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**Pump up the Volume – Coat-wise that is!**

If your dogs are like mine, they seem to know just when a really important show is coming up and decide to throw coat. Out it comes, bucket loads of it. This is particularly disastrous if you have a double coated breed that is like a road racing goanna without the full complement of what nature required and judges deem necessary.

There you are, faced with your previously glamorous Sheltie, your once magnificent Malamute or your severely denuded Samoyed. You've got the picture. Lots of breeds blow coat and it seems to take forever to get them back to show bloom despite every coat growing powder known to man. What to do?

Well I don't wait for nature to take its course and instead resort to human intervention. There are ways and means to get that scrappy excuse for a coat to look fairly passable. Firstly, get rid of the old coat as quickly as possible. Strip it, wash it, blow it out - whatever! Now bath the dog with a 5 to 1 solution of Body Building shampoo i.e. 5 parts water to 1 part Shampoo. The aim is to boof this coat up and bodify it WITHOUT making it stiff and unnatural.

Next step is NOT to use conditioner. Conditioner will flatten and lay down whatever coat is there. We want it standing up and looking at us! If you must have some moisturising product in the coat then use something that disentangles and moisturises yet doesn't soften or flatten, such as PP Revivacoat. You put this on and leave it in. Do not wash out.

Now here is the nitty gritty of the whole thing. We want to dry this coat so it will make 3 hairs look like 3 thousand. Enter stage right - Plush Puppy Volumising Cream. This stuff is fabulous. We recently showed a bitch who was quite literally near bald and had only blown coat 2 weeks previously. I fluffed and puffed this coat and she won.

All I did was apply a generous amount to all the depleted areas and rubbed it into the coat to cover each hair. Then I used a strong cattle dryer - there are various cool air, forceful air type dryers around - and literally blasted the coat to stand up on end. Blow the coat from the rear end, forwards to the head, against the growth of the hair. You will want to achieve as much root lift as possible as once the coat is dry and the dog has a good shake, it will settle down into it's rightful place but amazingly with a lot more oomph and volume.

Then on the day of the show, you will need to puff up and revitalize the coat once again. If possible, do as the Americans do and bring your dryer with you and try to find some power to plug in. Yes, they all do it. Some even lug their portable generator around too.

It depends how important the show is to you. Failing that, at least use something that has a light bodifier in it without undue stickiness. I use the PP Quick Fix Conditioner that is loaded with milk fats that will not only aid you in brushing the coat to shape but again coat the hair lightly. If you have a finer textured type of coat to work with, then just break the PP Quick Fix

Conditioner down to equal parts of water and product and spray on as you brush up. Don't make it too wet. I use an oval pin brush.

I then go through the coat with a wide toothed comb that has teeth roughly an inch and a half long. I work every hair through that comb ensuring every hair counts and combing it from skin to end. Use a fine toothed flea type comb for the ears and a slightly wider toothed small comb for the face and short leg hair etc. I then try to fluff up once more with the dryer if it is available.

Look at the silhouette of your dog. It may not have as much hair as it should but with judicious balancing of the dogs body weight leading up to the show - just stack a touch extra on him - he will most likely cut a rather nice figure. The judge will see he doesn't have as much coat as he would perhaps like but if the shape and silhouette is there then you have a fighting chance when up till then you had none.

Some swear by mousses and stuff but I for one prefer a more natural than sticky harsh feel to the coat. If we must intervene, then lets at least make the coats look like they belong to a dog and yet at the same time look as good as possible. I hope you get to win a few more awards than you might previously have done. After all, what would our weekends be without going to a dog show?

## **CHERYL LECOURT**

Don't forget to check out these products that relate to this article in our online shop:

Quick Fix Spray On Conditioner  
Reviva Coat  
Volumising Cream