

How to Choose the Correct Dog Clipper

Clipping a dog is essential maintenance for some breeds and can be quite rewarding and bonding for the owner however, it can also be very stressful if you don't have the right clipper for the job. So how do you choose the right clipper and why are there so many different ones on the market?

What's Inside the Cover?

As you probably know by looking at the price tag of clippers, not all clippers are the same, it's all about what's inside the cover, the motor!

There are typically three different types of clipper motors:

1. Magnetic

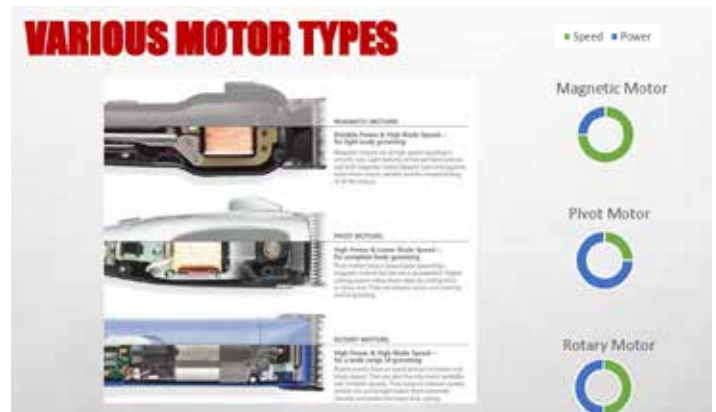
Simple design & fewer parts make these the longest lasting motors. Ideal for light touch-ups.

2. Pivot

Quiet, cool-running and long-lasting. Ideal for course hair.

3. Rotary

Most complex design used in professional clippers - most moving parts that may need to be replaced more often, but versatile and enables cordless design. Perfect for heavier duty cutting on all types of hair.



Things to Consider

There are a few things to keep in mind when making your clipper choice including:

What do you want to do with the clipper?

Do you just want to do touch ups in-between a professional full body clip? A clipper for touch-ups doesn't need to be as powerful as a clipper for a full body clip, allowing you to opt for a less expensive touch up trimmer.

Is your dog a nervous type, will it be worried by the noise?

A good pet store will allow you to turn each clipper on to hear how much noise they make. Both a Pivot and rotary motor clipper will be quiet but you may want to hear them as each brand will be different. If you chose a two speed or variable speed clipper, you will have the ability to run it at a slower speed which will generate less vibration and noise.

Do you want the option of more than one speed?

Running a clipper on high speed doesn't necessarily mean that you will get through the job faster. High speed is preferred for grooming though knots, thick undercoats or large areas such as back neck and chest and is ideal if you have a large dog. It will leave a cleaner finish but lower speeds are great for beginners as well as for use in sensitive areas such as the face and feet and will help prevent excessive blade heat. Having the option to choose is sometimes very handy.

Is a power source readily available?

Cordless clippers are usually less powerful than the corded versions but can be very handy if a power source is not easily accessible. Having to include a battery in the clipper body can increase the weight of the clipper and this should be factored into your purchase decision.

Finally, what type of coat will you be clipping?

Just like humans, not every dog has the same type of coat and purchasing a clipper without an understanding of the hair you are preparing to clip can have a negative outcome.

Which Coat Type is your Dog?

Curly/Wavy/Fleece Coat

e.g. Poodle

This coat type is also considered non-shedding and is soft, curly, wavy or fleecy.

Everything about this coat screams maintenance. Without regular brushing, combing and clipping this coat will become matted, causing great discomfort and many health problems for a dog.

Best full body clipper- (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Trims- (1 or 2) magnetic or pivot motor.

Long Coat

e.g. Maltese or Shih Tzu



Long coat or drop coats are continually growing and considered non-shedding.

Some people opt to clip their long-coated dog to reduce maintenance. Without clipping they require brushing at least three times a week to prevent matting and skin irritation due to poor air circulation.

A long coat is commonly quite fine, requiring a more powerful clipper.

Best full body clipper- (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Trims- (1 or 2) magnetic or pivot motor.

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Silky Coat

e.g. Cocker Spaniel

Silky coat breeds have a combination of long, silky and short, smooth coat.

With such a fine texture the silky coat is prone to matting if left ungroomed, clipping will help reduce maintenance.

Best full body clipper- (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Trims- (1 or 2) magnetic or pivot motor.

Double Coat

e.g. Alaskan Malamute

A double coat consists of two layers; a dense undercoat of short, usually fine/woolly hairs and a top coat of longer hairs called guard hairs.

Double coated dogs are very high maintenance as their undercoat sheds a lot. Without regular brushing, this loose hair from the undercoat gets caught up in the top coat and results in mats and tangles. Therefore, clipping a double coated dog has two benefits; one, there will be less hair shed around the house and two, it reduces the brushing and maintenance required to keep the coat healthy.

Best full body clipper - (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Heavy Coat

e.g. Pomeranian

This coat is a combination of long, thick, silky hair and some short, smooth hair.

Very similar to the double coat, the heavy coat is high maintenance and requires daily brushing to stay in tip top shape. Clipping a heavy coated dog reduces the maintenance required.

Best full body clipper- (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Trims- (1 or 2) magnetic or pivot motor.

Combination Coat

e.g. Border Collie

This coat type is a combination of long, silky coat and short, smooth coat.

Many of these breeds are working dogs and they love getting outside and dirty. Although their coat is designed to repel dirt and stay clean naturally, it has a great habit of trapping burs, leaves and other rubbish which they love to bring inside when they've finished having fun. This along with the brushing and maintenance require to keep their coat in tip top shape, encourages some owners to keep their coat short.

Best full body clipper - (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Wiry Coat

e.g. Schnauzer

Wiry coat breeds have a soft dense undercoat over most of their body and a wire coat over the entire body.

The longer top coat requires regular brushing to avoid matting and stay healthy. If you are wanting to clip the undercoat of a wiry coated dog you will need a stronger clipper than if you are just trimming the longer top coat.

Best full body clipper- (3) rotary motor - Heavy duty

Trims- (1 or 2) magnetic or pivot motor.

Short or Smooth Coat

e.g. Jack Russell

Wiry, Short or Smooth Coats don't require a clipper with a lot of power as long as their coat is not too heavy and thick. This is because their hair is coarse and there is usually less of it. This results in fewer hairs in-between the teeth of the clipper blade which reduces the effort required by the clipper to move the blade and cut the hair. People normally decide to clip these dogs because they shed too much hair around the house or to reduce maintenance.

Best full body clipper- (2 or 3) Pivot or rotary motor

If you are patient, you may be able to use a clipper with a (1) magnetic motor but this is still best used for trims.

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The shorter the blade, the bigger the angle. Do not allow the blade to skip along the skin. If necessary, use your other hand to gently pull the skin taught to allow the blade to travel smoothly in whatever area you are working.



Basic Clipper Use

Once you're ready to get clipping, there are a few basic techniques that you should follow.

1. Hold a clipper like a pencil, between the thumb and fingers.
2. Hold the clipper at the balance point where the weight is evenly distributed on the clipper to reduce wrist and finger strain.



4. Always wash your dog before clipping. Dirt from your pet's coat causes friction which can reduce the life of your blades.
5. Over time clipper blades can start "running hot" which can burn your dogs' skin and cause your blades to buckle. To prevent this from happening, oil the blade every two minutes, run the clipper on a lower speed and if it gets too hot change the blade to a new one. Don't forget to check your blades aren't hot by placing it on the back of your hand. If it's too hot for you it's way too hot for your dog.
6. After use, clean your blades with a blade disinfectant/cleaner then follow up with an application of clipper blade oil before storing. Sand, dirt and moisture can get into your blades, causing friction and blunting the blade, this simple maintenance will prolong the life of your blades.
7. If your blades are blunt, have them sharpened and realigned by a professional blade sharpener.

3. Keep the blade on the cutting edge, being mindful that it is different with every blade, or guard comb. Keep the clipper flush with the cutting edge allowing the clipper to do most of the work.

For more helpful advice on choosing a clipper type for your needs, call into a Better Pets and store to view our range.

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