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PET-GROOMING A BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG

1-2 hours *Time (start to finish)	*1 Sharp Scissor for trimming
*1 Pin Brush	1 Thinning Sheers
*1 Undercoat Rake/Undercoat Comb	*1 Nail Grinder or Nail Clipper
1 Bristle Brush	1 Nail File
1 Greyhound *Comb	*Cotton Balls & Cotton Swabs
*1 Spray Bottle filled with Water (or diluted conditioner)	*Ear Solution or Witch Hazel
Leave-in Coat Conditioner	*Dog Towels
Lanolin *Shampoo	*1 Hand Dryer with "Cool" Setting (* bare essential tools)

Bernese require little 'work' other than brushing with a pin brush bathing and drying- ok, that's a lot of work for a big dog- but they don't require the tedious trimming like that of other breeds. Undercoat removal is done either with an **undercoat rake** during the shedding seasons, generally fall and spring, or with a **pin brush**. Never brush the coat dry, as this breaks the coat giving a dull fly-away or wispy appearance. Mist the coat with water or **diluted coat conditioner**, first. **Lanolin shampoos** work well with Bernese. You may choose to use color enhancer shampoos specifically for white, rust and/or black coats, and spot wash your dog. Work small amounts of shampoo in the dog and really scrub. Be sure to rinse thoroughly. **Condition** if necessary. Don't over-condition or you will get a "flat" coat. I hand dry, with a towel and then "fluff dry" with a blow dryer. NOT a cage dryer. Some Bernese tend to be noise sensitive and a metal crate can just enhance the frequency and noise level of the dryer to intolerable levels... **THEY ARE HEAT SENSITIVE**. Heat stroke is NOT uncommon!! Don't leave them in a crate with a heated cage dryer unattended. It is important to dry right down to the skin to avoid hot spots. Use a **warm-cool dryer** not hot. The hair should be "fluffy"- (not smoothed like a golden) back brush if necessary on the hindquarters and rump. Comb through the tail with a **Greyhound Comb** and NEVER trim the white on the tip! The tail feathering can be slightly trimmed to clean up; but a full and bushy tail is more desirable.

Leave the whiskers unless they heavily distract from the expression (i.e. black whiskers on a white muzzle.) Removing the whiskers is optional, and most pet-owners don't care for the coarse texture it leaves behind. Ideally, the nails are ground with a **nail grinder** or else trimmed and filed. The nails should not show past the hair; and they shouldn't have what I call "Dr. Seuss" feet. The feet are rounded, by trimming the hair parallel with the table rounding out the foot. The hair on the top of the foot can be thinned with **thinning shears** if they appear rather bushy, too... Clean hair and debris between the toes- but be careful not to trim skin! They have webbed feet (snowshoes.) Minimal trimming is necessary. Even in the show ring they are not overly trimmed and can be penalized for such. Trimming some of the hair behind the ears with thinning shears is OK for heavily coated dogs. For Pets, shaving the belly or underside of the thighs is ok- but not too much- you don't want to lose the furnishings on the back of the hind legs. If the dog wears a collar regularly, be sure to brush through the neck to remove knots and tangles. Ears get swabbed with **cotton balls**. You can use **ear cleaner** from your vet or supply shop. **Witch Hazel** works wonders for a fraction of the price! Apply the Witch Hazel to the cotton ball, not the ear itself. A **cotton swab** can be used to clean around the folds in the ear. Do not go deep. The hair on the ears can be trimmed with a thinning shears to round out the head. Bernese should appear natural, not clipped. Once the dog is finished- you should be able to comb through the entire coat with a greyhound comb easily. Slicker Brushes break the coat, so I *generally* avoid them.

Happy Grooming!

Rebecca Kent has over 30 years of grooming experience behind her. She originally learned to groom her parent's Scottish Terriers and got her first Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier when she was 8. As a result, she learned what grooming really meant! She got her first Bernese Mountain Dog in 1989. She is a graduate of the New York School of Dog Grooming and opened Canine-Corner " from Hair to Heel" Dog Grooming and Training in 1996. With an M.S. degree in art education; her true love is still with the dogs and art!

