

MATS 101

WHAT IS A MAT?

A **mat** is series of tangled hair on a pet. It requires the assistance of both a brush and comb to remove. When left unattended, mats, spread forming clumps and a solid mass of dead hair that can no longer be removed by brushing or combing.



(Example of extreme matting)

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Matted fur is incredibly uncomfortable and often painful. They make even the simplest of tasks nearly impossible. Matted pets are susceptible to a plethora of unsavory infections and diseases. A pet's skin needs air to thrive, and mats restrict air flow and sunlight penetration. When water is introduced, it can cause mildew to grow that ultimately decomposes the pet's skin. In extreme cases, blood circulation to the legs and ears can be cut off. Mats cause irritation, redness, and skin infections that cannot be seen and/or treated until everything is removed.

I BATHE HIM ALL THE TIME. HOW CAN HE POSSIBLY BE MATTED?

If you fail to thoroughly brush out your pet before and after a bath, it can make mats worse. Water only worsens the situation, as already-tight-mats absorb the water like a sponge and dry even tighter.

DO YOU HAVE TO SHAVE HIM? CAN'T YOU JUST CUT HALF OFF?

When your pet's coat forms a solid mat, shaving it off completely is the only humane option. A blade must be safely wedged beneath the extreme matting and against the skin to remove the mat(s). When the coat is entirely composed of mats, there is no way to save any of it. Even when your pet has not reached such extremes but does exhibit solid matting in areas like his chest, neck, belly, hips, legs, ears, etc., it is in your pet's best interest to just start over. Don't worry – it'll grow back!

Additionally, forcing your pet to endure even the gentlest and most careful of de-matting is not ideal. It risks your pet being conditioned to believe the groomer's to be a noisy, stressful place, and your pet will likely never trust a groomer or a brush again.

FINE, SHAVE HIM. BUT HOW CAN I AVOID THIS IN THE FUTURE?

By investing a slicker brush and a metal greyhound comb and routinely brushing your pet, you can avoid matting together. When you brush him, don't just brush his back – you must everywhere: inner/outer legs, feet, sides, belly, shoulders, chest, under arms, tail, ears, face (especially between the eyes, under ears, and beard), etc. Use the comb to comb through his entire coat. If you cannot get the comb through, he's still matted.

HE WON'T LET ME BRUSH HIM – HE CRIES LIKE IT HURTS, AND HE'S TRYING TO BITE ME!

It just takes time and patience – practice and take it slow. Try using treats or other forms of positive reinforcement.

***Remember:** Be patient and consistency is key!

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ALL THAT! HE STILL WON'T LET ME BRUSH HIM!

If brushing your pet seems like an impossible feat, then be sure you are scheduling grooming appointment regularly. Opt for shorter, more manageable lengths every 6-8 weeks; or, if you want longer styles, come every 3-6 weeks. This is *your* pet and *your* responsibility. If must have him styled a certain way and their hair kept long, do the necessary work and keep your grooming appointments regular.

*TIPS:

- Brush out before and after bath, walking in the rain, after removing harness and/or clothing.
- Use both a brush and comb.
- When brushing, pay attention to...
 - Chest
 - Ears (behind, under, top)
 - Face (between eyes, beard)
 - Legs (inside/outside)
 - Tail