



GIANT SCHNAUZER

BIG FLOPPY EAR GROOMING GUIDE

Featuring Toddy — The Dog Behind the Brand

Regular grooming keeps your Giant Schnauzer healthy, comfortable, and looking their best. This guide covers a traditional, clean, practical pet cut built for big floppy-eared Giants — and explains the coat science most guides skip entirely.

FULL GROOM	BRUSH	BATH	SKILL LEVEL
Every 4–6 Weeks	2–3x Per Week	Every 4–6 Weeks	Intermediate

wherestoddy.com

ABOUT THE BREED

Know Your Dog

■ INTELLIGENT, POWERFUL, LOYAL

Giant Schnauzers are working dogs built for endurance. They need stimulation, structure, and a handler who means it.

■ DOUBLE COAT

Wiry outer coat with a soft undercoat underneath. Strip or clip — both work, but understand what you're giving up before you decide.

■ FLOPPY EARS NEED ATTENTION


Non-cropped, floppy ears trap moisture and debris. Check and clean weekly. Skip this and you'll be at the vet more than the groomer.

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

The Right Gear

for big, floppy-eared giants.

TOOLS YOU'LL NEED



Slicker Brush	Metal Comb	Pin Brush
Undercoat Rake	Clipper w/ Guards	Thinning Shears
Straight Shears	Ear Cleaner	Cotton Balls

The Process



STEP 1
BRUSH THOROUGHLY

Use a slicker brush and metal comb to remove loose hair and tangles. Don't skip behind the ears, under the legs, and the furnishings. Matted before you start means bathing makes it worse.



STEP 2
BATH & DRY

High-quality dog shampoo, rinse well, force dry completely. The undercoat must be bone dry before you clip or cut. On a Giant this takes longer than you think.



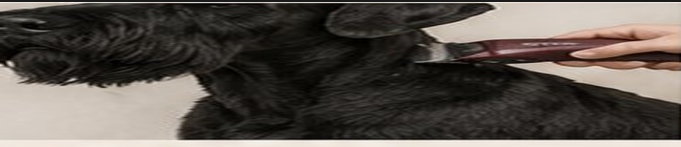
STEP 3
EARS: CLEAN & CHECK

Ear cleaner and cotton balls. Check for redness, wax buildup, or odor. Floppy ears trap everything. This step isn't optional — it's preventive care.



STEP 4
CLIP THE BODY

5F or 7F guard depending on length preference. Clip in the direction of hair growth. Even, steady passes. Don't rush or you'll chase lines all day.



STEP 5
NECK & SHOULDERS

Blend the neck and shoulders into the body using the same guard. This transition is where amateur groomers show their seams. Literally.



STEP 6
LEGS & FEET

Longer guard (5F–7F) on the legs, then neaten the feet. Trim hair between pads for traction — especially important if your dog lives life on the road.



STEP 7
HEAD & BEARD

Scissors on the top of the head. Keep the beard full and natural, trimming just the ends for shape. The beard is the character — don't massacre it.



STEP 8
EYEBROWS

Curved scissors, follow the natural arch. Keep eyes clear without changing expression. Over-trim and you've got a different dog. Trust the arch.



STEP 9
FINISH & BLEND

Thinning shears to soften hard transition areas. Check symmetry on both sides. Step back and look at the whole dog before declaring it done.



STEP 10
PAWS, NAILS & FINAL CHECK

Trim nails, check paw pads, do a final pass over the whole dog. Missed spots, mats, skin irritation — catch it now, not at the vet in two weeks.

The Coat Problem Nobody Talks About

Most groomers won't tell you this. Most owners find out too late. If you clip a Giant Schnauzer repeatedly over time, you will permanently change the nature of the coat — and you cannot undo it.

THE UNDERCOAT

Soft. Dense. Insulating.

The undercoat sits beneath the surface — fine, soft, and packed tight. Its job is insulation. It doesn't give the Giant Schnauzer its look or repel water and debris. Left unmanaged, it mats, traps moisture against the skin, and crowds out the follicles trying to grow proper topcoat. Regular brushing and carding keeps it from taking over.

THE TOPCOAT

Wiry. Harsh. Weatherproof.

The topcoat is what makes a Giant Schnauzer look like a Giant Schnauzer. Coarse, close-lying, wiry guard hairs that repel water, resist dirt, and hold color. On a black dog like Toddy, it's what keeps the coat black — not brownish-gray. When a guard hair dies, it must be removed by stripping or carding so a new hard hair can replace it. Clip it instead and the replacement grows back softer. Do this repeatedly and the topcoat is gone for good.

Every time you clip instead of strip, you cut both dead topcoat and living undercoat. The undercoat grows back faster. Over time it wins. Guard hairs get overtaken, the coat goes soft, and the dog loses its weatherproofing. Once a dog has been clipped for years, transitioning back to a proper wiry coat is possible, but it's a long and difficult process.

PRESERVES COAT

Hand Stripping

Dead guard hairs pulled out by hand or stripping knife. Signals the follicle to grow a new hard hair. Texture preserved. Color stays true.

- Preserves the wiry topcoat texture permanently
- Maintains true black color — prevents fading to gray
- Removes dead hair at the root, keeping the coat tight
- Keeps follicles active and producing proper guard hair
- Done every 6–12 weeks on a rolling schedule
- Best started young while the dog tolerates handling

SOFTENS OVER TIME

Clipping

Clippers cut hair at a set length. The follicle gets no signal to replace with a hard hair. The undercoat gradually takes over.

- Convenient — available from any groomer
- Less expensive per session
- Practical when show coat isn't the goal
- Progressively softens the topcoat with each clip
- Black dogs fade to gray or brown tones over time
- Once the coat converts to soft, reverting is very hard

Hand Stripping — Step by Step

Hand stripping is not difficult once you understand what you're doing. You're not yanking hair. You're removing dead hair that's already ready to come out. When the timing is right, it releases easily. If it's pulling hard, the hair isn't ready — move on and come back.

01

TEST IF THE COAT IS READY

Pinch a small amount of topcoat between thumb and index finger and gently pull in the direction of growth. If it slides out easily, the coat is blown and ready. If it holds firm and the dog reacts, it's too early. Strip dead hair only — never live hair. Forcing it hurts the dog and poisons the grooming experience.

02

USE CHALK OR POWDER FOR GRIP

Sprinkle grooming chalk or cornstarch into the coat before starting. It absorbs oil and gives fingers traction on the hair shaft. Particularly useful on a freshly bathed coat. Rubber finger cots reduce fatigue on extended sessions.

03

DIRECTION, SKIN SUPPORT, SMALL SECTIONS

Always pull in the direction the hair grows — never against it. Lay your free hand flat on the skin nearby to keep it taut. A few hairs per pinch, not fistfuls. Work systematically: back, sides, neck, then detail areas.

04

HOW TO USE A STRIPPING KNIFE

A stripping knife doesn't cut — the serrated blade grips. Fold hair over the blade with your thumb, then pull in the direction of growth. Coarse knife on the body, fine knife around the head and transitions. It's a gripping tool, not a detangling one.

05

USE THE ROLLING COAT METHOD

Don't strip the entire dog to the skin at once. Take off roughly one-third of the coat evenly. Six weeks later, another third. This keeps the dog in coat at all times and makes each session shorter. This is the professional standard — not a shortcut, the correct method.

06

READ THE DOG

Squirming, vocalizing, or skin twitching means you're pulling live hair, the skin is irritated, or the dog needs a break. Stop. Reward. Resume. Keep sessions to 20–40 minutes max with a dog new to stripping. One bad session can set you back weeks.

**THE
HONEST
WARNING**

The first full strip after years of clipping is the hardest. The undercoat will be thick, the topcoat will be soft, and it takes multiple growth cycles before a proper wiry coat comes back — if it comes back at all. Start stripping while the dog is young, before the coat has been compromised. If Toddy's been clipped, start carding consistently now and introduce selective stripping on the back saddle first.

Carding — How It Actually Works

Carding is what you do when you're not fully hand stripping but you're not willing to let the coat go completely soft either. Done consistently, it meaningfully slows the softening process and keeps the undercoat from overwhelming the follicles. It's also the right maintenance tool between full strip sessions.

01

WHAT CARDING ACTUALLY DOES

A carding tool — undercoat rake, carding comb, or stripping knife held flat — is pulled through a dry coat in short, firm strokes. It grabs dead undercoat and loose dead topcoat and pulls it out without cutting live guard hairs. It thins the undercoat and creates room for the topcoat to sit correctly against the body.

02

DRY COAT ONLY — NO EXCEPTIONS

Wet hair stretches before it breaks. Card a wet coat and you're snapping live guard hairs at the shaft. Card before bathing or well after the coat is fully dry — dry through to the skin, not just surface dry. Use a force dryer and verify with your fingers before picking up the carding tool.

03

SHORT STROKES, WITH THE GRAIN

Hold the skin taut with your free hand. Pull in short, firm strokes following the direction of hair growth. You want resistance as dead undercoat pulls free. If the tool is catching and dragging, brush the coat first. Work section by section. Undercoat coming out in clumps is correct — that's the point.

04

HOW OFTEN TO CARD

For a dog with a harsh, correct coat: every 4–6 weeks between strip sessions. For a soft-coated or heavily clipped dog: card weekly to prevent undercoat from clogging follicles. When unsure, card more often. The undercoat grows faster than the topcoat and will always win if left alone.

05

CARDING AFTER EVERY CLIP SESSION

Clipping removes hair above the skin but leaves dead undercoat packed in the follicle. Over time this accumulation clogs the follicle, traps debris and oils, and causes the sores and pustules common in Schnauzers on clipper-only schedules. Card after each clip session, follow with a thorough bath. Skipping this is how clipper dogs get chronic skin problems.

06

THE HYBRID APPROACH

Card or clip the sides and legs where full stripping is hardest. Hand strip the back saddle — the most visible section. This takes less time than a full strip, is easier to maintain on a schedule, and preserves more coat texture than clipping alone. A breed-experienced groomer can show you which sections to prioritize for your specific dog's coat type and current condition.

**THE
FOLLICLE
WARNING**

When Schnauzers are clipped repeatedly without carding, dead hair, oils, and debris accumulate in the follicle. The follicle narrows. The skin reacts. The result is sores, pustules, and a dog prone to recurring skin infections. A carding session followed by a thorough bath is the simplest preventive measure. Do it every 4–6 weeks minimum regardless of whether you clip or strip. This is not optional hygiene — it's the difference between a healthy coat and a vet bill.

BETWEEN GROOMS

Notes & Maintenance

BRUSH 2-3x PER WEEK

Prevents mats forming in the furnishings and keeps the undercoat manageable between full grooms.

CHECK EARS WEEKLY

Keep them dry after baths or swimming. Floppy ears don't self-ventilate. Weekly check prevents infections from becoming a recurring problem.

TRIM EVERY 4-6 WEEKS

Maintain shape and coat health on schedule. Pushing it longer means more work and a more uncomfortable dog.

HANDLE CONSISTENTLY

Regular grooming builds trust. A dog that tolerates grooming well is one that's been handled consistently since puppyhood.

THE GOAL

Finished Look



A CLEAN, BALANCED GROOM — COMFORTABLE, FUNCTIONAL, AND TRUE TO THE BREED.

WHERE'S TODDY

wherestoddy.com