

# Why is My Dog So Matted?

(And why does Carol talk about brushing/combining so much?)



## What is a Matt Anyway?

A matt is a tangled mass of hair in a dog's coat held together by shedding hair, debris, and moisture.

## What's the Big Problem with Mats?

Matts can trap moisture, parasites and infections resulting in an unsanitary coat condition and skin disorders. Severe matting can jeopardize the overall health of a dog. It is not unusual to find skin abrasion and inflammation under a matt. It can cause discomfort and limited mobility in the friction areas shown below. Another problem is they grow once they start.

## Why Do Mats Form?

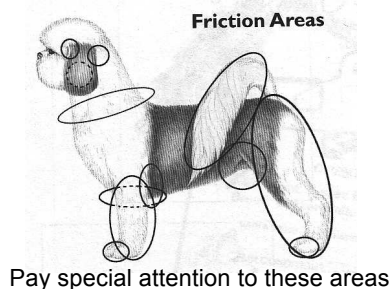
1. ALL dogs shed. For some dogs, the hair falls off and onto the floor (Labrador, German Shepherd). For others, as it sheds it can tangle with the other hair and form matts (Poodle, Bichon, ShihTzu, Lhasa Apso, Golden). A dog's tendency to have matts is related to its coat type: silky, cottony, harsh, curly, straight, rough, smooth, woolly, double coat, etc. Your dog's coat type will always dictate how much grooming the coat needs to remain matt-free.
2. Dirt, static, moisture or friction. See the illustration below for high friction areas that generate the most matts and need the most grooming attention.
3. Not enough brushing and combing. The coat is longer than the owner has time for.
4. Not being professionally groomed on a regular basis or too long between grooms.
5. General health or allergies affecting the hair follicle, cuticle, skin condition.

## What Will Carol Do if My Dog is Heavily Matted?

Safety and Comfort First. Some dogs do better with the dematting process than others. It can be painful and even dangerous to remove excessive matting or matts tight up against the skin (like washed wool, pelt). Clipper rash, nicks and brush burn can occur as the dog struggles or wiggles. Carol is a trained professional using today's advanced products and equipment and is often able to remove minimal to moderate matting with bathing, drying and brush out. However, if your dog's safety or comfort is at risk, Carol will recommend a haircut to remove the matts. The severity of the matting will determine the cut coat length. It could require what groomers call a "close trim", "shave down" or "smoothie"!

## What Can I Do About It Now and Avoid It in the Future?

1. Follow Carol's recommended grooming schedule and the brushing/combining routine to keep your dog matt-free and your grooming costs to a minimal. Every minute you spend will be 10 minutes Carol doesn't. That adds up to savings.
2. Go shorter and/or groom more often. Length of hair and frequency of your grooming appointments can totally eliminate matting, minimize your work and keep a clean dog.
3. Use the correct grooming tools for the hair type. Most often you will start with a recommended brush followed by combing with a stainless steel comb.
4. Don't miss the friction areas or brush right over the top of the matts. Use the comb to find the matts. If you find one that is too tough-DON'T CUT it out. Point it out to Carol and let her safely remove the matt. A slip of the scissors means a rush to the vet!
5. Be careful not to brush the skin and cause brush burn. Keep your brush flat to the skin with a pat and pull motion.



Hope this helps and  
Happy Brushing/Combining!

-Carol

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