

## Mattes - An FAQ Special Page

*Mattes ... what mattes? My dog isn't matted!*



Many dog owners have absolutely no idea that their dog has any mattes or the extent of the mattes. When we separate the top layer of fur that is often brushed and combed out nicely, we then expose the matting underneath. Owners are often completely shocked at what they see before their eyes as they have simply concentrated on the bits of the dog that they can SEE.

*Mattes or Knots?*



**Mattes and knots are not the same thing!**

**A knot is a small clump of fur which has become tightly tangled.**

**Mattes are knots that have become so tightly clumped that the fur is bound right down to the skin. Knots can often be combed or brushed out or, if needed, cut out safely. Mattes cannot be brushed out – they are a solid mass of fur.**

**The only way to safely and humanely remove a matte is to shave the area.**

**In the case of extensive mattes, this can mean shaving the whole dog.**

### ***The wet weather has made my dog matted!***

Weather conditions do not cause matts in a dog's coat. Too much coat, a coat not kept clean, or not brushed and combed properly is usually what causes matts.

### ***My dog had to be shaved!***

When a long haired dog is not groomed regularly, the longer the coat is neglected the more matted it will become. Surprisingly, owners of such dogs may leave their dog 3-6 months between grooming.

When dogs are badly matted groomers will generally shave the dog. This is done for the sake of the dog. It is painful and stressing to ask a dog to sit still for a lengthy period of time (approx 6 hours) and have a metal brush and de-matting comb repeatedly taken over his skin. It causes brush burn in many cases.

Owners are made aware as soon as possible of the extent of the matting and, if necessary, they will be advised that the dog will be shaved.

It is a painstaking procedure to shave a badly matted dog safely and properly. A dog's skin is thin like tissue paper. When the coat is matted, the skin becomes loose due to the weight of the matting. When passing clippers (blades) over the body, the skin may slip between the blades of the clippers which, if not very carefully handled, may result in a bad cut.

Owners should note that an additional fee is charged for severely matted dogs.

### ***How can matting be avoided?***

As noted above, regular, proper brushing and combing are essential in order to avoid matting of your dog's coat.

If matting does occur, here are the tools you'll need to remove matts from your dog or cat:

#### **\* A steel comb**

These are designed to keep fine textured coats and the "feathers" on legs and tail of long haired dogs tangle-free. Always hold the dog's skin/body close to the area being brushed in order to support the skin and avoid excessive pulling on the dog's coat.

#### **\* A slicker brush**



The Slicker Brush with soft pins is designed especially for pets with sensitive skin and fine, silky coats. It is used to remove dead and shedding hair and also helps to untangle mattes and snarls. Again, make sure you hold the dog's skin/body close to the area being brushed in order to support the skin and avoid excessive pulling on the dog's coat.

\* A matt splitter



Use: Place tool on the coat with light pressure and comb out in the direction of hair growth. Note: going against or across the direction of the hair growth will cause excessive cutting of the hair. Only use once a week or every other week (too much use could result in a bald pet!). As always, hold the section of coat being worked on to avoid pulling on the dog's skin.

Use of these tools on a weekly to fortnightly basis, along with regular visits to your dog groomer every 2-3 months (depending on the length and thickness of your dog's coat) should avoid mattes becoming a problem for your dog.