

## Grooming instructions for field spaniel:

By Karen Balinski Copyright 2009

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**\*IMPORTANT! NEVER SHAVE THE BACK COAT OF A FIELD SPANIEL AS THIS WILL RUIN THE COAT!\***



**Ears: 7F blade-** Shave the top 1/3 of the ear against the way the hair grows, starting from that little bulge in the ear leather. Hold the ear flat in your hand and clipper in an upward motion clipping onto the head. <The head will be clipped with 7F so it is blended> Make a nice straight line across the top of the ear.

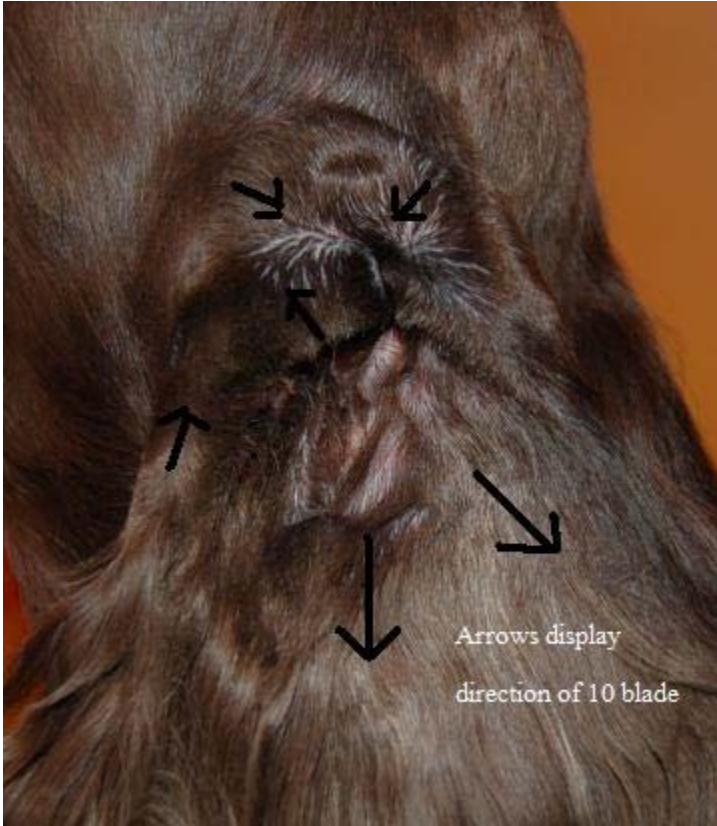
\*against grain will not leave clipper marks!

\*Not all dogs can have the heads shaved close. Sometimes hand scissoring is needed instead.

**10 blades-** Clip inside the ear, clearing the hair from the top third. Use your clippers at whatever angle needed that will give you a clean inner ear. It's important to keep this inside area clear of

hair, as hair can harbor bacteria/fungus and contribute to ear problems.





Notice how the inside of the ear is trimmed short. The arrows show the direction of the clipper blade.

**Don't forget behind the ear!**  
**Clean up behind the ear with**  
**the same blade you used on**  
**front of the ear the 7F. The**

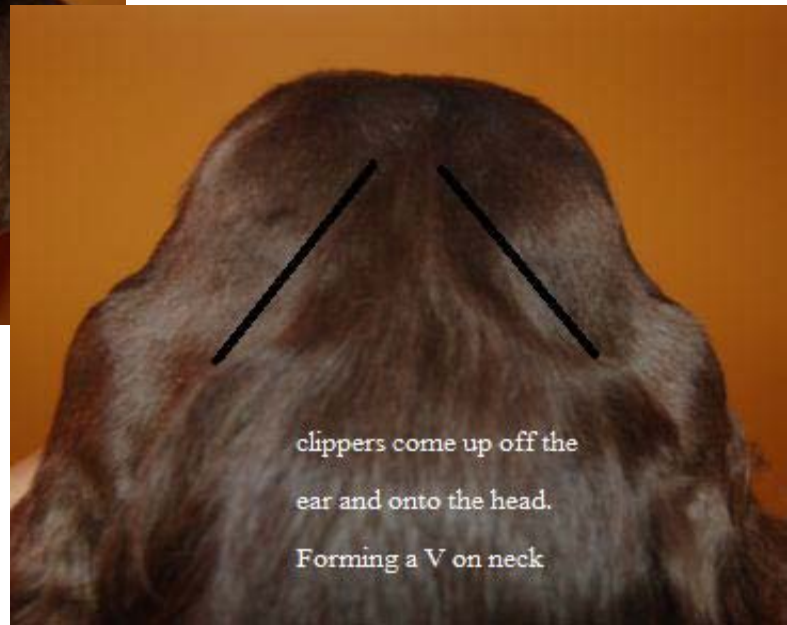
**arrows show the direction the clipper blade**  
**which is against the grain.**





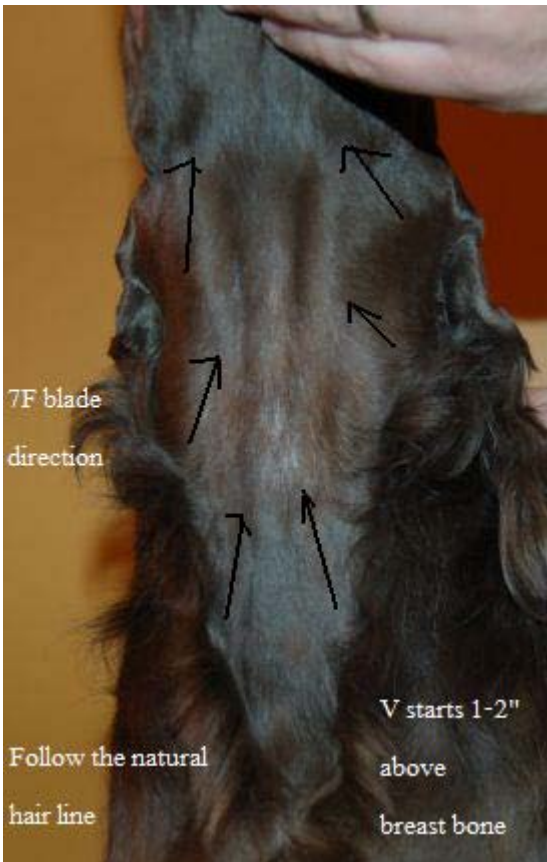
arrows show  
direction of 7F  
blade

**Head: 7F** Against the grain:  
Blend the shaved area of the ear  
into the top of the head, starting  
at the back of the skull going  
against the grain and stopping  
just above the eyebrows. Be  
careful to lift the clippers slightly  
before you get to the eyebrows so  
you don't leave a noticeable  
ridge. The blade should be flat  
against the skull.



clippers come up off the  
ear and onto the head.  
Forming a V on neck

On the back of the neck you should be forming a V that will later be blended with thinning shears. This will give the back of the neck a natural look, rather than having the cut marks at the top of the neck.



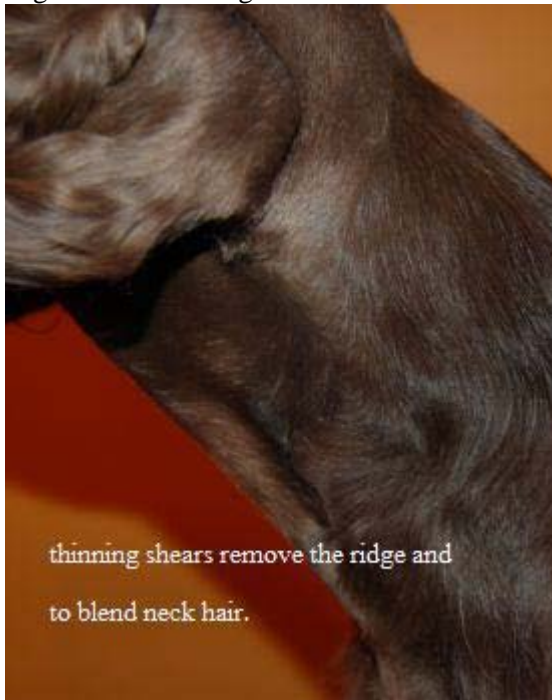
7F blade  
direction

Follow the natural  
hair line

V starts 1-2"  
above  
breast bone

**Neck/Throat: 7F blade.** Start to clip two-three finger-widths above the breast bone. Clip against the way the hair grows, moving up the throat and chin. Clipper the rest of the neck in the same fashion using the natural cowlick of the neck as your guide. Change clipper directions as the hair changes directions, so that you are always going against the grain. The finished clip-line should form a sort of V-shape. The Hair on the neck forms a natural ridge that you can follow. The pattern is from the ears down to breast bone, forming a V.

Blend the neck hairline with thinning shears so the hair blends smoothly. There should be only a slight noticeable ridge from the un-shaved neck to the throat area. Also use thinning shears to blend the back of head and top of neck so that there is no noticeable difference in hair length. You want to create a flowing neckline. Remember when you look at your dog if your eyes are drawn to an area it usually means there is hair that is need of blending.



**Chest and leg:** The picture to the right shows a very un-groomed front leg and chest. More hair is not always better. The hair is hiding the dog's lovely front and is distracting the eye away from the shoulder. Notice the hair dragging on the grooming table.

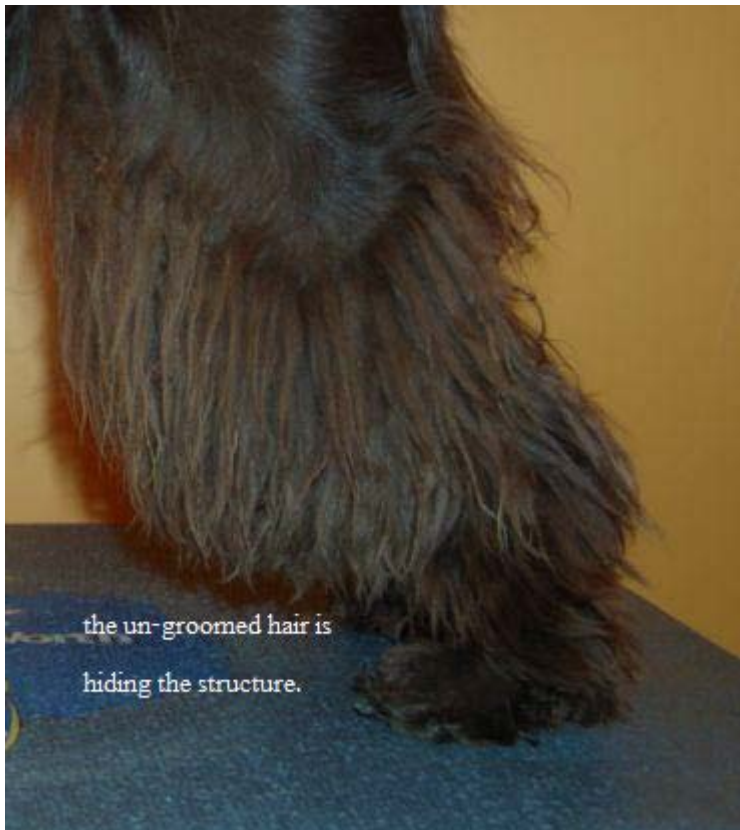
The chest hair can either be stripped by hand or thinned with thinning shears. Hand stripping results in a natural look. However as this is a veteran dog so thinning shears were used.

The front leg needs about 2 inches cut from the over-all length. Thinning shears are needed to remove the bulkiness of the hair. To cut the hair so that it is not dragging on the floor, try this trick. Comb the hair from the pasterns down to large pad. You will then hold the hair against the large pad & trim any hair that comes past the top of the large pad. This will give the hair the correct length so it's not dragging on the floor.





Use your straight shears to clean up area from pad to pasterns. Reduce overall length. <Pictured below>. A stripping knife/blade is used to strip the hair by the shoulder and elbow. Thinning shears were used to blend away any scissor marks. You can now see the dog's structure and you are not distracted by having a large volume of hair hanging.



**Hocks:** The hocks should be trimmed short to maintain a neat appearance. The hock may be thinned and/or trimmed with the cut running parallel to the hock. The hock should look neat and tidy. If the hock looks overly hairy or distracting take more hair off. Some areas of the country shave the hock. I personally do not recommend this as the grooming on a field spaniel should look natural.



For really hairy back legs use the following steps.

1. Comb the thigh hair up to get it out of the way.
2. Comb the hock hair out.
3. Using the large pad as a guide trim hair with straight shears at angle shown
4. Trim hock hair with straight shears
5. Thin and blend hair with thinning shears.



You can use straight shears or curved shears. Follow the natural curve of the thigh. The cut should end at the top of the hock.



after the cut is made with straight shears it is time to blend with the thinning shears

Even though it looks choppy right now you will be able to blend your cut with thinning shears, so don't panic.



Blended and looking pretty

Thinning shears are used by going up underneath hair. By cutting underneath you reduce the chance of leaving scissor marks on the surface.



The groomed and un-groomed hock is pictured left. This demonstrates the need to remove excessive hair. Having the hair neatly trimmed is also essentially for the dog to maintain a healthy coat and skin. With the longer hair debris gets en-tangles in the hair. Moisture can get trapped underneath the dense coat leading to skin issues.



To groom the foot:

1. Comb the hair upward. <Pictured left>
2. With short straight shears or short curved shears- cut along the top of foot from left to right. (Follow black line in picture)
3. Continue to round the foot. Comb cut comb cut....
4. Take your time...
5. If your dog has long flat feet leave the hair on top a little longer. If your dog has a nice tight cat foot, get rid of the hair to show off that foot!



Why to have a neatly trimmed foot:

1. It shows off the foot rather than hiding it underneath hair
2. Less dirt gets trapped by the hair
3. No tangles or mats will occur
4. No worry about burrs



The bottom of the un-groomed foot. The long hair may be trimmed with scissors or clippers can be used. By removing the hair the pads will have contact with surfaces and give the dog the traction they need. By leaving the hair long in between the dog's pads you are increasing the dog's chances of injury, infection and discomfort.





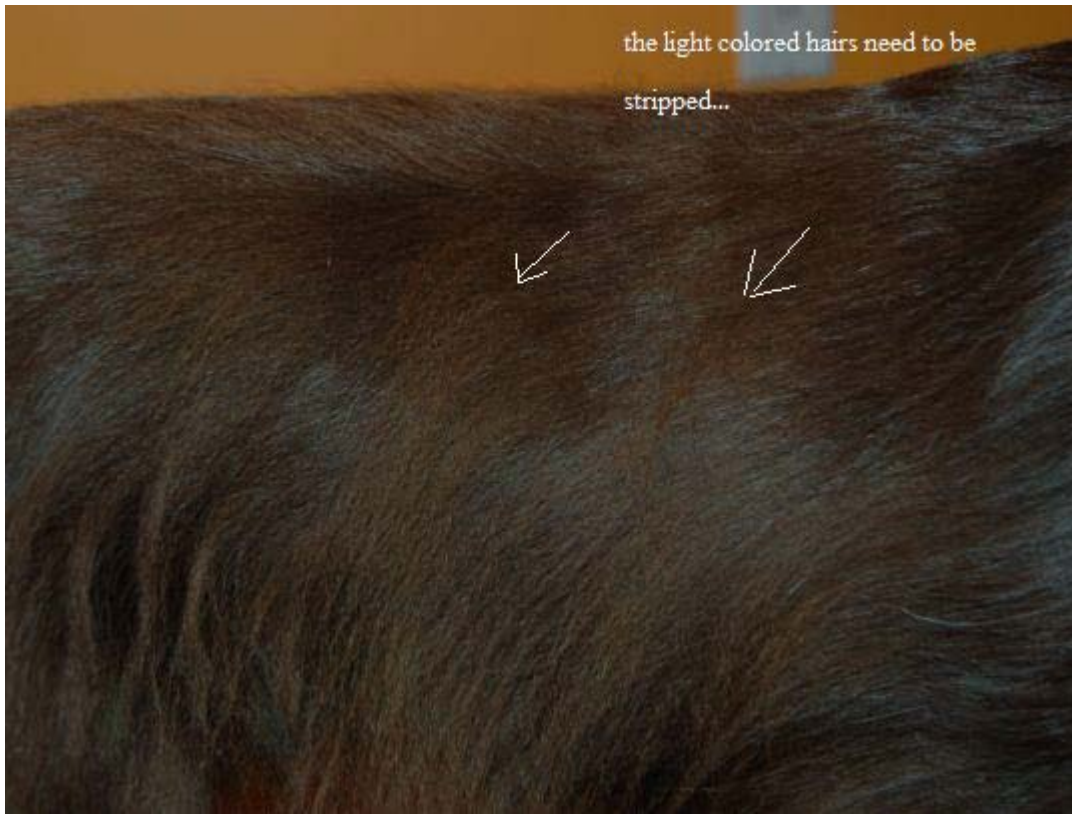
My dogs have all been taught to lie on their backs as I trim their pads. This allows me to have a good view of the area I am trimming as well as a good grip on the dog's foot. The dog's are also more comfortable on their backs and are less likely to fight as you are placing them in a submissive position.



Only the bottom of the tail is clipped. If you prefer you can hand scissor the tail to create a nice and clean look. If you Field has a longer tail leave some hair at the base of the tail. If the tail is short, trimming the hair close to the base of the tail can give the appearance of a longer tail.



Here is what the tail looks like when it has been cleaned up.



Stripping can be done by hand or with grooming tools such as stripping stones or knives. Stripping is removing the dead coat a little at a time and it does not hurt the dog although it can be taxing on your fingers and hands. People new to stripping are often confused as to what to strip. Hair that needs to be stripped is dry fly away hair. It is usually lighter in color and also appears to be dry and brittle. Stripping is only recommended for dogs that are being shown. It is too time consuming to waste the time and effort on dogs that are not being shown.