

The Grooming Ring

By Eve Auch

Editors note: Eve Auch, of Iron gate Dobermans has been involved in the sport of purebred dogs since 1969. She has bred 23 conformation champions, including an Award of Merit winner at the National Specialty (owner handled), over 36 CD titleholders and many CDX/UD dogs. Six Iron gate dogs have TD and TDX titles. Eve has been heavily involved in the Doberman Pinscher Club of America including as Show Chairman, chairman of several committees and futurity director. Also Eve is one of the 11 certified Evaluators for the Working Aptitude Evaluation.

A beautiful ear crop enhances a gorgeous head. A beautiful ear crop enhances even a mediocre head. A beautiful ear crop can even make an unattractive head better! But, an ear crop that doesn't stand, has wells in the bases, flops around at the tip, or just refuses to stand, can ruin the best of heads and facial expressions.

An experienced veterinarian should be able to fit the ears to the head, taking into account the breed. While I am primarily involved with Doberman Pinschers, I have worked for several veterinarians over the years and have been involved with the after-care of numerous breeds, including the Doberman Pinscher, Boxer, Schnauzer, Great Dane, Bull Terrier and Min Pin, plus other breeds, such as the Norwegian Elkhound and German Shepherd, whose ears should stand erect naturally, and have failed to do so. Many of the principles apply to these as well as to the cropped breeds.

Many people do not understand the aftercare process. I've heard people say that they roll the ears for three days, then take them down and let the ears rest. I'm not sure why they are "resting," as that is the very thing you don't want them to do. Also, I've seen ears that have a piece of tape wrapped around the top and bottom of the ear and nothing in between, or only a partial peg or one with no rigidity.





Over the years I have learned and developed many tricks and techniques. Let me explain some of these techniques that have worked well for me.

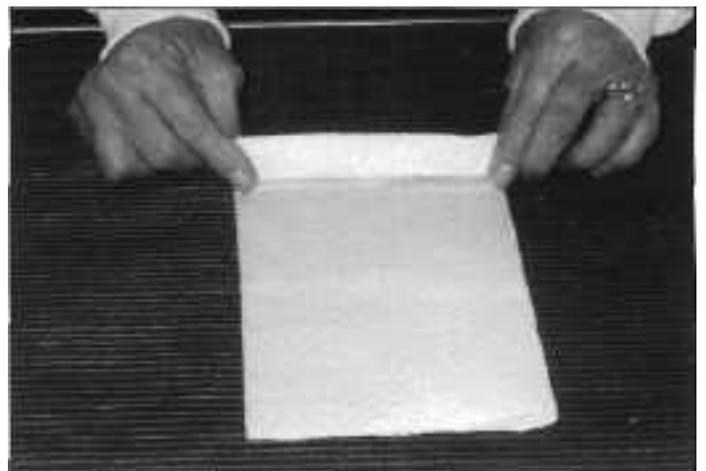
As soon as the ears are cropped, and before the puppy wakes up, I use Skin Bond, a surgical glue used in humans, to glue the ears to a piece of foam (I use "Fun Noodles," cut to fit the puppy's ears and hollowed out on one end to fit comfortably on top of the head). Paint both sides of the ears with Skin Bond and place porous tape on the inner part of the ear. This piece of tape should exceed the length of the ear by at least one inch. Then place tape on the foam and paint it with Skin Bond for a good hold. Then press the hair side (outside) of the ear to the foam and pull the tape that is glued to the inside of the ear, up to the top of the foam. Add a second piece of tape for added support. I never put the tape on the stitches, but closely parallel the line of stitches. I make sure the tape is pulled tight so there is no sag in the ear. Then cover the ears with a cotton sock that has been cut on both sides. The toe of the sock fits over the foam and the cut ends tie under the chin. The sock is changed daily and the ears are powdered with Furacin (unscented baby powder or cornstarch also work well). If there are several puppies together, or if the puppy is with an older dog who is

apt to lick the ears, the sock is changed daily until the stitches come out. Otherwise, I leave the sock on for about three days and then allow the ears to be exposed to the air for the next week.

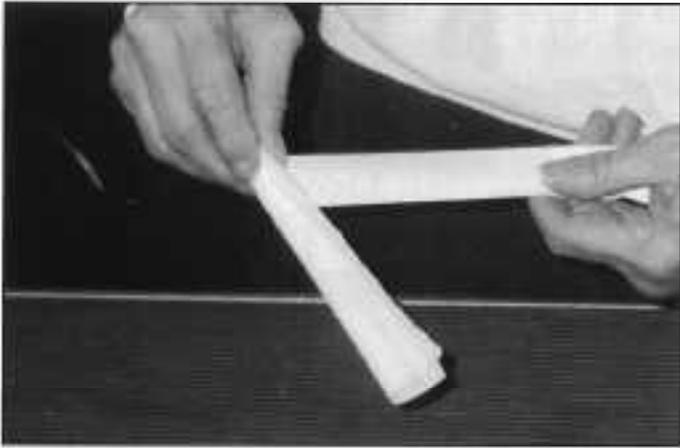
When the stitches are removed at approximately 10 days, the ears stay glued to the foam. When the scabs are gone, I proceed to "roll" the ear.



My rolls are made out of a craft stick (longer and thinner than a Popsicle stick) and a piece of paper toweling folded in half. Again, using porous tape (I use Zonas 1" porous tape), I wrap the stick and piece of paper toweling to resemble a barbershop pole. Leave some of the paper toweling exposed, it will absorb any moisture getting into the ear. I put a small piece of tape at the top and bottom of the roll to keep the stick from moving either into the ear or out the top.



Before beginning, I tear eight strips of tape; each about 5" long, and have them ready to go. I use four strips per ear. I insert the roll and gently twist it down into the ear. Starting about 2/3 of the way up the ear, I stick the first piece of tape on the roll and go around the ear in the direction the hair grows. The second piece of tape starts at the top of the ear and is rolled around the ear until it meets the first piece of tape. The



last two strips of tape continue down the ear until it is entirely covered.

The important things to remember are, if you wrap the tape too loosely, the rolls will come out and if you wrap the ear too tightly, you will cut off the circulation and damage the ear.

Once taped, I put a strip of tape across the head to tie the two ears together. I do not want this strip to tie the ears parallel. I actually want a slight V shape as the puppy can then work the ears and strengthen the bases.



I do not remove the rolls for one week, unless a puppy is having trouble adjusting to the rolls. As soon as I take the ears down, I immediately put them back up. The reason for this is that encasing the ear in tape causes the ear to generate heat. It was explained to me, that as the ear generates heat, the cartilage thickens the ear leather.

Using this method and being conscientious, I usually have the ears standing by the time the puppy is ready to cut the permanent teeth. During teeth cutting, the ears often become wet spaghetti! I simply continue to roll the ears through this stage and miraculously

when the permanent teeth are in, the ears are up. Mother Nature seems to have her priorities straight in that she sends the calcium in the puppy's system to the mouth instead of the ears! In Dobermans I don't recommend adding calcium to the diet, as I have known it to cause problems in the uneven development of the bones and ligaments.

One thing I want to mention here which is extremely important is that through the entire process, it is important to make this an enjoyable time for the puppy. While the puppy is up on the table, I practice stacking the puppy and teaching it the basic four "s" words: "stand", "stay", "stretch", and "step". Treats are given freely as is praise. Puppies should never be disciplined or treated roughly during this period. Lots of positive hands-on experiences for the puppy will reap great rewards in future behavior.

If the seven steps above are followed and the owner is conscientious about keeping the ears rolled, it is rare that a problem will develop. There are several "tricks" I use if a problem should develop. These problems can include wells in the base of the ear, tips that flip, bases that break, an ear that tips in, and ears that break higher up. These problems and the materials I use to correct them will be discussed in a later issue.

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Part Two: Breaks and Dips by Eve Auch

Breaks and dips? A new hair style? Perhaps a new recipe? Or is it a case of , "Uh, oh. My puppy woke up from his nap but his left ear didn't!"

I mean, the right ear is perfect but that left ear? What do I do now? I thought I had done everything right but suddenly everything is going wrong. How sad he looks! Is his show career over before it has a chance to begin?

In spite of all your hard work and careful attention to detail, ears sometimes seem to be connected to the brain and take on their own life. The fact that Mother Nature has her priorities straight and sends all that calcium to the mouth as teeth are exploding everywhere and forgets about the cartilage in the ears is just one of life's bumps in the road. So you need to take the bull by the horns, urn, make that the dog by the ears, and practice a bit of correctional work.

BREAKS

When one ear is standing perfectly and the other breaks at the base, you need only work on the one "bad" ear. Using Skin Bond, paint both sides of the "bad" ear. On the hair side, place a piece of porous tape which is 1" longer than the ear. On the inside (skin side) of the ear, place a piece of tape which is long enough to reach from the base of the ear, across the head, under the chin and back to the base of the ear. Once the tape is in place, you will gently pull the ear over the head so it is now laying flat across the top of the skull and in front of the "good" ear. Continue under the chin with the tape and meet up to the place you started at the base of the "bad" ear. Once the tape is fastened to itself at the base of the "bad" ear, you will leave it there for at least a week and preferably two weeks. The cartilage will continue to form during



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Gently massage the dip over the joint of the index finger.

this period. After several weeks, remove the tape and IMMEDIATELY roll both ears (see the first edition of the Boxer Ring). After rolling, place a piece of tape connecting the ears (a bridge of tape) and pull the ears so they are absolutely parallel to one another. Leave the ears rolled in this position for a week.

If the puppy is in a growth spurt, you may need to repeat this procedure several times. The main thing is to not wait too long before you tape over the head. If one ear is solid and the base of the other ear just wants to break at the base, the chances are it isn't going to get any better given additional time. Quick and aggressive action is needed.

DIPS

A dip, sometimes called a well, is created when the base of one (or both ears) has an indentation in it on the outside (hair side) of the ear right as it attaches to the skull. It looks as though someone has taken their thumb and pushed down where the ear meets

the skull. If the dip occurs in just one ear, it will make the ear crop look as though one ear is longer than the other. If it occurs in both ears, shame on you. It means you didn't stretch the ears up straight during your initial aftercare. Then the ears could be parallel but will appear shorter than the actual crop.

If the wells appear at the bases of both ears, this is the massage technique I learned years ago. While watching television or just sitting around, gently take the ear between your thumb and index finger. Placing the second joint of your index finger against the inside of the ear, take your thumb on the outside of the ear and gently massage the dip over the joint of the index finger. You will need to do this repeatedly several times a day. Each session should consist of approximately four dozen massages. If you are working with both ears, have the dog face you and both ears can be done at the same time. Simply put both of your index fingers against the inside of the two ears and using



„,you can tape the ear in the reverse of the technique used above for the broken ear.



Leave this tape in place for LESS than a week.

both thumbs, roll the ears gently over the index fingers. This can take several weeks of consistent work, but you will see results.

Alternatively, and especially if only one ear is involved, you can tape the ear in the reverse of the technique used above for the broken ear. Here is how it works:

Paint both sides of the offending ear with Skin Bond. On the inside of the ear, place a piece of tape which is approximately 1" longer than the ear. On the outside of the ear (the hair side), place a piece of tape that will reach under the chin, up the side of the muzzle and across the top of the head until it meets up where the tape began. Leave this tape in place for LESS than a week. The cartilage will break down faster in this procedure than it built up in the section above on Breaks. Again, as soon as you remove the tape, IMMEDIATELY roll the ears, making sure that the ears are stretched straight and the well does not have a chance to reappear. If you do not stretch the ears at the base, or if the ear slips down on the roll, another well will form.

It would not be wise to repeat this procedure more than once as the cartilage does break clown fairly quickly and you can find yourself in the position of having to fix a break instead of a dip.

Next time fixing the curls!

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TESTING AND REPORTING GUIDELINES

Use and interpretation of tests should be in consultation with your veterinarian or veterinary specialist. These guidelines will be updated as further knowledge is gained.

Condition tested	Test used	Minimum age	Frequency	Report as
Hip/Elbow dysplasia	Radiograph	2 years	Once	OFA # or
OR	Radiograph	6 months	Once	PennHip %
Hypothyroidism	Thyroid Panel'	2 years	annually for breeding stock	date tested**
Aortic valve disease	Auscultation/ Doppler	None	None	date tested**
AS/SAS	Auscultation/and Doppler Echocardiogram'	24 mos'	Once by Echo	date tested*
Boxer Cardiomyopathy	Holier monitor	12 mos.	Annul for breeding	date tested**

Heart disease can be inherited or it can be caused by bacterial, viral or parasitic agents these are NOT inherited. The damage appears the same in some cases. A screening program can help determine the origin.

All hearts should be auscultated at each veterinary visit. This is particularly important prior to any surgery, including ear cropping. If a murmur is detected the dog should be evaluated to determine the cause and significance of the murmur. Murmurs may be innocent ("flow" murmurs) or may be an indication of structural heart disease such as aortic stenosis, sub aortic stenosis, septal defects or defects of the mitral, tricuspid or pulmonic valves. Echo with Doppler measurements can accurately find and diagnose the origin of murmurs which cannot always be heard or reliably pinpointed by auscultation alone.

¹ Maximum flow values have recently been reevaluated and raised to 2.4 IF there is no evidence of structural causes. The cardiologist should determine if the flow value for an individual Boxer is of concern. Current information is that AS/SAS may develop upon sexual maturity in dogs that were previously tested clear, thus the new recommendation for 24 mos. minimum age. Boxer Cardiomyopathy is a complex condition that is still under study.

² Thyroid panel must include the following tests: TGAA (Thyroglobulin auto antibodies), Total T4AA, Free T4AA (by equilibrium dialysis), cTSH. (Optional tests include T3 and free T3)

³ Because these results can change over time, or because the age at testing may be significant, it is essential to list the date of the most recent test in each case. There are no normal values for some of the recommended tests, and there can be differing opinions between experts in the field.



Part Three: Curls by Eve Auch

Curls? A new hair style? I mean, the right ear is perfect but that left ear? What do I do now? I thought I had done everything right but suddenly everything is going wrong. How sad he looks! Is his show career over before it has a chance to begin?

In spite of all your hard work and careful attention to detail, ears sometimes seem to be connected to the brain and take on their own life. The fact that Mother Nature has her priorities straight and sends all that calcium to the mouth as teeth are exploding everywhere and forgets about the cartilage in the ears is just one of life's bumps in the road. So you need to take the bull by the horns, um, make that the dog by the ears, and practice a bit of correctional work.

First of all, most curls occur at the tips of ears which have been cropped too narrow. Breeders or owners who want a super long crop with narrow, paper-thin tips are simply asking for trouble. A pleasing crop doesn't have to be an extreme crop. Having said that, and incurring the wrath of those who like "the look", there are a couple of solutions, depending on what is causing the "curl."

Sometimes an ear will contract because the tip wasn't stretched straight when the initial rolling was done. Or a contraction forms before the stitches are out usually because the ear wasn't stretched and held in the correct position while healing. If the curl is caused by a contraction in the ear, the contraction will



Cut the Molefoam into a triangular piece with the two sides being long and the base quite short. It will look like a skinny, tall pyramid. Tape a craft stick right down the middle on the side of the Molefoam which is NOT sticky using a 1" strip of porous tape.





have to be massaged or taped out. The use of Vaseline or Neosporin is helpful. Coat the edge where the contraction is and gently pull and rub several times a day. Once the contraction is more pliable you can then roll the ear making sure the area of the contraction is pulled straight before applying the tape.

If the problem isn't a contraction but simply ears that are curling at the tips and bouncing around when the dog is moving at a trot, or the dog looks at you with the ears erect from the bases to slightly below the tips, your problem is going to take some more work. It has taken the ears several weeks to grow into this problem and it is going to take time for the problem to be resolved.

Probably the most satisfactory result I have obtained with curling tips is the use of Dr. Scholl's Molefoam. Moleskin doesn't work as well because it lacks the rigidity of Molefoam. Cut the Molefoam into a triangular piece with the two sides being long and the base quite short. It will look like a skinny, tall pyramid. Tape a craft stick right down the middle on the side of the Molefoam which is NOT sticky using a 1" strip of porous tape. Tape a piece over the top and bottom of the stick so it cannot move. Then roll the base of the Molefoam and tape it with a strip of porous tape. Paint the sticky side of the Molefoam with Skin Bond. Paint the inside of the ear with Skin Bond. Insert the Molefoam gently into the base of the ear, making sure that the Molefoam sticks to the ear all the way to the top. You do not need to tape the base of the ear but you'll need to tape the upper third of the ear with a double roll of porous tape. Make sure the tape is tight enough to hold the tips in place but not tight enough to cause circulation problems.

Once you've taped the ear, it can be left for at least ten days. If both tips are curling, it would be advisable to cross tape the ears together so the weight of the Molefoam and sticks don't pull the ears down at the base and cause a break at the bases.

It really must be emphasized that there will be limited success if the crop is so long and narrow that there is very little cartilage to work with. You can't repair what isn't there!

In conclusion, there are other ways to handle some of the problems I've discussed here and I'm sure that many of you have had great success with other methods. What has worked for me in the past is what I rely on for the future. If you have other ideas, please forward them to me. I am always anxious to learn new techniques and procedures. Good luck, and happy ear rolling!



Then roll the base of the Molefoam and tape it with a strip of porous tape.



Insert the Molefoam gently into the base of the ears making sure that the Molefoam sticks to the ear all the way to the top. You do not need to tape the base of the ear but you'll need to tape the upper third of the ear with a double roll of porous tape.

