



Expert Grooming Article



Chinese Shar Pei

Dating back to 200BC, this ancient breed was saved from extinction in China and registered with the Hong Kong KC and subsequently with the AKC gaining full registration in 1992. His silhouette, with the "hippopotamus" muzzle, loose skin and wrinkles combined with a compact, square body and harsh short coat makes this breed an interesting stand out and created great curiosity when they debuted in the show rings. His characteristic blue tongue does lend some thought to the rumours of long-ago associations with the Chow. Perhaps? Perhaps not? Nothing was recorded for posterity and he was primarily a peasant's dog, used for hunting, guarding and herding. (read more over page..)



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His high set tail is a breed characteristic showing anus uplifted and the tail base thick and round, tapering to a point.

Shar Pei is literally "sand skin" or "sandpaper-like coat" alluding to the standard request for a short and rough coat, without shine. A soft coat is a fault, so the emphasis is for that "must-have" harsh coat.

Now they do say extremely harsh coat, so our focus is to keep hydration and coat vigour, be kind to the skin as many Shar Pei's experience sensitive skin issues, and yet, keep this coat harsh and without shine.

The best routine you can undertake is to bath, oil and blow dry during the week and for the show, bath, and blow-dry without oiling. Blow drying ensures all the loose skin and wrinkles are dry and you are removing any dead hair regularly. Takes effort but is by far the best routine to get into.

It is a relatively simple procedure. You don't have oodles of coat, nor trimming to do. You just need to be consistent each and every week.

Between shows and for the show, bath with a mixture of half **Plush Puppy Sensitive Skin Shampoo** and half **Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening Shampoo**. Dilute both shampoos 1:5 (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water). The Sensitive Shampoo will assist the issues that many Shar Pei have.

The Whitening Shampoo is not softening and will tone the unwanted warm hues the coats can exhibit. This is especially evident when the coat is ready to shed and will work with all the solid colours of the Shar Pei. This is a great mix for both show and between times. The coat can get oily and be hard to cleanse, so this mix will make sense of it all for you.

For a dog that needs texture or added texture use **Plush Puppy Texture + Shampoo**. This is formulated to retain and improve coat texture. It thoroughly yet gently cleanses and deodorises the coat of wire, harsh or coarse coated breeds without softening or compromising texture. It is low irritant with a subtle apple fragrance, and full of beneficial and powerful natural extracts. Use diluted up to 1:10 or apply undiluted directly to areas requiring intensive cleansing. Rinse thoroughly.



When washing faces always use **Plush Puppy Let's Face It**. This is a hypoallergenic sulfate free low foaming shampoo designed just for faces.

It's no tear formula features the highest quality Blue Cypress Extracts, Panthenol with Pro Vitamin B and SugaNate. These special ingredients clean, soothe, add moisture, aid healing and have anti-inflammatory benefits. A small golf ball sized amounts directly to the face and eye area allows you to thoroughly clean without causing irritation. It can also be used in and around the ears with the same benefits. Its low foaming design allows ease of rinsing, yet complete cleaning.

Don't use conditioners with this breed as they will soften and flatten the coat. However, between shows you do need to make sure the skin and coat are hydrated. Use a little **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil**. Dilute 1 teaspoon into 2 Litres of warm water and sponge the whole quantity liberally through to the skin. LEAVE IN. DO NOT RINSE. Do blow-dry to keep the wrinkles and loose skin dry.

Make sure you also work Seabreeze Oil UNDILUTED into the elbows and hocks to keep the skin supple and discourage callouses. Again, leave on, do not rinse off.

Seabreeze Oil is magical. It is excellent for maintaining a healthy vigour to the skin and coat, and is sourced from Evening Primrose and Calendula Oils. It is non greasy and totally water soluble making it easy to apply without fear of build-up. It gives incredible sheen and finish to the hair. This also helps keep any scurf at bay and leaves the coat smelling delightful. A real must-do step. We cannot stress enough the wonderful attributes of this product.

As with any product, please ensure Seabreeze Oil does not get sloshed around the eyes. Whilst they are gentle and safe, no dog likes the irritation of foreign substances into the eye. It only encourages tearing and thus staining. They don't even like water sloshed in the eye! Neither do I.

For show bath just eliminate the Seabreeze Oil from the routine. Shampoo only and then blow-dry. His coat is not to be trimmed and must not be longer than 1 inch or 2.2cms. That's explicit and so is the express request



for an extremely harsh coat. It does not get clearer than that.

So its a 'no' to conditioners. The coat is meant to stand out somewhat on the main body and somewhat less on the limbs. Blow drying will assist the lift to this coat whether it be a "horse coat" or a "brush" coat. Hence the Seabreeze Oil which will give you the hydration, won't flatten nor soften, and allows you to consistently blow-dry without harm to the health of the coat. Blow drying will also assist to keep the silhouette from looking raggedy. The continual rolling of the coat by lifting all dead hair weekly with the dryer will shape a far better outline.

Every so often the coat can get too dry and even brittle. **Plush Puppy Coat Rescue** has been specifically formulated to help dry or damaged coats back to life. Coat Rescue's naturally blended essential oils and pure plant extracts help restore strength and elasticity to dehydrated and tired coat hair. The treatment is exceptional on brittle coat hair. An extra-deep treatment for a coat that looks dehydrated and in desperate need of moisture. Infused with naturally blended essential oils and pure plant extracts including Kaolin, Almond Oil, Cinnamon Bark, Castor Oil, Soya Protein, Seaweed Extract.

Use as an "in-between shows" treatment should the coat need that bit extra. After shampooing, dilute 2 tablespoons of Coat Rescue into a squeeze bottle with 500ml of water. Apply to the dehydrated area of the coat with a large sponge and leave on for a minimum of 5 minutes. Try to leave on for as long as possible, remembering it will hydrate the coat, but not soften it. We tend to leave on for hours while we do other dogs. Then rinse clear.

Now for Show Day.

On the day it's important to keep the harsh texture and no shine. When the coat is dry apply **Plush Puppy Powder Puff Terrier**. Don't go overboard. This is very performant instant coat hardener and a little bit goes a long way. So, perfect texture and no shine! What else could you ask for?

Keep on hand **Plush Puppy Wonder Wash** which is a no rinse wet instant shampoo for "those show day" last-minute emergencies as this will clean up anything, pronto. Just spray foam with the fingers and towel off. Wonder Wash is a brilliant quick self-rinsing bathing alternative solution for quick and easy cleaning without the need for a complete bath. In moments when regular shampooing is not an option, Wonder Wash will clean, whiten and brighten problem areas on all coat kinds. Always keep our handy Plush Puppy Wonder Wash spray in your tack box. It contains optical brighteners, has a fresh apple fragrance, and violet tone.

A light mist of **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** to deodorise any greasy skin odours Shar Pei's can have and you are pretty much ready to show. The hard work has been done before in the weeks leading up to the event. No coat is made overnight. You can mask, or cosmetically cover, but the stress at the show is worse and far better you are done and dusted with this quick routine on the day because you did the hard yard for many long weeks beforehand.

The Shar Pei is lordly. I did love that descriptive. He really is snobbish and independent with that calm, confident stance and his characteristic scowl.

He stands firmly and on the move at a trot, will start to converge to centre line of gravity as he settles into the gait.

Whilst standoffish with strangers, he is devoted to family and is regal, intelligent and dignified. This individual character in the ring is captivating. He is a breed alone from the far distant times of Chinese culture and as enigmatic as the old pictures of those long-gone people with their eastern life and inventions. He really can look right past you. I see this and know this is a long chain of dogs just being a Shar Pei. You do have a dog to be well proud of.

