

# MATTING

“Matting” refers to densely tangled clumps of fur in a pet’s coat. If a coat is not properly and/or frequently brushed, loose and live hair become embedded in large masses. Sometimes “mats” can be combed out, but if left too long, it is impossible without seriously harming the animal.

Matts can form in both the outer coat as well as the deeper undercoat. Sometimes severe matts form in the undercoat and are unnoticeable because of a heavy outer coat. If left completely unattended, a pet’s fur can become entirely matted to such an extent that the only recourse is to shave the entire coat.

## Causes

Matting is especially prevalent in long-hair dogs during seasonal shedding if the excessive hairs are not removed. Regular and frequent grooming—especially brushing—is absolutely necessary to not only prevent mats, but to keep your pet’s coat and skin healthy.

## Dangers

Severe matting can be extremely painful to your dog during brushing. Brushing only causes live hairs to be pulled out of the skin with excruciating pain. Even mild matting can cause your pet a great deal of pain.

Matting can cut off blood supply to extremities, and deny regular air circulation. Skin denied fresh air and stimulation from regular brushing becomes quite unhealthy. It can turn dark pink to red, and open sores are apt to form emitting foul odors. Even organic matter, like weeds and stickers, can become embedded in the skin. Mats have been known to contain stool of the pet and even fly larvae that further irritate the skin. Remember, sometimes these mats and their consequences can be completely hidden from view.

Some severely matted pets may require the attention of a veterinarian.

## Removing Mats

Throughout the grooming industry, the term “dematting” simply means to rip the matts from the dog’s skin. Many groomers will do this with no regard for your dog’s comfort in order to make money. We at Bing’s Boarding have taken a stand on this controversial issue, and we will not remove mats that will hurt your pet. Please do not ask us to do so as we will not compromise our professional standards. Severe mats will be shaved, but only after consulting with the pet’s owner.

Shaving a matted coat is a delicate and slow process requiring experience and expertise. A dog’s skin is thin like tissue paper, and dense mats can cause it to become loose due to the weight of the matting. Clippers can easily cut loose skin if not done properly and safely.

After shaving, a pet may develop an itchy skin response. Owners should watch to ensure that constant scratching does not cause the skin to become irritated. Dogs may also develop hematomas after shaving, especially matted ears, as blood flow returns to the area. Any concerns should be addressed by your veterinarian immediately.

## Prevention

Dead, loose hairs should be removed through regular and thorough brushing. This is especially important for long-haired dogs, and when dogs shed seasonally. Brushing also aerates the fur and skin. Regular, professional grooming is essential, too, because Dog Day Afternoon groomers thoroughly bathe and brush with particular attention to areas where mats quickly form. Keeping your dog’s hair at a manageable length also helps to prevent matting.

Grooming should be done on a regular basis every 4 to 6 weeks;\* after 8 to 10 weeks, a coat may become too dirty and matted to maintain (depending upon breed and lifestyle of your dog)

I understand the dangers and possible ramifications of matting and shaving a matted dog that my groomer discussed with me.

Dog’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_