



Strawberry Persian and Pedigree Cat Rescue -
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GROOMING, EYES AND CLAWS – this is just some general advice from us volunteers at Strawberry. This does NOT replace any advice from your vet or vet nurse who know you and your fur-baby and if you are at all concerned about the health of your pet, please get medical advice.

GROOMING can be a lovely sociable time spent with your cat if you are lucky enough to have one who adores being pampered and lies on its back waving its legs in the air whilst you brush him/her. The majority of cats are not too keen, especially if they have not been brushed enough to stop any mats forming.

However, grooming can also be a frustrating and, at times, painful experience for both you and your cat! Perseverance is the key. Your cat needs to be groomed and if you can't manage it, then you will need to instruct a professional groomer, or your vet nurse to ensure it stays in top form. Some Persian parents choose to have a regular clipped coat each Spring, to make the cat cooler and the coat easier to keep control of for some months.

With any newly adopted fur-baby, start within days of adoption.

Grooming an older cat who objects to it can certainly be problematical. Bear in mind that a cat who is badly matted will also be in a lot of pain (it's a bit like someone putting an elastic band on your hair and tightening it more and more until it pulls at your scalp – some come to us with ripped skin or skin burned by urine being held under mats). Don't feel you need to do the whole body in one go but take a little and often approach, stopping when your cat starts to get stressed. Always end on a good note with a tasty healthy treat of something you can give to your cat everyday. That way your cat starts to associate the grooming with something nice.



Persians have a double coat and it is very important that the brush or comb reaches the undercoat and untangles that hair as well as the softer and easier to groom topcoat. Always check underneath your cat's front and back "armpits" as this is often the area where the knots are at their worst but are well hidden from view. Unless you are very very experienced please do not cut your cat's knots out with scissors. Their skin is incredibly fragile and it is sometimes very difficult to see the dividing line between fur and skin. One snip too close and your cat will require stitches. It is much safer to invest in some small cat specific clippers and (with the guard on) shave the hair away. Your cat may not win any beauty competitions afterwards but it will be comfortable and safe. A comfortable happy cat is our aim as a cat-parent.

We all choose to use different brushes etc, we have a lot of things, but the comb with different length teeth is the one I use 95% of the time for my persians.

Above all, try not to become stressed if your grooming sessions don't go according to plan as your cat will pick up on your anxiety. Be confident. Ask a cat-experienced friend for help. You are the parent and you will get there in the end with a bit of patience.

If a cat is getting very matted, where it may have coped with its own grooming and coat previously, this can be a sign of dental problems – so using their mouth and teeth to tease our little knots are not possible. Cats should have a vet check at least every year, even if you don't want vaccinations done.

Severe matting must be addressed urgently, consult with your vet /vet nurse or a very experienced groomer.



EYES

Why do a Persian's eyes get so mucky? Persians - along with other flat faced cats and dogs - are referred to as being Brachycephalic.

This means that their skull bones are shortened in length, giving their faces a pushed in appearance. The flat face often blocks the tear ducts, the tears pool in space under or creases around their eyes, so regular cleaning is a necessity, we do our own cats once a day minimum.

Either buy cat specific eye cleansing wipes or use a cotton wool pad moistened with warm water which has been boiled in kettle and then cooled to only tepid temperature. Do not use while still hot from boiling - leave to cool to tepid temp. Use a separate wipe or cotton wool pad for each eye so that no infection is transferred from one eye to the other and gently wipe the eye area and down the folds either side of the nose. Because a Persian's nose is closer to its eyes than "normal" cats it is important to make sure that the eye goo doesn't travel down and block the nose - so this may need cleaning carefully too - one nostril at a time. A cat who cannot smell its food will not eat its food so always check nostrils for a blockage. Finish the cleansing routine by sweeping the pad carefully over the upper lashes upwards and away from the eye so they are not encouraged to grow inwards towards the sensitive eye area.



CLAWS

Clipping your cat's claws is an important part of the grooming routine, particularly if you have an indoor cat who will not be wearing its claws down by itself. Arm yourself with proper cat clippers (we personally use dog claw clippers as per below), take your cat's paw in one hand and apply pressure to the pad in the middle of the paw between your thumb and finger. This will cause the nail to extend/ the cat sort of splays its fingers when you do that.

The white tip of the nail is like your own nails, cutting the white tip does not hurt. The pink/ red quick which is nearer their paw needs to be left (this is like the pink of your own nail and will bleed if cut by accident).

Place the clippers between the end of the quick and the end of the nail and clip the end of the white part and press down sharply on the clippers to avoid the nail splintering. Get your vet nurse to show you how to do it - they are usually the most experienced we find to do this!

Don't forget to pay attention to the dew claw (positioned like our human thumb) which is situated towards the back of the leg and is higher up than the other claws.

Without regular trimming your cat's claws can grow around towards the pads of their feet and become embedded so keep a careful eye on them. If your cat objects to having its nails prodded and poked then it might help to wrap a towel around it, dealing with one leg at a time and leaving the others wrapped up. Or leave to a groomer when they do your cat's coat regularly. We get cats who have been loved, but come in for rehoming and their claws have grown right through the whole pad and out the other side (hard to see when the cat is a longhaired one).

