

Weekly Combing

Weekly combing should be part of the routine of taking care of your **RagaMuffin kittens** from the time you bring your kitten home. If you start the grooming process when the **RagaMuffin kittens** are young, they will become accustomed to it, and it will be a more pleasurable experience for both your **RagaMuffin kittens** and for you. While your kitten may resist or squirm when you first start the grooming, over time the **RagaMuffin kittens** will get used to the grooming routine and will come to see it as a means of getting more attention from you.

Medium to medium long haired **RagaMuffin kittens** should be combed out at least once per week, though at the outset, it is suggested that you comb twice weekly to get your kittens accustomed to being combed. Use a long-toothed metal comb in order to remove dead hair. Comb the coat in the direction the hair lies, at a 45 degree angle to avoid raking the skin. Comb slowly and gently, so as not to pull on the coat. The weekly or twice weekly combing sessions will remove a lot of dead hair and has the added benefit of greatly reducing shedding the more often you comb your **RagaMuffin kittens**. Since you are removing dead hair, regular grooming will also reduce hairballs.

Cats shed all year long, but in the spring and fall, you will find that they shed more, so during these times you should groom more often, as there will be more dead hair.

Hairballs

Many cats, including **RagaMuffin cats**, at one time or another will have a hairball. As stated above, you can greatly reduce, and possibly eliminate, hairballs, by frequent grooming. Cats are fastidious and in the process of grooming themselves, they ingest hair. The more loose dead hair they have, the more hair they ingest, which is why frequent grooming is so helpful in preventing hairball. Symptoms that your **RagaMuffin kittens** or **RagaMuffin cats** have a hairball include loss of appetite, chronic vomiting, and constipation. If you fail to groom your **RagaMuffin kittens** or **RagaMuffin cats**, it is possible that the hairball can become lodged in the intestine and require surgery to remove it. Prevention is worth its weight in gold to eliminate this risk.

If hairballs are a problem even with regular grooming, there are products that will help your **RagaMuffin kittens** pass the hairball remedies in the stool, so they move through the digestive tract with ease. Consult your veterinarian on products to use. You can try canned pumpkin (not the pumpkin that is made for pumpkin pie filling, but just plain pumpkin). Many **RagaMuffin kittens** and **RagaMuffin cats** readily consume pumpkin, while other cats do not. You can also try salmon oil with your **RagaMuffin kittens** and **RagaMuffin cats**. There are also hairball remedies available in local pet shops, though you should be aware that many of these remedies contain petrolatum.

Claws

Your **RagaMuffin cat's** claws will require regular clipping. As a kitten, you will need to clip your kitten's claws approximately every ten days to two weeks. Adult **RagaMuffin cats** require claw clipping approximately every two to three weeks. Scratching posts help your **RagaMuffin kittens** or **RagaMuffin cats** to remove the outer sheath of the nail, so they do not get too thick, but in this process the nail becomes sharper, so keep an eye on your **RagaMuffin kitten's** claws to make sure they do not get too long. You must use special cat clippers to trim your kitten's claws. It is important to clip your **RagaMuffin kittens** or **RagaMuffin cat's** nails on a regular basis to avoid the nail from growing into your cat's paw pad, which would be painful to your **RagaMuffin kittens**, and also to prevent your kitten's claws from getting caught in anything.

When your **RagaMuffin kittens** are calm or just awakening from a nap, hold their paw up in a strong light, so that you are able to see the quick of the nail. The quick is the pink part of the nail, which you can see by applying gentle pressure to the toe that results in the claw being extended. The quick is the sensitive part of your cat's claw and will bleed if it is cut. Cut the nail at the point where it begins to curve and hold the nail clipper perpendicular to the nail to avoid splitting the nail and causing your **RagaMuffin kittens** discomfort. If you are unsure, have your veterinarian or **RagaMuffin breeder** show you how to cut your kitten's nails.

Dental Care

Your **RagaMuffin kitten's** permanent teeth will emerge when they are between 14 and 30 weeks of age. You should start cleaning your kitten's teeth on a regular basis as soon as possible after bringing your kitten home. This will help to prevent the build up of plaque, which can result in hardened calculus, inflammation and gingivitis.

There are several methods you can try to clean your **RagaMuffin kitten's** teeth. In the beginning, get your **RagaMuffin kittens** used to having you put your finger along their lips. Gently take your hand and scratch along the side of the head and then move your finger and gently rub along your cat's lips. If your cat resists, pull back and move more slowly. There are toothbrushes and rubber tips that you can wear on your finger to actually clean your kitten's teeth, as well as pleasant tasting "toothpaste" to use. These products can be found in a pet store. **Do not under any circumstance use human toothpaste for your RagaMuffin kittens or RagaMuffin cats.** You can also use a small piece of gauze. If you prefer, you can use a paste made up of baking soda and water to clean your **RagaMuffin cat's** teeth. Wipe the outer surface, making sure you gently rub along the gum line of your kitten's teeth. Your vet should check your **RagaMuffin kittens** or **RagaMuffin cats'** teeth at their annual vet visit to ensure they do not need to have their teeth cleaned by the vet.

Bathing

Most long haired cats should be bathed about once a year. You should only use a shampoo formulated for cats. Use water that is warm and comfortable to the touch. Before you begin the

bath, place a cotton ball in each of your cat's ears. Place your **RagaMuffin kitten** or **RagaMuffin cat** in the kitchen sink or other sink where you have a sprayer. Wet down the coat thoroughly, making sure that the undercoat is wet. Apply the shampoo and work the shampoo into your **RagaMuffin cat's** coat from the neck down. Make sure you work the shampoo into your **RagaMuffin cat's** feet and tail. After applying the shampoo and working it into the cat's coat, it is time to rinse. You must rinse until the coat feels squeaky clean in order to ensure that all the shampoo is out of your cat's coat. Don't forget to rinse your **RagaMuffin cat's** chest and belly as well as the back and sides. Once you have thoroughly rinsed your cat's coat, squeeze as much excess water out of the coat as possible and have a thick towel ready to roll your cat up in. Hold your **RagaMuffin cat** close to you to keep them warm and absorb much of the water from your cat's coat. You should thoroughly dry your **RagaMuffin cat** with a blow dryer in order to avoid the cat getting a chill and also to avoid tangles in the coat. If your **RagaMuffin cat** is afraid of the dryer, start out with the dryer on a low setting and then as your cat gets used to the dryer, you can change it to a regular setting. After your **RagaMuffin cat** is dry, make sure to run a comb through your **RagaMuffin cat's** coat and remove any dead hair.

If you have any questions about grooming your **RagaMuffin kittens**, please contact any of the **RagaMuffin cat breeders** that belong to **The RagaMuffin Kitten Breeders Society** and they will be happy to be of assistance.