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VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON MATTING & SHEDDING

Matting is a condition in your dog's fur that is caused by dense tangles and knots. It's a painful condition that can lead to other health concerns, such as infections or skin irritations. Matting can also mask other health issues, including parasites. Mats cut off the air flow in your dog's hair and can trap moisture, which can cause irritation and sores on your dog. Even mild matting can be painful. In severe cases, matting can cut off circulation to your dog's skin and cause hematomas. In some circumstances, matting may be so severe that you would need to take your dog to a veterinarian for treatment.

Some dogs have coats that are high maintenance and are more vulnerable to matting. Any long hair dog can get matting but certain breeds and coat types are more prone to matting, such as Poodles, Doodles, Curly Coats, Cocker Spaniels, Bishon, ShihTzu and any variation of these breeds. Dogs with long silky coats such as Yorkies can also get matted as well as double-Coated dogs.

MATTING

CAUSES OF MATTING

Friction - Matting is typically found in areas of your dog with the most friction. This includes armpits, where the collar or harness sits; legs, where they lay down or come in contact with wet grass; behind the ears and areas on their body where they might be scratching.

Seasonal – Matting can develop during the time of year where they are "blowing their coat" and coming into their summer coat. If the loose fur isn't brushed and removed, dead skin mixes with fur and it becomes a breeding ground for mats.

Allergies – Long hair dogs who have allergies, causing them to lick and itch, will almost always develop some matting.

Fleas – If your dog has fleas and she or he itches, the scratching will result in matted fur.

Water - Water can also contribute to matting. If your long hair dog goes outside after raining and his belly rubs the wet grass, he's likely to get matted between his legs or belly. If he enjoys swimming, chances are he has experienced some matting as well. We cannot bathe a dog if there is matting. This will only cause the mats to get tighter. If you wash your dog at home, be sure to thoroughly dry and brush out to prevent matting.

It is recommended that you always brush and remove mats before getting your dog wet!

TREATMENT FOR MATTING

If the matting on your dog is mild, it can sometimes be brushed out with the use of detangling spray products and specific grooming tools. This is time-consuming and can sometimes be painful. Therefore, this should only be done if the matting is mild. If you detect some mild matting in your dog, DO NOT bathe them! Remember, the water will cause the mats to get tighter. Bring your dog to us before the mats get too bad. Early treatment of the mats will help prevent skin conditions and may salvage some hair length.

DEMATTING PROCESS

Imagine trying to brush out dreadlocks in your own hair! It would not be comfortable! The de-matting process involves taking small sections of hair at a time and working to release the mats utilizing de-matting tools and products and then brushing.

If the matting on your dog is severe, the safest and most humane way to remove the mats would be to clip his hair short. The length of his hair will depend on how tight the mats are. We must be able to get the blade under the mat right against the skin to remove them. If the mats aren't too tight, sometimes we can get longer blades underneath the mats to salvage some length. However, if the mats are tight to the skin, we would need to use our shortest blade available to remove the mats. This would result in very short hair but would give you a fresh start and make your dog much more comfortable. This is often not the style that most owners would prefer but is often the safest and most humane option for your dog if he is matted.

SHEDDING

SHEDDING AND DE-SHEDDING

De-shedding is a method used to minimize the amount of fur and dandruff a dog / cat loses. There are several benefits to removing dead hair. De-shedding is an effective way to manage how much fur your dog loses, removing the undercoat in large amounts helps to prevent furnishings and clothing from becoming saturated in unwanted hair.

THE BENEFITS OF DE-SHEDDING A DOG

Fewer knots and matting: when your dog's undercoat becomes tangled up and matted it can cause discomfort, and even pain. Regular de-shedding reduces the amount of fur. So, there's less chance of their coat knotting up.

Better temperature control If your house is always warm your dog may feel too hot between natural shedding cycles. Reducing the amount of fur through a de-shedding treatment can help them to stay at a more comfortable temperature.

A Cleaner home, less dandruff meaning less allergies.

Monitoring your dog's skin by regularly de-shedding your pup allows groomers to identify any new lumps, bumps, bruises, or marks on their skin that may need vet attention.

DE-SHEDDING VS BATHING

De-shedding rooming is different from regular dog grooming – special tools are needed to do the job correctly.

The purpose of de-shedding is to speed up the natural shedding process. When your dog sheds, they lose fur and dead skin cells, and many breeds experience entire coat blowouts twice a year. De-shedding your dog means your removing the undercoat before it naturally falls away.

Regular grooming and brushing often deals with the top layers of the dog's fur and while regular brushing is an effective way to keep their coat looking good and remove knots if you want more control of your dog's fur fall-out de-shedding is the best solution

Speeding up the natural process for shedding the fur and dead skin cells.

RISKS OF INJURY

Although there is a small risk of injury, using a de-shedding tool can irritate the skin making it sensitive.

WHAT YOUR GROOMER WANTS YOU TO KNOW

We love your dogs just as much as you do! This is why we do what we do. We are passionate dog lovers who have made a career choice of spending time with dogs and doing what we love. We only want the best for your dogs.

When your dog is matted, we believe in doing what is best for your dog. In many cases, this means shaving the mats out of your dog. Shaving is not a "short cut" to get the job done quickly. This can be a very slow, tedious and dangerous process. We are working on areas of your dog where skin is thin, likely already irritated and sometimes their hair is being pulled because of tight mats. Removing a heavily matted coat includes risks of nicks, cuts or abrasions due to warts, moles and skin folds trapped and hidden within the matted hair. Therefore, shaving a matted dog must be done slowly with utmost care.

Cutting the mats out – Never cut the mats out of your dog's fur with scissors. It's very easy to catch your dog's skin in the mats and unintentionally create a large wound on your dog. Please do not ask us to just "cut out the mats" when your dog is matted. This is dangerous, and we will only remove mats with clippers for the safety of your dog.

Brushing - Many owners who brush their dogs regularly may feel the thick layer of pelted matting under the layer of brushed fur and mistake this for the skin. Your groomer must be able to get a comb all the way down to the skin and through the coat. When the fur is pelted to the skin, it needs to be removed. If you are unable to get a comb through the hair to the skin, chances are we may not be able to either. If your dog has severe pelting, this is not something we can brush out. The matting must be shaved out.

Your dog's ears – The skin on your dog's ears is very sensitive and thin. If your dog's ears become matted, the mats can cause delicate blood vessels in the ears to rupture, causing hematomas in the ears. Hematomas can be very painful for your dog and must be treated by your veterinarian. This is why it's best to not attempt to demat severely matted ears. Instead, shaving the ears is the safest option. We often uncover these hematomas and recommend a vet visit.

Realistic Expectations – We know the pain that mats cause, and our priority is to ensure your dog's comfort and safety. Shaving out mats with clippers is the safest way to remove a severe mat. This will leave a bare patch in your dog's fur. If your dog only has one or two small areas where mats are severe, we may be able to shave those areas and keep the length on the remaining part of his body. However, if your dogs' legs are matted and the body is not, he may look a little silly with shaved legs. Therefore, many times it's best to start all over.

PREVENTION

Prevention is the best way to deal with a mat. Avoid getting them!

Diet - A strong healthy coat relies on proper nutrition to stay in peak condition. Dogs need plenty of Omega-3's in their diet to maintain a healthy coat and keep their immune system strong. Most commercial diets are unbalanced with fatty acids. Feeding animal-based oils such as fish oil, krill oil or salmon oil is recommended over plant-based oils (such as corn oil) as it's already in a usable form of Omega 3 for your dog to assimilate. In addition, it prevents an overload of Omega 6 which can result in further skin inflammation, allergies or skin issues.

Brushing - Brushing your dog is the best way to prevent matting. Brushing exfoliates the skin. Using a moisturizing or detangling spray can help prevent static electricity, which contributes to matting. When brushing, remove your dog's collar and take a small section at a time, being sure to cover the entire body.

Often, the back of the body is the easiest to brush, so this gets the most attention, whereas the legs, tail, or ears get left out. So be sure to pay close attention to those areas as well.

Choosing the right brush – The type of brush or comb you use will make a big difference. Brushes and combs have different sizes, lengths, spacing, and bristles. Please take advantage of our expertise and ask us what brush and comb type to purchase for your pet. Chances are we have the perfect brush and comb in the store.

Slicker brushes – These have fine wire bristles that bend and are great for long heavy-coated dogs. The heavier and thicker the coat is, the stiffer the pins should be.

Comb – A comb is helpful after detangling. There are different sizes and designs based on your dogs' coat length.

Soft Bristle brush – This is ideal for short hair dogs to brush the surface. Soft bristle brushes do not help with matting.

Pin Brush – Pin brushes have metal bristles in a rubber base. These are great to separate and untangle silky coats.

Bathing – Bathing your dog regularly will help keep his skin and coat in optimal condition. It's recommended that you bathe your dog as often as they need it as this will help remove the buildup of dead skin and hair. Some dogs require bathing weekly and others monthly. The time between baths will vary by dog but using a gentle shampoo and moisturizing conditioner will help keep their skin and coat in the best condition. Never use human shampoo or dish soap on your dog. These products have an improper pH level for pets and can contribute to dry flaky skin.

Manageable length – Keeping your dog's hair at a manageable length will help prevent matting. Getting your dog's hair cut every 4-6 weeks will help keep them at a manageable length.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We always believe in comfort over vanity. There are times where de-matting isn't the best option for the safety and comfort of your dog. Dematting of severely matted dogs is inhumane and not a service that we will offer. If it can't be humanely saved, it should be removed.

The good news is that hair grows back! In the meantime, your dog will be much more comfortable with mats removed, and his skin will have proper airflow to begin healing.