



Expert Grooming Article

Flat Coated Retriever

The Flat Coated Retriever has a rich history and was developed in England in the mid-1800s to serve as a close-working shooting dog. His ancestry includes the Labrador, Newfoundland, Spaniel-type water dogs, Setter, and Sheepdog. Known as a "gamekeeper's dog", he was used widely on British estates. They are dual purpose dog being excellent in water and on ground.

For this their coat is required to be dense, of fine to medium texture and good quality, as flat as possible, with legs and tail well feathered. The coat requirement is to be protective for both swimming and working on land in an English climate. The Flat Coated Retriever come in only 2 colours of Black and Liver...(read more over page..)



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Plush Puppy® Australia Pty Ltd
info@plushpuppy.com.au
Ph: +61 7 3010 8800
8 Natasha Street, Capalaba QLD 4157
f PlushPuppyAustralia
i PlushPuppyAustralia



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When preparing a flat coat there are several factors to consider. What coat stage is the dog currently in? As with many retrievers they can be in full coat or out of coat and all the various stages in between. Plush Puppy creates outcome driven products that will assist you in any coat stage to get the very best of your dog's coat.

Let's start with a dog in good coat. Plush Puppy always recommends using **Plush Puppy Let's Face It** on the head and around eyes and ears. 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.

As a typical retriever, that double coat likes a bit of mud and dirt, and there may be areas that need a deep clean. For those parts use **Plush Puppy Deep Cleansing Shampoo**. This is a clarifying shampoo designed to remove grease, grime and any product build-up in a dogs coat. By clarifying we mean cutting through ANY impurities to leave the coat in an ultra-clean natural state. This shampoo has extra surfactants that open the cuticle deeper to allow the deep cleaning and clarifying process. The rich formulation infused with Green Tea and Seaweed extracts. Green Tea is full of nutrients, antioxidants, and phytochemicals and Panthenol (Vitamin B). It helps strengthen the coat and retain moisture. Seaweed extract provides detoxification, which leaves the coat in a healthier state. It will provide the deepest coat clean available leaving the coat reset and refreshed. Use at a mixture of 1:5 (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water). Lather the area and rinse well.

For the body and feathering on good coat use **Plush Puppy Natural All Purpose Shampoo with Henna**.

We call this shampoo the 'Shine' shampoo as it features natural Henna extracts that impart a beautiful gloss and shine to your dog's coat. Natural All Purpose Shampoo is primarily derived from organic sources and features Alpine and Lichen herbs. These extracts combine into a rich concentration that help dog groomers get results. This is a great all round shampoo for all breeds and perfect for use on normal to slightly dehydrated coats. Use at a mix of 1:5-10 (1 part shampoo to 5 up to 10 parts water). Lather the dog well and then thoroughly rinse.

To condition or not! Generally a conditioner on a retriever type coat will cause a fluffy effect. This is not what you desire in a sporting hunting dog. Hydration is key not softening.

Use **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil**. This will add shine, hydrate and condition the coat. It is a truly beneficial blend of using extracts of Calendula oil, Wheat germ oil, and Evening Primrose. On a full coat add 1 tablespoon (less for an out of coat dog) to 4 Litres of water, then either sponge on or sluice well through the coat and LEAVE IN. DO NOT RINSE.

This is quite a unique product in that it is not greasy and totally water-soluble. It gives an outstanding healthy/vigour to the skin and coat. It will maintain the texture and moisture in the coat and help protect from the harsh outdoors especially in some of the tougher climates where this dog is required to work. Use the oil at this dilution rate after shampooing for a show. Again leave in and do not rinse. You will get a nice healthy sheen on the coat with this routine. I also like the depth of colour it tends to add to the coat with continued use.

Then use the oil straight from the spray or apply undiluted to the areas around where the dog pees - his nether regions. This is a notoriously bad area for breakage plus, urine will bleach the coat. Keeping the coat oiled allows you not only to regularly bath and keep that high lustre and hydration, but also help prevent the coat getting brittle or tangled and dissuade accumulation of backyard debris.

For show grooming, the routine is to use **Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening Shampoo** which is a shampoo for toning unwanted warm tones and best suited to the Flat Coat. Use diluted at a ratio of 1:3 (1 part shampoo to 3 parts water).

It may sound strange to recommend a whitening shampoo, however it does not lighten but in fact adds cool tones. This toning quality will assist in camouflaging the red or brown tones from the coat which are more evident as the coat has faded and lost the cool hues of the coat colour. This works on both blacks and livers.

If these red or brown warm tones are still there on the blacks, then use **Plush Puppy Black Opal Shampoo** which has stronger and longer lasting tonal qualities. It does not have a developer nor is it a dye so no damage will be done to the coat. It just beautifully tones unwanted warm tones. This is not a dye that colours the coat but a strong stain. Repeat the process to achieve a greater the depth of colour. For maximum effect use

on a well-cleansed coat, we suggest using after your Plush Puppy Deep Cleansing Shampoo. Use at 50:50 with water and leave on for as long as the dog will stay still before rinsing off.

If your coat is perfect and stunningly black, then use **Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo** 1:5 for a great shine result.

For any areas that may not appear full enough due to shedding, use **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** diluted 1:3 for some extra volume.

At times, some coats become dry, brittle and dehydrated. For these times use **Plush Puppy Natural Conditioning Shampoo** 1:5. This shampoo is scientifically designed to add hydration and slightly soften a coat.

After shampooing, only use conditioner on selected areas if required. By using products correctly you can start to sculpt the outcome of this dog! The Flat Coat may not be a hairdo breed as such, but he can be tweaked for optimum finish without losing integrity. Apply **Plush Puppy Silk Protein Conditioner** at a dilution of 1:5 on the feathers and a much weaker solution of 1:20 for the topline if needed. Apply the diluted mix, massage through and rinse thoroughly.

Blow dry using the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Pin Brush** till 3/4 dry so as not to overstretch the coat. Never use bristle on a really wet coat. Switch to **Plush Puppy Ultimate Anti-Static Porcupine Brush** which is a 1/2 bristle 1/2 dialon cushioned brush for the final drying stages to obtain that smooth, straight and glossy finish. Pin brushes have their purpose at the wet stage and the other for the smooth finish when almost dry.

Should you have a coat that is far too curly or wavy, add 1 tablespoon of **Plush Puppy Blow Dry Cream** to the Seabreeze Oil mix mentioned previously to really flatten the coat. Dry using a force dryer and a hand or stand warm dryer can be used to finish the dog. Plush Puppy Blow Dry Cream is fantastic to reduce bulkiness or to straighten and flatten the coat.

The very best grooming spray that all dog owners should have, and use, is **Plush Puppy OMG**. OMG is the perfect product for this coat type. A light spray of OMG and brushing in allows this product to refresh the coat. It separates the coat and leaves the most amazing finish.

OMG comes in a **ready to use spray form** or **concentrate** for you to make your own required dilution mix. For a Flat Coated Retriever we suggest using at an approximate mix of 1:20-40 (1 part OMG to 20-40 parts water) from the OMG concentrate. Alternatively, you can use the ready to use at 1:20 and dilute further if required. The stronger the mix the stronger the effects.

Different dogs at different coat stages means different mixtures. The higher the amount of OMG, the greater effects. If you need more softening and hydration to a fuller or larger coat, then a higher mixture rate is required. Using OMG can be a one off at shows or during the drying process after bathing. An amazing product for regular brushing also as it hydrates the coat and reduces stress and coat loss. OMG and as its active ingredients smooth the cuticle and protect the coat. OMG can also be used on top coats and brushed or polished in for that wonderful smooth flatness to the coat. OMG never builds up, never goes stringy.

Don't forget to make him smell good too! **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** is a deodoriser as well as a fragrance, eating up the nasty odour and leaving a good fresh smell that won't asphyxiate the dog or the judge. All senses come into play when judging and a good smelling dog is a nice touch.

For a final boost of shine and lustre, spray a light mist of **Plush Puppy Shine and Comb** 30cm above the coat and let the mist fall onto the coat. 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.

Now let's go out with a bang! A light dusting of **Plush Puppy Pixie Dust** applied strategically and sparingly to areas where you want the light and or sun to pick out the glints of light reflection from the from the Pixie Dust. Yes, it is a white powder but worked well into the coat, the powder is not seen but the shimmer stays. Less is more, if you can see this when applying, then you are too heavy handed! For easy application use a **Plush Puppy Ultimate Powder Applicator Brush**.

Oh, how this dog does work and look a million dollars at the same time! His strong, clean "one piece" head, his level topline, his beautiful underline gently tapering with moderate tuck up, creating that blunted triangle image - the fore chest a prominent prow! His tail is waving, his coat is draping and he gleams like the brightest star against a black night sky. His strength and quality, his style and symmetry are all there for exhibition and evaluation. He is endowed with optimism and friendliness and is quite the centre stage dog, for who could resist this wondrous breed?

