

Prick Ear Benefits & Self Domestication Syndrome

While cropping and docking are primarily aesthetic there are some studies/vets who state drop/pendant/flopped ear dogs have more ear infections than prick ear dogs (standing/erect ears). The long slender tail on a doberman is not padded well and at a risk of "happy tail syndrome". Dew claws are removed to reduce injury. The dew, while a function digit in most Doberman, is loosely attached to the ankle area and is easily caught on fabric, couches and other surfaces. It can easily be ripped, broken, dislocated, even torn off. The floppy ears, slender tail, and coat coloration variations are results of genetic changes as a result of self domestication syndrome. In practice cropping a dog's ears is to duplicate the natural prick ear. Cropping creates an artificial prick ear. Not a single wild species of canid has flopped ears.

"Dogs with heavy floppy ears have the most problems with ear infections. Some breeds have lots of hair in and around the ear canal which causes them to develop ear infections."

<https://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/outreach/Pet-Health-Topics/categories/procedures/dogs/examinin-g-and-medicating-the-ears-of-your-dog>

"Hare notes, the physical changes that appeared in dogs over time, including splotchy coats, curly tails, and floppy ears, follow a pattern of a process known as self-domestication. It's what happens when the friendliest animals of a species somehow gain an advantage. Friendliness somehow drives these physical changes, which can begin to appear as visible byproducts of this selection in only a few generations."

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-wolves-really-became-dogs-180970014/>

"List of traits modified in the "domestication syndrome" in mammals* ...

| Trait | Animal species | Location/source | References |
|--|--|-------------------|------------|
| Depigmentation (especially white patches, brown regions) | Mouse, rat, guinea pig, rabbit, dog, cat, fox, mink, ferret, pig, reindeer, sheep, goat, cattle, horse, camel, alpaca, and guanaco | Cranial and trunk | <i>a</i> |

Floppy ears

Rabbit, dog, fox,
pig, sheep, goat,
cattle, and donkey

Cranial

b

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4096361/>

"A cluster of SNPs that associate strongly with the drop ear phenotype is located within a narrow interval downstream of the gene MSRB3, which is involved in human hearing. These SNPs are in strong genetic linkage with another set of variants that correlate with body mass within the gene HMGA2, which affects human height. In addition we find evidence that this region has been under selection during dog domestication, and identify a cluster of SNPs within MSRB3 that are highly differentiated between dogs and wolves."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4477608/>

<https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/ear-infections-in-dogs-otitis-externa>

- Some breeds, particularly those with large, floppy or hairy ears like Cocker Spaniels, Miniature Poodles, or Old English Sheepdogs, appear to be more prone to ear infections, but ear infections may occur in any breed.

<https://www.practicalpaw.com/dog-ear-types/>

- Floppy ears are generally set lower on the head than erect ears and don't offer the sensitivity to sound of the erect ear shape. However, dogs with drop ears have another trick up their canine sleeve. Many dogs with floppy ears compensate for their slightly muffled hearing by excelling at picking up scents.

Ear cropping is optional. The intent is not just for looks, but to duplicate the natural ear seen in all wild canids. The natural tail is a thick, padded tail. Doberman do not have thick padding like wolves, foxes, and other canids.

Ear cropping is seen as standard practice for feral cats. The tip of the ear is clipped away. No one bats an eye at that. Cropping done right and with proper post surgical care has no impact on the dog (far less impact on their overall health and mental health than spay/neuter). Cropping is also less invasive than spaying or neutering which removes essential hormones from the dogs system (affecting their tendons/bones, digestive system, mood stability, even their autoimmune health). Cropping recreates the prick ear. The floppy ear is a result of genetic defects from self domestication.

Puppies are docked when they're still young and not as impacted by pain/injury. While they're young, meaning a few days old to a week old, they're well protected psychologically from pain and trauma. They also have a much better healing and recovery as young puppies rather than doing these procedures on older dogs. These alterations are optional and by no means necessary for a happy, healthy dog. But floppy ears, intact dew claws and intact tails are more

to mend and care for. I have both, an all natural and the traditional standard. The all natural has already had 2 ear infections and deep bruising on her tail. She has also gotten Ear Margin Hyperkeratosis several times just by shaking off.

Dew claws are removed on companion pets to avoid dew claw injury. The dew is a functional toe but is not as functional as you may think. It is loosely attached to the leg and easily torn on surfaces like fabric and carpet. Some breeds the dew is not functional and is just hanging from the skin. The dew can be useful in sprinting dogs and in active working dogs. There is good argue both ways regarding to keep it and to remove it. Keeping the dew may reduce arthritis in older dogs and reduce tendon injury. But if a dog snags the dewclaw and it breaks or tears it will need to be surgically removed.