break a leg which usually means they will have to be put down. Trimming them often is the best prevention for this. Push the wool back from the rabbits foot and expose the toenail. Clip off the end being careful to not clip the quick which is what supplies the blood. If you DO accidentally draw blood, do not panic. They will not bleed to death from a short toenail. Put them down and it will stop bleeding fairly soon, or apply a styptic pencil or cayenne pepper to the toenail to stop bleeding. You can trim toenails with any pet nail trimmer or even a human toenail trimmer.



Vaccinations and Worming

We are always asked what vaccinations rabbits get- our answer is NONE. The only thing the rabbits receive on a regular basis is we worm with Ivomec. We use the cattle liquid and dose orally at a rate of .03cc per pound. We do this from 2-6 times a year depending on how the rabbits condition is looking. We actually do this as much for wool mite as we actually do for worms since our rabbits are kept in cages that keep them out of their droppings.

Checking Teeth

Try to check your rabbits teeth on a regular basis. Sometimes a rabbit that has been doing well will catch teeth on a feeder, or cage wire and pull them out of alignment. If you catch it quickly and keep them trimmed they will usually grow out correctly again. If they are left out of alignment for a long period you will not only have a bunny you can't show, but one that will require tooth trimming the rest of their lives.