Cat Grooming Part 1

Welcome to cat grooming from check in to check out. This is a PGC program. A little housekeeping before we get started. All of the workshops are going to be broken down into chunks. This recording will be part one. There's a workbook that is associated with this. Download it, you will need it in order to pass the test. You have to pass the test in order to get a certificate to get credit for the PGC credentialing program. There is also a private Facebook group. The link is on this web page. Join it. If you have questions, that's probably the best way to get hold of me. You will have six weeks to watch all the recordings and to take the test. You will have unlimited opportunities to take a pass that test during that six-week period.

However, you can send me an email Mary@pawsitivelypretty.com. I’m a little slower to respond to emails. The same thing sending me a message through my website PawsitiveEd.com. it's going to go to my emails, so the same deal. You can text me any questions that you have, I respond a little bit faster to text. And besides that Facebook group, the FB group Pet Groomer Town Hall.

The goal of this program is to give you the tools that you need to become a successful cat groomer. And successful cat grooming begins before the appointment and ends with a return visit. How did I get involved in cat grooming? I call it Baptism by fire. Meaning, I was a new groomer and cat appeared on my schedule and then appeared on my table and I was told to groom it. The bad news was is that I didn't have anyone to tell me how to groom the cat. The general consensus of the day, we’re talking well over 20 years ago, was that a cat was just the same as a dog and you just groom it like you would a dog. The good news was that I didn't have anybody to teach me the wrong ways to groom a cat. The Well, this is why we do it. This is how we do things type of mentality. I had to figure things out for myself.

The turning point for me had been was I had this very talkative cat, and I would swear to you, the cat was saying, Help me Help me Help me. And when the owners came to pick up the cat, I mentioned how talkative the cat was. The owner said, Oh, yeah, he tells us Love you. Love you Love you all day long. And here, the cat was saying help me to me. That light bulb went off on the top of my head and I thought, maybe I should rethink my handling techniques, because I'm treating these cats as if they were dogs. And a couple of shout outs that I would like to do is one is: Stacey Ward and the other one is Barbara bird, who really helped me see cats for the different species that they really are. I learned way better handling techniques from them.

This program is going to be broken up into five parts. Part one is what we're covering today is going to be on client communication and the check in process. Part Two will be what makes cats different. Part three will be tools, products and handling injuries. Part Four will be bathing drying and clipping. There will be a lot of video here. And the last part will be your staff, checking out the checkout procedures pricing and marketing.

Let's start off with client communication. I'm going to again now reference the workbook here. Communication is really important. Especially with cat owners, it'll help reduce misunderstandings of what can and cannot be done.

**The initial phone call**. Even if I had allowed online booking of dogs, I would not allow online booking of new cats. Because that phone call at the phone call is really important. During that phone call, I'm going to go over all the things that need to happen before I make that first appointment. I'm going to go over my Terms of Service. I also had an addendum that went along with that. And the addendum was very clear. I had three questions on there. No initials to accept, I wanted to fill out signature on it. You can email these forms to the owners. You can set up a Drive folder and give them the link to it, you can put it up on your website for download. There's lots of ways to get forms to somebody that needs to be signed before that first appointment.

The first statement is: as cats are physiologically more sensitive to grooming, positively pretty mobile grooming salon, that's the name of my business, will cease grooming when it becomes detrimental to the health of the cat. As the pet professional, I make the determination when it's detrimental to the cat, not the pet owner.

Second: minimum charges will apply regardless of completion of grooming. This is especially important as I was a mobile groomer. I pull down your driveway, minimum charge will apply.

Third: In the event of matting or coat removal, positively pretty mobile grooming will not be financially responsible for condition of skin or injury due to the stripping process.

Then I also had my senior release form. The other thing I want is a health record meaning I want to know the date of the last vet visit. Any health concerns I should be aware of? And then the third question on that one is going to be what medications are your pet is on? Because sometimes answer the question number two is there are no issues because it's being treated. However, if this cat is on insulin, or on heart medication, I want to know that because that can impact the grooming.

I let them know I want the cat brought in its own carrier with something that smells like home. And as I charge hourly, the clock ticks soon as I knocked on the door. What I would normally do is I would text them my way over. If it is a regular client meeting, that’s their cue to put the cat in the carrier with something that smells like home and some treats make this comfy so that we're not searching for the cat when I get there. If it is not a current client, I've never groomed this cat before that text is going to tell them you need to know where your cat: is meaning close bedroom doors, close closet doors, close basement doors. What's going to happen when I get there, I'm going to sit down with them. We're going to go over my paperwork, we're going to go over what it is that they're looking for in a groom and give that cat enough time to acclimate to me. It gives the cat a little bit of time to see me as a non threat.

I want the cat to see me as being part of the household.

I will make this determination when the groom is over and that they need to be fully aware that payment is due at time, regardless of completion of groom. I let them know that mobile I have a specific timeframe in which to work. Shops, however, have the ability to stop working on the cat give a cat a break. If I'm going to require vaccinations, I'm going make that clear to them. I want rabies. I've already been through the rabies series because of a cat bite. Feline respiratory diseases are highly contagious. And if you're going to require them, you have to have a way that they can get those records to you before you set the appointment. Or a timeframe in which you want them after you set the appointment.

**Grooming environment.** ‘m going to show you how I prepare for cat grooming. Music really does truly soothe the savage beast providing it is the right music. There's lots of studies on music and animals and how it affects them. Their hearing is so much greater than ours. And they have more issue with music that's on either end of the spectrum. Anything loud or jarring can be problematic for them. Spa or pop is best. There is music designed specifically for cats. You might find it on YouTube, but you can go over to Amazon and put cat music into the search box and it'll come up for you.

Their sense of smell is also way greater than ours. I want to keep the scents down to a minimum. Most of the time as mobile cats would be first appointment of the day. So there wouldn't have been other dogs in the van. I do personally like to diffuse essential oils. However, I will not do that around cats. So cats would come in first and then if I wanted to diffuse essential oils for the dogs later on, that would be okay.

Cats are far more aware of their surroundings than dogs are. I think that's because they are less domesticated than dogs. I have poohbear right here as my little minion, And if I was to say, hey, pooh, you're out on your own. He wouldn't do too well. Cats would do way better than him. Because they are so much more aware of their surroundings. And because of that, they can go into overwhelm a whole lot easier than dogs do. You can do cat specific days, or times when a shop is less busy. Having a separate room for cats is probably the best option that you have.

In this day and age, everybody should have some sort of video recording setup. It can be anything from putting your phone on a flexible tripod, and uploading the video to a Google Drive folder to a full out security system with video and audio recording. You need to be aware of how long your system keeps the videos because some of them just simply overwrite them. And you need to let your clients know that you're doing this. Make them sign that they are aware of video and audio recording as required by law. If there's a problem and they ask to see the video and you don't have it because you never recorded it, they're simply going to assume that you're hiding something.

Some tips. Don't over schedule yourself on days or afternoons with cats on your schedule, because they're going to sense your stress. If you're stressed, then there's a reason to be stressed. They're just going to feed off of your overwhelm.

Keep it as calm as possible. Provide a nurturing and calm environment for them. Don't play loud music, go with that spa, pop, or cat friendly music, right Don't have other stylists running around in the shop cleaning or vacuuming. Have that calm about you.

**The check in process** should include a snout to tail assessment. This should be done in a quiet place. As I was the mobile, the first time I would do this in their house. Before I bring this cat into my mobile grooming van. Shops don't have that luxury. Lock it down. Make sure all escape routes are dealt with. I had a friend who was mobile and had the van doors that opened outward. And when they open out the wall between the cab and the work area, there's a little gap underneath. The cat got underneath the gap and right into the dashboard. They had to dismantle the dashboard to get the cat out.

Lock doors. When I was when I was working in a shop, there was a door coming into the grooming shop and another going into the retail part. Both of those doors were locked when I had a cat out. If somebody wanted to come in, then the cat would be put away before I unlocked those doors.

With a snout to tail assessment, you're checking for the following. You're looking at gum color. Pale gums indicate blood is not circulating well in this cat could be a prime candidate for a heart attack. Eyes: you're looking for discharge and listen to their breathing because that raspy breathing may be indicators of respiratory disease and you don't want that sick cat in your facility. Especially for new cats, that was done prior to coming into my van.

I'm going to run a comb through the coat. And then have my matting and my senior pet waivers handy. I'm going to be really specific on what I can and cannot do. I’m going to prioritize the groom and set up a plan of action. On the cat outline form in the workbook, I’m going to have the owners indicate exactly what they would like. Lion cuts can be very subjective. Once the cat owners tell me what it is that they would like we're going to figure out if I can do that. For a new cat, that means prioritizing the groom. If the cat is matted, that means we do a shave first, followed by a bath, then drying, and then finish work. Because I don't know when their turkey timer is going to pop. That's a little timer that you find on turkeys and chickens. When it pops up. It's done cooking. When it pops up on a cat, groom is over. They're done. And as a mobile groomer, that meant the groom is over. For shop. Maybe not, maybe that cat just needs a break. Put the cat in a crate, let the cat chill out a little bit, maybe can get back to and get a little bit more before that turkey timer goes back off again.

Once I've already groomed the cat and I know what the cat can cannot do, then we can change that, that plan of action. I had a cat that initially the owners wanted on a three-month schedule realized fairly quickly that they wanted to done far more often. The first time it came to me matted and I was able to get the matting off and give the cat a bath. That was it. Cat was done. The next time I came out, I was able to get through the drying process. Part of working with the cat is that you start developing a trust with the cats. For me the magic number was always three. By the third room, I was able to fully complete the groom for them, but I knew when to stop grooming this cat. You're looking at the long plan, not a short-term plan.

I will always receive cats in the carrier. I prefer their carrier, but I do have my own cost. I'm not bringing cats into my van with a carrier that is held together with bread ties. If that's the case, then I'm going to bring in my carrier and we'll just transfer the cat over. I'm going to allow this cat to acclimate to its new environment. I'm going to secure my van. No escape routes. If you're a shop, close the doors, lock them. Give the cat the opportunity to acclimate to its new environment and see that this is not so scary. I open up the carrier and let the cat come out on their own, let him sniff around. And while the cat is doing that, I'm going to get set up. As I'm on my hourly rate begins when I knock on the door and owners need to be aware of this. This is how long it takes to groom a cat. I’ll gather all the things I need to groom this cat. Whereas the differences is when grooming dogs I'm going to have all of this set up ahead of time. Once I get all my stuff together, it'll pick up the cat and I will get started but it's giving the cat an opportunity to not see me as a threat. Cat carrier is always kept open nearby as cats are smart enough to know that the way back home is to the cat carrier. They are more likely to run into the carrier than any other place. All right. It's why having a dedicated space for cats is always best.

We're going to stop here and next section we'll begin with part two: what makes cats different.