

FALL'ing Into The Matting Trap!

We all start the season off with the best of intentions. We care for our beloved pets and we feel keeping their coat long for the winter months is the best way to keep them warm. While a long coat in theory will keep your dog warm, there are many other things to consider before making this decision. In this write-up, we will go through a few of the key considerations so together we can make the healthiest and best choice for YOUR pet and YOUR lifestyle.

- 1) Keeping your dog in a longer trim will require more maintenance. As the coat grows longer and longer, the necessary maintenance can even become daily for some dogs that have soft, cotton coats! Dropping the ball on this commitment could leave you facing a shave down in January when the coat has gotten so matted that it's not helping your pet stay warm anymore but is causing discomfort and other health risks such as hot spots and skin irritations. Matting is caused by a coat getting wet/dry, wet/dry without being brushed and COMBED. Are you willing to up the maintenance at home or double their grooming visits in the winter months to keep their coat in the condition needed to keep them warm?
- 2) "My dog doesn't need to visit the salon because I don't want his hair trimmed in winter!" If keeping that longer coat is now your #1 priority, especially if daily maintenance is waning, planning regular visits to the salon will keep that coat in great shape. We will wash, condition, line-brush and go through each strand with a comb to make sure we are tangle free. When matting is starting in areas such as under the collar, hind end or feet (areas that are most often missed with at home maintenance), we can salvage before it's so tight that the only course of action would be to clip it off and start fresh, regardless of the temps outside.
- 3) "My dog wants to be outside all the time!" Is your dog hot in the house?! You thermo-regulate their lives. They most likely spend 95% of their time in the house with you. Are you wanting them to be hot/uncomfortable for 95% of the time or perhaps a shorter trim more suited for the indoor temperature and wearing a coat outside would be the more humane and reasonable choice for your realistic maintenance abilities?
- 4) "Let's bring the outdoors in!"....Ummmmmm, maybe not! More coat, more mess! Not only will that extra coat track in bigger messes, debris, and deep-soak the coat, but without a proper brush AND comb when it dries will very quickly start to get matted. It happens FAST and it's hard to be in a routine committed enough to catch it soon enough!
- 5) "My dog doesn't get cold outside!" Yes, they do. "My dog will come to the door when he's cold!" Oh, not always!! Vet clinics treat frostbite all the time on dogs who make their own poor choices for their health! Many dogs don't know when to call it quits. Dogs will gorge themselves on food, even when their stomachs are so full that they are needing veterinary help! They will run into traffic to catch that plastic bag that's floating in the air! A small dog will be aggressive to a Great Dane when clearly at the disadvantage and will face certain death without intervention. These are only examples from my home, the list is endless! We like to use the example of a toddler loving the snow but being allowed to choose how to best protect themselves. We wouldn't allow them to make that decision for themselves, we would set guidelines based on rational thinking, facts, and safety. Dogs can't be trusted to make rational decisions with a brain geared towards instinctual action! Just like toddlers, just because a dog "does", doesn't always mean he/she should in good conscience be "allowed to".
- 6) Bulk of coat does NOT keep a dog warm. That matted pelt will NOT keep your dog warm! Often the matting is cutting off circulation making your dog at even a higher risk for frostbite! Think of insulation in your walls. If it were to be packed tightly, the R value would be much lower than insulation set into the wall all fluffed up and in good condition.

When deciding what's right for you and your pooch, there are more considerations than just the ones we've covered here. Please call the Salon and speak to our knowledgeable Staff and Stylists to discuss what's right for YOU, YOUR pooch and YOUR lifestyle for the coming months. There are many coat types, some more prone to matting than others. Every home is unique with what time can be spared for coat maintenance; every financial situation is unique when it comes to what can be spared to financially fund the maintenance on their dog's coat. It is best to never judge those around you, but ALWAYS feel free to share this newsletter with them and have them join you on the right track for a comfy canine this winter too!

COMFY CANINES CAN CONQUER COLD!