



Expert Grooming Article



Shiba Inu

The smallest and oldest of all Japanese dogs, the Shiba Inu was originally bred to hunt large game such as boar and bear in the mountainous regions of Japan working the underbrush from which his name is reportedly derived. Known as the "Little Brushwood Dog" he was given official recognition as a precious natural product of Japan. More elegant than the original, larger boned, more rough looking dogs, the modern Shiba Inu is an excellent watchdog and hunter of small game. He is compact of body with well-developed muscles and one expects to gain an overall impression of hard muscle plus an air of importance. This little fellow exudes confidence and beauty. (read more over page)



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His coat calls for a double coat with stiff, straight outercoat and soft, dense undercoat. Colours are Red, Black & Tan, Red Sesame or Black Sesame. The undersides of his body, tail, inside leg and sides of muzzle and on cheeks is "Urajiro" or a whitish colour. The coat must not be long or woolly and the AKC standard states that it must not be trimmed. Whiskers remain intact.

Understanding that form follows function, the Shiba Inu coat would have needed in his working mountain environment, to be of good texture and resistant to water and cold. Arctic or mountain coats, all need to be impervious to dampness. Whilst his tail calls for longer hair standing off like a brush, the rest of his coat is approx. 1 1/2 to 2 inches long with shorter fur on face, ears and legs.

To maintain the best for the Shiba Inu, one should never use conditioner on this coat as it serves to flatten or soften a coat, the very things you don't want. However to retain the all-important colour and water-resistant quality, you do need to hydrate the coat. **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil** is a natural blend of wonderful extracts and oils of Evening Primrose, Calendula etc. and is water-soluble. Use this after bathing by saturating the coat with a mix of 4 litres warm water and 1 tablespoon of Seabreeze Oil. Leave in and do not rinse out. Blow-dry if possible for the best finish. This will never be greasy or unsightly but instead gives you the absolute best finish and sheen to the coat whilst retaining all the texture and volume you need. It is a very natural look to the coat and with constant use, the coat will look fabulous. We even spray the Seabreeze Oil onto the coats during the week for extra protection. You can dilute this or use undiluted - just revert to the bath mix recipe when preparing for a show.

For show bath, choose either the **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** or **Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo** diluting both at 1:5 (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water). The Body Building Shampoo gives lots of lift and volume to a coat that is skimpy or is not in full coat, and the All Purpose gives a fantastic shine. Neither will soften or flatten the Shiba Inu coat and you can choose to mix 1/2 and 1/2 of both of these shampoos together to obtain the body building and superb shine qualities. Then of course rinse and saturate the dog with the Seabreeze Oil mix as described above, and leave in and don't rinse. This is your basic routine.

When the dog is out of coat, always choose the Body Building Shampoo and then Seabreeze Oil diluted and saturated onto the coat, and at this point you can add 1 tbsp. **Plush Puppy Volumising Cream** to the Seabreeze Oil mix and leave in - don't rinse. Blow dry starting

from the rear and working forwards towards the head drying against the growth of the coat for as much lift and fullness as possible. The Volumising Cream is not sticky and does not feel artificial and just gives a "more coat" feel to the dog. How did we manage without this? You can also make a spray by mixing 1 tablespoon of Volumising Cream to 250mls of warm water and mix with a fork until blended. Lightly spray the dog prior to showing on the day and then blow drying quickly back up for maximum fullness. The coat when not in full bloom, tends to flatten overnight and a quick spruce up with the Volumising Cream and a 3-minute dry, will make the coat spring back to life. This is also available in a ready to use formula **Plush Puppy Volumising Spray**.

Never short circuit the blow drying. Dry using a force drier to start and using the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Pin Brush**. This brush allows minimum coat breakage and easily works through the coat. Once 3/4 dry switch to the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Anti-Static Porcupine Brush**. This puts a wonderful finish to the coat. Both brushes are exclusively made for Plush Puppy using the very best of materials and built to last.

Blow drying the Shiba is by far one of the most important tasks. It is arduous if you are impatient! To save valuable time give the dog a spray with **Plush Puppy FAST Blow Dry Spray**. FAST combines clever ingredients to dramatically reduce drying time. It adds moisture and conditions while protecting the coat. It contains Australian Native Flame Tree extracts known for their hydrating properties. It also protects the coat from damage from sun and heat. It contains a slight hold ingredient for better coat management and a special active ingredient that eliminates static electricity and stops the fly-away's. A brilliant blow drying spray that halves the drying time.

Finish with a **Plush Puppy Professional Grooming Comb**, built for absolute ergonomic comfort in various sizes. The lightweight oval shaped spine combining fine and coarse pins made of hardened stainless steel with anodic oxide finish that reduces drag and static to the coat. Perfect for use for this breed of dog.

For general brushing ALWAYS use a Grooming Spray. Never brush a dry coat without it. Use **Plush Puppy O.M.G. Grooming Spray** diluting the **Concentrate** at least 1:30 (1 part OMG to 30 parts water). This is a revolutionary grooming spray that lives up to its name. A light spray of OMG and brushing in allows this product to refresh the coat leaving it feeling wonderful. It separates the coat and leaves the most amazing finish. This will keep the coat free of static and tangle free. Coats just behave with O.M.G. and you eliminate the possibility of breaking or stretching the coat.

Using OMG can be a one-off at shows or during the drying process after bathing. This is also an amazing product for regular brushing as it hydrates the coat reducing stress and coat loss. Its active ingredients smooth the cuticle and protect the coat. OMG never builds up and never goes stringy. It is available in a **Concentrate** formula or **Ready-to-use spray**.

Every couple of weeks, treat the coat with **Plush Puppy Coat Rescue**. This should be diluted to a workable, runny slurry by mixing 1:3 (1 part Coat Rescue to 3 parts water). Diluting allows for easier dispersion and gives you the ability to work through the entire coat. Leave this on for as long as possible before rinsing off. We leave this on our kennel dogs for several days but 10 minutes is better than nothing! It has everything known to man in this formulation giving deep hydration and depositing protein for extra structure to the hair.

If the topline does dehydrate and get dry flippy ends, then use Coat Rescue regularly but also mix **Plush Puppy Blow Dry Cream** with it. Blend 1 tablespoon to 250mls of warm water in a Plush Puppy 250ml Spray Bottle, then apply liberally along the topline to instantly flatten and put some elasticity back into the damaged hair. This is great for keeping that topline even and flat.

On show day also use a light spray of **Plush Puppy Shine and Comb** for instant reflection and gleam to the topline. Hold the bottle a good 30 - 45cms away and allow the mist to fall onto the coat rather than blasting the coat. Run your hand along the topline and see the glamour in the hair appear. By keeping shine to the coat, you instantly give the appearance of deeper and richer colour as the light reflects off a smoother surface better than a rough surface.

Some extra info for those with dogs whose coats are a trifle soft, add a very light dusting of **Plush Puppy Powder Puff Terrier**. You don't need much. Just a few siftings through the fingers onto the coat and worked well into the hair. This is mighty tough stuff. It gives instant texture where there is little or none. Use as much as you need till texture is achieved but don't overdo it. Once worked well through the coat, brush out excess or preferably, blow out excess.

Finally, a light spray of **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** onto the dog for a final olfactory enhancement to the dog. Judges do judge with eyes, hands and nose!! Better to have a dog that doesn't smell like a dog trailer or a kennel. Some dogs just get into all sorts of smells or pee all the way to a show in their trailer. Clean up their undercarriage with a quick spray of **Plush Puppy Wonder Wash**, work the lather around the offending area and towel dry off and follow with a light overall spray of Odour Muncher.

Now your inquisitive, confident little fellow is ready to party! Gaited on his loose leash at a good trot around the ring, his outgoing, confident disposition is apparent to all. His gorgeous foxy head with triangular, pricked ears with slant of back of ears following his arch of neck, tail set high and carried over back in a sickle or curled position, all lend to the forthrightness and dignity of his character. His nimble and easy gait show a brightness and energy that is quite magnificent in such a small dog. He may be small, but he can work and this proud little breed. The Shiba Inu is an arrestingly natural beauty!

