

How to Care for Your Brushes

Whether you choose to use synthetic brushes in bright colors or natural-bristle brushes with wooden backs, your brushes represent an investment. By caring for them properly, you'll extend their useful life.

Always store your brushes so that the bristles are protected from being crimped or smashed. Many types of grooming boxes and totes exist on the market, but no matter which you choose, protect your bristles by storing them neatly. One technique is to stand your brushes on end so that each brush is balanced on the tip of its solid handle. Another method is to gently nestle the bristles of two brushes together so that they interlock.

Dirty brushes cannot help you achieve a clean horse. While you're brushing your horse, you're ideally scraping a curry or a shedding blade against the tips of the bristles every few brush strokes to flick away dust. Eventually, however, your brush bristles collect a buildup of sebum and grime. With each brush stroke, you return that grime to your horse's coat, leaving less than desirable results. When neglected long enough, dirty brush bristles will begin to clump together, becoming even less effective tools for cleaning your horse.

Occasional cleaning with soap and water not only makes your brushes work better and last longer, it reduces the chance of buildup of bacteria in the brush. If at some point you encounter a skin disease in your horse, be sure to isolate the brush (and curry) used on the area so as not to spread a contagious condition to other parts of the horse.



So Clean They're Like New!

If you have just a few brushes, curries or combs to clean, you can't beat Brush Therapy for effective, easy cleaning in just minutes. This product is a powder that dissolves with effervescence in warm water, whisking away deep down dirt and grime from the bristles so thoroughly that they look like new. One bag of Brush Therapy cleans about six to eight items. Once rinsed with clean water, spread your brushes on a clean towel in a warm location to drain and dry before returning them to your storage tote.



Helpful Tips:

- In general, sharing brushes and hoof picks between horses is not a good idea. Keeping a separate set of grooming tools for each horse helps to ensure that contagions are not spread between horses.
- If a brush or curry becomes moist with mud or manure during grooming and you don't have time to wash it, allow it to air dry. Then, scrape it clean before returning it to your storage kit. Similarly, allow any damp sponge or towel to dry before putting it away to prevent the growth of mildew on its surface.

Lots of Brushes to Clean?

This method isn't as easy as using Brush Therapy, but the most economical way to clean many brushes, curries and combs at once is to fill a tall bucket with hot water and mix in Dawn® dishwashing liquid or a similar dishwashing detergent designed to lift out grease and rinse well. If your brushes are all synthetic with plastic handles, you can add a splash of bleach to the mix. Bleach can be drying to natural bristled brushes with wooden handles, and so it should only be used on this type of brush when suspicion of skin disease or other equine illness is present. Another way to sanitize brushes is to add a moderate amount of Listerine® mouthwash to the wash water—it has a pleasant aroma and kills bacteria.

Soak the brushes for several minutes, agitating them to loosen dirt. Rinse and repeat the process until the water is no longer discolored, and you don't see any soap suds. Rinsing thoroughly is important to prevent a buildup of soap residue in the brush bristles. Spread your clean brushes on a towel in a warm location where they can drain and dry thoroughly before returning them to their storage container.

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