

Gidget is behaving much better for them than she does for me at home. I guess it's because I give in if she wiggles and squeals, but these girls do the job no problem.

I didn't realize how dirty she was until she was in the bath. They had to do an extra rinse as well as a deep conditioner. The bath took about 30 min., I hope they stay on time, I have my hair appointment after this too!

Now that she is being blow dried, I understand why they call her wiggle monster! The groomer is very patient and calm with Gidget and soon Gidget realizes this is what she has to accept as part of the grooming process. (If it takes considerable more time to dry because of behavior problems, there may be an extra charge.)

I think they are still on time. So far it's taken about 40 – 50 min and the groomer said it would take approximately the same amount of time to brush, comb, clipper and scissor. I asked once for a pattern for Gidget and it took a bit longer for them to finish. This required all hand scissoring of her coat and only one of the experienced groomers was available to do it.

I wanted to have it done for our family photo and it was wonderful. The specialized technique is beautiful and well worth the extra cost to have it done. Today is just a practical clip, we're going on a holiday and my sister will be looking after Gidget. She doesn't have a dog, so I wanted to make sure she has a shorter hair cut to ensure she wouldn't get matted while I'm away.

Oh, I see Gidget is almost done. It is a good thing Gidget only had a few tiny matts. She really didn't like her hair being pulled even a little bit for dematting. Even though the groomer was being gentle and using dematting solution (conditioner to untangle mats), Gidget still reacted.

I will have to show my sister how to comb Gidget properly so she is not terribly matted when I return.

She cannot tolerate much dematting and the alternative would be a total shave down which isn't very cute on her!

(Most professional groomers can assess the extent of matting by combing and feeling the dogs coat and will advise you what type of groom they can do.)

Gidgets groom took about 3 hours, she had a rest after her bath and dry. Then on to the table for finishing. Her grooming appointment was on time, it only cost the amount quoted for regular groom, no extra charges for dematting or behavior problems which can occur. And I got to my hair appointment right on time too!

Professional grooming shops should be clean and bright. Surfaces are cleaned between grooms, kennels disinfected and equipment sanitized.

We hope you have a pleasant experience at your local groomers!

## A Day At The Groomers

The Professional Pet Groomers Association of Manitoba, Inc. is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose members care passionately about pet grooming and are committed to building a strong, professional grooming society in the province of Manitoba.

## Responsibilities of Grooming

Before we describe the grooming experience we must first address the difference between grooming responsibilities of the owner and the professional groomer.

Most dogs that require grooming such as poodles, cocker spaniels, bichons and others too numerous to describe are usually groomed professionally every 8 to 14 weeks. The professional groomer sees the pet for 3 to 4 hours at each grooming session. The owner is in contact with their pet every day therefore they are the primary care giver of their pet's coat maintenance and upkeep.

The professional groomer is a pet beautician, responsible for shampooing, conditioning, styling your pet's hair and trimming their nails. Like a human beautician the professional groomer may encounter health problems on their clients body that need to be brought to the owners attention.

However, with regular at-home grooming ie: brushing and combing, the owner can significantly reduce the risk of health problems such as matting, infections, hot spots and other skin irritations.

PPGAM members are dedicated to creating a positive grooming experience for everyone involved in the grooming session. By understanding our roles and responsibilities we get a better idea of what is expected from both groomer and the owner. We encourage everyone to educate themselves on these responsibilities and endeavor to describe the grooming experience with that in mind. We hope that you enjoy reading this story.

The events and characters are fictional and any relation to real people or place is purely coincidental.

## A Day at the Groomers

Today is grooming day. The appointment was made 2 to 3 weeks in advance. I remember once I tried getting in on the same day and found the grooming shops were booked weeks in advance. The groomers need advance notice of all dogs into the grooming shop prior to their appointment. I booked ahead this time to ensure the date that I wanted.

The grooming salon called the previous day to remind me I had an appointment so everything was ready to go in the morning. Gidget (our family dog) has had her morning walk and taken care of her bathroom needs.

In a professional grooming salon there are other dogs scheduled as well, it means first come first served in most cases. But today is different, I'm on time and ready for Gidget's appointment, so there's no need to bump her appointment to a later time or even date. I signed a release form acknowledging that the professional groomers are working with live animals, with care and experience they do the best they can to minimize the stress for young and old pets. Many pets have an aversion to some aspect of the grooming process, be it nail trimming, bathing, the blow drying or just being on the grooming table.

I remember my previous dog, in her senior years, had a heart problem and the groomer had sat down with me prior to grooming to explain the whole grooming process and in which areas Sally may experience stress.

It was reassuring that they took the time to go over everything and I especially loved the fact their whole shop was CPR certified. Although Sally never experienced anything more than a little disorientation (she needed two groomers to hold her up while grooming, sometimes she just lost her balance). I really appreciated the groomer's candor.

Gidget was placed in a kennel while I reminded them she doesn't like her feet touched and she has a sensitive tail. I remind them every time just in case, because I don't want to put them in a dangerous situation by assuming they know everything about Gidget. It's only her second time and she may have been good last time but this is a new day and she may act a little differently. I wouldn't want to put anyone at risk by not disclosing her sensitive spots.

I asked if I could stay for this grooming session to see first-hand what they did. Although they don't allow non-personnel to stay within the grooming room. They do have a window I can watch from that won't disturb Gidget. Some pets, like children, act uncooperatively when their parents are in the room. I watched comfortably from outside the room.

I looked on as the groomers continued grooming the dogs that came in prior to Gidget. I was amazed by the care and expertise the groomers exhibited with the dogs. There were all sizes of dogs and with different types of coats. There was only one situation where a dog tried to strike out at the groomer while having it's nails trimmed. The groomer calmly muzzled the dog and continued working on that area. I was relieved when the groomer took the muzzle off after finishing the nails and the dog was good as gold for everything else.

Oh, there's Gidget being placed on the grooming table. The assistant is doing an inspection I guess? She is checking her ears and eyes and running a comb over her coat, it looks like she found a matt or two. Oops! I tried my best at home but there were a few little ones around her head. Then the groomer assistant is clipping Gidget's nails and cleaning her ears.