

## How to Prevent Matting

Hair mats can be a serious problem for dogs. A mat is basically a mass of tangled hair, but might also be comprised of burrs or barbs from plants, particles of skin dander or other debris. Sometimes a mat may start quite close to the pet's skin making it difficult, if not impossible, to see the skin beneath. Left untended for too long, they can entangle the dog's fur all the way to the skin where sores may develop.

- ❖ A matted coat can cause and hide skin that is red, irritated, swollen or cracked
- ❖ A matted coat can conceal the presence of fleas or other pests
- ❖ A matted coat can make it impossible to determine in advanced the presence of any scabs, growths or other conditions on the skin
- ❖ A matted coat can prevent a pet's skin from completely drying if it becomes wet, a situation that can also cause skin problems
- ❖ The grooming process necessary to remove the matted coat may aggravate the pet's skin.

Removing mats may be a laborious, expensive, time-consuming task, especially if the dog must be sedated because of the pain the dog would suffer if it was awake while the mats were being removed. The best thing you can do for your dog is to prevent the hair mats in the first place. You can accomplish that with regular grooming, an essential step needed to prevent hair mats in dogs

**Brush and comb your dog regularly.** Be sure that you can get a comb from the skin outward on all parts of the dog. Don't forget legs, belly, and chest. A long-haired dog will need more frequent brushing than a short-haired dog, but all dogs should be brushed a minimum of once a week. Removing loose hair is a great way to lessen or prevent hair matting.

**Bathe your dog regularly, but only once you can get a comb through his fur or hair.** Bathing a matted dog will make the situation worse. Conditioner alone does not magically remove matting. Talk to your groomer about how often your particular breed needs bathing. Your groomer can also advise you on the best shampoo and rinse to use.

### **Brushes that help Prevent Matting**

*Slicker Brush* – The slicker brush pulls up dead hair or undercoat. It also helps untangle mats and snarls. It is great for use on medium or long hair dogs, or cats with tangles.

*Metal Tooth Combs* – Combs remove tangles, fluffs, and separates hair, and increases volume. Combs are perfect for finishing a coat.