

Why Do Pets Hate Baths?



The mention of the word ‘bath’ and your pooch hot-footing it to the nearest hideaway?

You’re not alone. This is every pet-parent’s reality. And, it’s not a coincidence. We may unwittingly have a lot to do with it.

Let’s see what cardinal sins we’ve been committing while bathing our pet, and see if we can turn bathing into a positive experience for him.

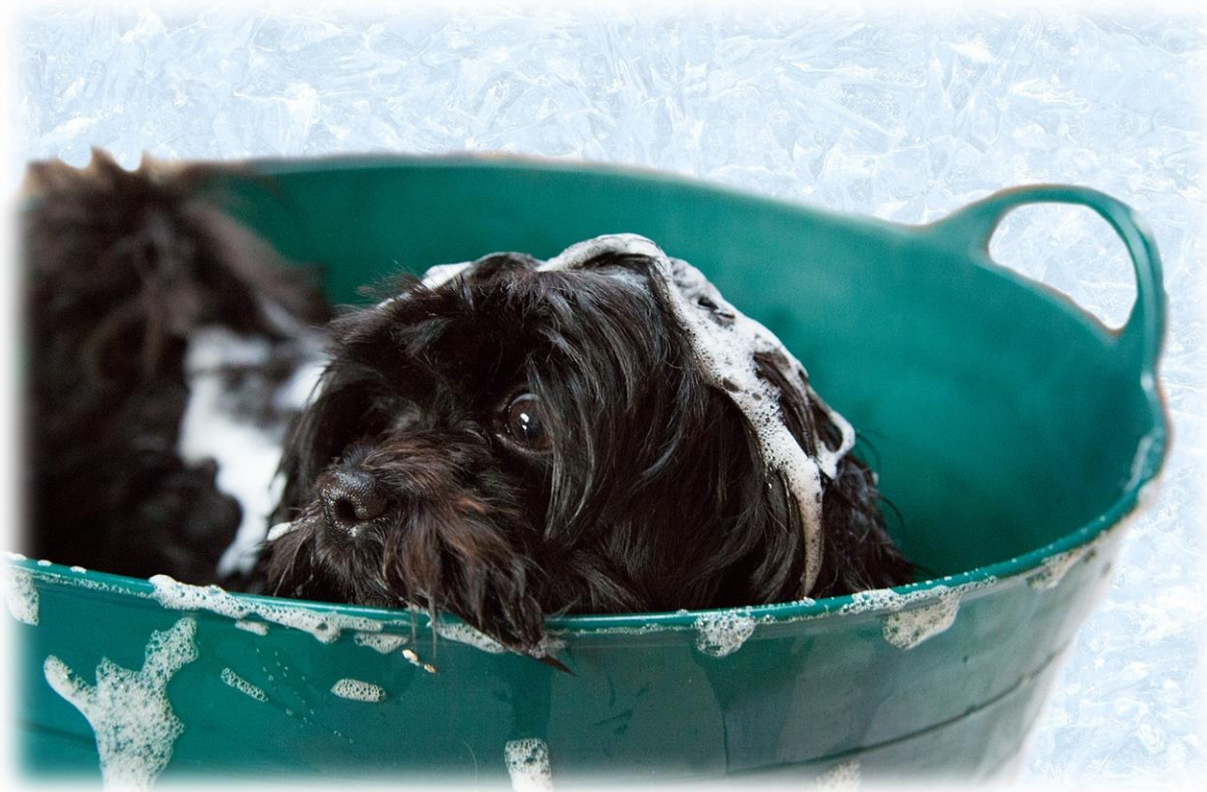
Stop Bath-time Battles

1. Don’t Make Your Pet Feel Cornered



Bath-time doesn't always have to mean you chasing your dog or cat down the hallway and dragging him into the tub for a scrub-down. It encourages your dog to run away from you when you call him. How about trying it a little differently instead, by coaxing him with a treat and leading him to the bathroom with gentle, encouraging words. This kind of sets the tone for the rest of the experience for your pet. So why not make it nice?

2. Neither Hot nor Cold



The temperature of the bathwater plays an important role while bathing your furry friend. It should neither be too hot, nor should it be too cold. Lukewarm is what you should aim for.

And how do you test that? By spraying the nozzle on the forearm, as that area of skin is the most sensitive. Another thing to keep in mind if filling up the bath tub, is, to never do it with your pet nearby, as the sound of rushing water may upset your already nervous pet. So have it ready, before you bring him inside.

3. Not on the Face Please!



Dousing your pet's face with running water is a bad idea. Our dogs and cats, who are wired differently from us, definitely don't appreciate the feeling of water splashing them on their snouts. It can be quite overwhelming for them actually. A washcloth on the face might be a much better idea, as it gets the job done, without making your pet uncomfortable.

And care needs to be taken while rinsing under their necks and the top of their heads. Their nose and chin need to be kept at a safe angle away from the water, so that the water doesn't get into their eyes and nose.

And instead of aiming the water jet straight onto their coats, at least initially, it may be a better idea to let the water hit the back of your hand, as you move the nozzle across their body.

4. No Yelling



Start every bath by calmly saying the word 'bath' to your pet before taking her near the tub. This sets the expectation of the pet right by minimizing surprises. While bathing and drying her, praise her generously for cooperating to make the pet feel good about the experience. (In case you're wondering, it's scientifically proven that your pet understands all of your words and tones.)

Once the bath is complete, offer your pet his favorite treat, so that it reinforces the good behavior of staying calm and cooperating during bath-time.

5. They're Called Pet Shampoos For a Reason



Never use a human shampoo on your pet. Even if it is labelled mild, natural or baby shampoo. The pH of the shampoo will still be very different from a pet's shampoo that is better suited for its skin type. And human shampoos can be quite drying for pets.

The best thing to do would be to consult your pet's veterinarian for product recommendation, as he or she will also have a history of your pet's allergies etc.

An oatmeal shampoo is generally a milder option for pets, but if your pet has sensitive skin or has skin infections then he may need a medicated shampoo specific to his treatment.

6. Pain-free Brushing and Drying



If your dog has long hair and a thick coat, brushing after a bath can be tricky. In such cases, what helps is brushing right before a bath and after you finish drying your pet.

It's important to ensure that there are no snags or knots in the fur, as they can make the experience quite painful for your pet. If he has tangled fur, a better bet would be to have a professional groomer take care of it initially and establishing a regular brushing routine thereafter.

For breeds that have a thick coat, (Like a Golden retriever or a German shepherd) the brushing can be started while the pet is still having a bath to help remove the excess undercoat, but for all other breeds it's

important to make sure that your pet is completely dry before you begin brushing him.

Some breeds may need for you to use a blow-dryer as towel drying may sometimes not be enough for their thick and long fur. But remember never to use a hot blow-dryer on your pet.

And blow-drying is generally an unpleasant experience for your pet as the noise unnerves them. Using it sparingly would be a good idea to make sure your pet doesn't end up with a bad taste in the mouth at the end of his so-far pleasant bathing experience!

7. How Often is Too Often?



Dogs and cats groom themselves naturally, and don't need very frequent bathing. A bath once every month should be sufficient to keep them clean. Bathing them too frequently can strip their skin and fur of natural oils that help retain their moisture, and can also cause dryness and flaking.

Amidst all the noise, the closed space and all the scrubbing, your soaped-up pet is far from happy during his bath.

And while having him step into the bath willingly will always remain a distant dream, with these steps, you can at least aim to make it a fast and easy experience for both you and your pet. Happy bathing!

References:

<http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/are-you-bathing-your-dog-wrong>

<http://www.petmd.com/dog/slideshows/7-common-bath-time-mistakes-pet-owners-make>

<http://www.dogster.com/lifestyle/5-common-mistakes-that-make-dogs-hate-bath-time>