

Blackforest Belgian Sheepdogs®

Routine Care & Grooming Guide

Collars, Leashes & Harnesses

Choosing the right gear keeps your puppy comfortable and protects that gorgeous, signature Belgian coat.

- **For Puppies:** I highly recommend the **Mini Soft Web collars (8–13 inch, 1/2")** and matching leashes from *White Pine Outfitters*. They are incredibly lightweight—which is exactly what you want, as heavy leashes are just impractical for training—and they won't break the puppy's hair.
- **For Older Puppies & Adults:** I recommend switching to a **rolled leather collar** to help reduce matting around the neck area.
- **No More Dangling Tags:** As you know, all of our puppies are microchipped and enrolled with *AKC Reunite*. You can actually buy a flat collar directly on their website that has your contact information printed right onto the material. I use these myself! The woven soft material prevents hair breakage, and you don't have to deal with noisy, dangling tags.
- **Walking:** If your puppy is pulling hard, consider using a quality **harness** to protect their neck during training.

Grooming Your Belgian

Belgian coats are beautiful and magnificent, but they do require the right tools and consistency to keep them looking their absolute best.

- **Puppy Coats:** Puppy fluff tends to clump easily. A standard **slicker brush** (available at any local pet store or Amazon) is the best tool for this stage.
- **Adult Coats:** Once they get their adult coat, I recommend a high-quality pin brush, specifically the **#1 All Systems 27mm Soft Pin Brush**.
- **Blowing Coat:** When your dog "blows" their dense undercoat, an **undercoat rake** will be your absolute best friend.

 **A Note on Deshedding Tools:** Please do not use a **Furminator** or similar deshedding tools on your Belgian. These tools have blades that cut the guard hairs and take out far too much coat, damaging the integrity of the double coat.

My Favorite Grooming Hacks

- **Never Brush Dry:** Whenever you brush your dog, always use a spray bottle to lightly mist the area you are working on first. This simple trick lubricates the hair and prevents it from breaking.
- **Dealing with Mats:** You will find that mats most commonly form behind the ears and in the breeches. When this happens, don't panic or reach for the scissors! Just rub a little bit of **diluted conditioner** directly into the mat and gently pull it apart with your fingers.

Nail Care & Training

Keeping your puppy's nails short is crucial for their structural health, structural posture, and correct foot development. I recommend trimming or grinding their nails **once a week**.

You can use either standard canine **nail clippers** or a **Dremel** (rotary tool). Because Belgians are athletic, highly active dogs, getting them comfortable with feet handling early is a top priority.

The Quick "Good Feet" Training Guide

Don't rush this process! The entire goal is to make nail time a positive, low-stress routine for both you and your pup.

Days 1–3: Handling and Rewards. Gently touch your puppy's paws, lift them up, and manipulate individual toes. Reward them immediately with a high-value treat. Do this when the puppy is already relaxed or tired.

Days 4–5: Introduce the Tool. Show them the clippers or turn on the Dremel nearby so they hear the noise. Do not touch their paws with it yet. Pair the sight or sound of the tool with a jackpot of treats.

Days 6–7: The First Touch. Touch the tool to a toe without actually clipping or grinding. Reward heavily.

Week 2+: One Nail at a Time. Trim or grind just **one single nail**, give a massive reward, and stop for the day. Gradually work your way up to one paw, and eventually all four feet in a single session.

Breeder Tip: *If you use a Dremel, keep it moving! Touch the nail for just 1–2 seconds at a time so the friction doesn't generate heat, which can easily startle or hurt the puppy.*