



## **Information About Matting & Creating Healthy Grooming Routines**

### **About Matting:**

- **A mat is not just a knot in the fur, it is more akin to a painful, unplanned, and unmaintained dreadlock tight to the skin.** Think of it like gum stuck in a child's hair that keeps growing into a bigger knot. Mats can be tight and pull on the skin of the pet; This can cause several issues, as well as covering others.
- **Because mats and tangles pull on the skin, once the pulling is released by the groomer by removing the matt, the blood will rush back to the skin causing redness, swelling and itchiness.** This is the fault of the situation, not the groomer.
- **There may be further repercussions shortly after the grooming appointment and responsibilities on the pet parent.** After the grooming that involves the removal of matting, one needs to watch out for redness, swelling, irritation, rash, itchy skin and more. It is an important pet parent responsibility to NOT to allow the pet to further disrupt the skin by chewing or scratching. A cone/balloon collar or clothing on the pet may be required to prevent so. (One can check with their veterinarian if ointments like neosporin or coconut oil can be applied and/or if further medical treatment is needed).
- **Most brushes only brush the top surface of the hair.** Brushes that look like they were made for humans are typically the wrong type for your pet. Mats are deep in the coat. Pet parents are almost always unaware of them or the severity of their existence.
- **The armpit area of pets is like a deep hidden cave.** It is also a common spot for matting due to the friction of movement and because of the anatomy of pets, matting and tangles cannot be seen by most pet owners and cannot be properly brushed. The skin in that area is also extremely sensitive and fragile. De-matting this area often causes skin issues.
- **Bathing your pet at home tightens and worsens pre-existing matting.**
- **Skipping the conditioning process after shampooing a pet at home can be damaging** and it leaves the hair strand like a scaly christmas tree. The dry scaly hair is then more likely to grab other hairs/fur and tangle.
- **The application of oils or cornstarch or other home remedies or products online are not recommended or proven to be helpful in the removal of matting.**
- **Cutting out matting at home is very dangerous,** and can easily lead to cutting your dog and a veterinary visit. It is often very difficult for pet parents to tell where skin stops and a matt begins.
- **Dogs with Curly hair need more conditioner.** Just like humans, the oils from our skin condition the hair and thus, straight hair/fur needs less conditioner than curly hair as the oils have a more difficult time traveling down the curly hair strand.
- **If a comb with deep teeth (approximately 1"-2") cannot easily get through your pet's entire coat** (all over their body, including: all of the legs inside and out and feet,



between toes, behind the ears, chest, neck, inner thighs, and armpits) **they may be matted**. If a comb cannot get through the coat this also means that a groomer's tools cannot get through the coat.

- **Less frequent grooming appointments are stressful and dangerous for pets.** Severe tangles and matting, and/or lack of regular experience or training to being groomed on a routine familiar basis at a professional salon, can make grooming stressful on pets and puts them at greater risk of trauma and injury. Skipping grooming appointments (going more than 8 weeks between grooms) creates an uncomfortable unfamiliar grooming experience for your dog. Stress can also induce underlying health conditions.
- **Your pet's haircut may look undesirable.** De-matting can often be painful and uncomfortable for pets, therefore Paws & Anchor will do whatever is in the best interest of the animal, including but not limited to a complete shavedown if necessary. Unfortunately, this could change the final grooming appearance. This is especially true for curly and wavy hair type pets.
- **It costs more if you miss regular grooming appointments** (going over 6 weeks between professional grooms). *Additional fees are due to:*
  1. Coat condition requiring additional work and time to complete the groom that needs to occur by an advanced skill level (for example, extra time for brushing and blowing out long hair (over 1"), resetting a haircut pattern in very overgrown hair, impacted shedding coat, caked in bodily excretions, carefully removing any tangles or matts before starting the normal haircut, and more)
  2. Special products and tools required (for example, detangling tools, products to condition the matted/tangled hair or hypoallergenic oatmeal shampoo and conditioner) and,
  3. The pet's behavior/temperament to the grooming process (for example; behavioral resistance or aggression toward the grooming process due to removing painful matting, lack of training as a puppy to tolerate the grooming process, tools/equipment and handling, or general lack of a regular familiar professional grooming routine, all creating uncooperative experience for your dogs grooming appointment and requiring a higher skill level, potential assistance required from other staff to handle the pet and higher level of danger for the pet and groomer).

A Pet's hair that is tangled or matted, and/or it has been over 8 weeks since its last grooming, are at greater risk of injury, stress and trauma. All precautions will be taken by your groomer. However, problems occasionally arise, during or after grooming, such as nicks, clipper irritation, itchy skin, redness (even occurring later at home after the groom), hot spots, cuts, sores, hematomas, injury, and mental or physical stress.

**Areas of skin where the matting was shaved may look very irritated and red well after the groom, but this result was necessary to remove the matting. Matting can pull tight at the skin and in order to remove it sometimes a short clipper blade must be used. After removing it the blood rushes back to the skin and it can look like an abrasion or rash hours or days after the actual grooming. This repercussion of skin irritation from removing matting is very different from a puncture wound or cut and no one intentionally tried to harm a pet. It is a fault of the**



**situation, not the groomer. The Paws & Anchor staff never choose to shave areas of a dog short enough to cause skin irritation unless they have to due to matting.**

Severe tangles and matting, and/or lack of regular experience or training to being groomed on a routine familiar basis at a professional salon, can make grooming stressful on pets and puts them at greater risk of trauma and injury. Every attempt will be made to minimize the stress of the grooming process for pets in the care of Paws & Anchor, however problems occasionally arise when working with live animals.

### **Matting Prevention and Developing Quality Grooming Routines:**

- **Regular grooming appointments (every 2-6 weeks) will avoid most painful matting** and ensure your pet(s) have a healthy clean home life (without: tangles, hair in their eyes, crusted eye gunk, hair covering paw pads creating slippage while walking or itchiness, and feces stuck to hair on their bottom) and positive experiences for the professional grooming process. Skipping regular grooming appointments creates an uncomfortable grooming experience for your dog.
- **Puppies should start grooming appointments at 8 weeks of age.** The critical window of socialization ends around 16 weeks/4 months of age. Unfortunately, when a dog does not get proper socialization in this time period, they can become fearful and/or aggressive to other things that are unfamiliar. The grooming salon is very different from the home environment and includes lots of new sounds, smells, surfaces, tools, equipment, the sight of other dogs that do not look like them, and a variety of new humans and new handling that they are not accustomed to. It is important to start socializing them to the professional grooming salon experience as soon as possible, and continue the process bi-weekly to monthly (so it is familiar) until adulthood as they will need grooming for the rest of their lives. Setting a precedent of positive experiences will be thoroughly worth it to create a well rounded family member and avoid the road of future grooming issues (including but not limited to special private grooming appointments, needing to be groomed on sedatives and or resorting to shave downs on a anesthetic at a veterinary office because the pet was so much of a danger to themselves and others due to a lack of being comfortable and trained to tolerate the grooming process).
- **Training practice at home for the grooming process can assist.** One can also work on: brushing your pet out daily or a minimum of 3 times a week on a surface (like a table or wash machine), having an assistant give positive reinforcement with high value treats (something they never get like cheese or deli meat) when behaving calmly for grooming practice, and touching their bodies with foreign tools like a can opener and electric toothbrush can help. It is also important to go beyond touching their paws when they are relaxed on the couch or giving their paw, to touching and handling each individual paw digit all over and then touching with a foreign object to get them accustomed to the nail trim process. Having new people brush them and model nail trimming will also be helpful. See a Paws & Anchor groomer for further tips.
- **Brushing at home with the proper tools and technique can make a huge difference.** Preventative care with brushing at home should be done daily to at least 3 times a week all over the body and checked with a comb for tangles missed deeper in the coat. Establishing a routine schedule at home is key. Brushing needs to occur all over their body, including: all of the legs



inside and out, feet, between toes, behind the ears, face, chest, neck, inner thighs, and armpits. Thereafter the entire body needs to be checked with a deep tooth comb. If the comb gets stuck anywhere, go back to brushing that area with light short sweeping taps. It is the responsibility as a pet parent to brush their pet at home regularly, ensuring they become accustomed to it (their bodies are covered in hair and denial of that fact by the pet parent is not helpful), and neglecting to do so can cause painful matting and tangles in the pets hair. See a Paws & Anchor groomer for brush & comb (very much needed) recommendations according to your pets coat type and a demonstration on technique.

- **If you want to keep your pets hair longer than 1” long (the “extra fluffy” or “afro” look) you must accept that you are entering the world of high maintenance show-dog like hair** that will need to be groomed every 1-3 weeks (pending length desired), you will need to brush your pet for at least 30 min. daily, and the pets lifestyle must be limited (to reduce tangling while playing or not getting to swim). Shorter hair cuts are easier to maintain at home and less prone to matting than longer “fluffy” hairstyles. Requesting a longer “fluffy” style for your pet, means daily brushing at home and much more frequent full professional grooming. Unfortunately this is not explained in doodle ownership lifestyle and fluffy dogs in the media don't disclose so.
- **To avoid matting issues, products used at home need to include conditioner after shampooing, a PH balanced shampoo created for pets, and pet “brush sprays” or “conditioning sprays”** should be used regularly on curly and wavy hair types. It is better for pet parents to skip washing their pets at home if they are not going to use a liquid conditioner massaged and brushed into the coat post shampooing. Otherwise the dry coat they created can create matting, worsen matting, and encourage matts to form later because the coat will then be dry, unconditioned, and the scaly strands of hair/fur are more likely to catch onto each other and tangle.
- **Be sure to remove pet wearables when inside to avoid contact matting.** Friction to the hair from harness, collars and pet clothing can cause matting. They should be taken off at home and the areas of contact should be brushed and combed daily post removal to prevent matting. Talk to your veterinarian about a microchipping ID if your pet does not already have one.

### **Special policies at Paws & Anchor to help you and your pet:**

- **Paws & Anchor is a cageless facility!** Our animal clients do NOT wait in stressful cages (like other salons) with other stressed and barking dogs around them. We also do not have dangerous cage dryers that can overheat and injure pets. (We use cool air hand dryers.) Your pet is given individual attention with special care and you are called as soon as they are ready for pick up.
- **Paws & Anchor has strong ethics and policies regarding the safety of your pet.** Pets are never left alone and the staff never steps away leaving them unsupervised on a grooming table or in a bathing tub. Paws and Anchor also has a strong policy against, and never uses, dangerous cage dryers that can potentially harm animals. All pets are hand dried with towels and cool air hand dryers.



- **We use Positive Reinforcement to create a good experience for your pet** and give plenty of affection and individual attention.
- **At Paws & Anchor we do preventative detailed extras to assist your pet after they leave us.** We trim armpit hair shorter than the body at each appt for matting prevention as body movement causes friction in this problem area. The sanitary area is trimmed at a length slightly longer than grooming standard to avoid clipper irritation. We also trim the area around the ear shorter to bring more air to the area and help prevent ear infections by letting that skin breathe more.
- **We offer a discount to regular clients!** Clients can pre-book their appointment to stay on a schedule and receive a \$5 discount. At a client's grooming appointment they can pre-book in person for the next visit to receive the \$5 off discount at the next appointment as long as it is within 6 weeks. The option is great to stay on schedule, prevent matting, and assist in receiving the time and date desired (as the grooming salon schedule is often booked up weeks in advance).
- **We have options to help clients when their pet “doesn’t let me brush them”.** Paws & Anchor offers 20-30 minute brush out appointments for clients to be scheduled on a weekly or visit-weekly basis. We also offer mini-grooms (including a full bath, blow-out, complete brush out, and trimming of the sanitary, paw pads and eyes) that can be scheduled 2-3 weeks after a full grooming to help between complete grooms. A Paws & Anchor groomer can also assist in recommending tools and brushing techniques to help. We are here to help provide options that ensure that their coat is maintained on a regular basis and avoid matting.
- **Paws & Anchor’s Positive Puppy Program is a training course combined with a frequent grooming schedule to assist clients and new puppies in creating comfortable, positive and cooperative grooming experience for the rest of the puppies life.** The program is individualized for each unique puppy, and was designed by certified dog trainer and groomer, Nicole Kienlen CPTD-KA, owner of Paws & Anchor. Ask our groomers for more details on the program!
- **Special Private appointments are available at Paws & Anchor after hours with one in one attention.** These appointments are great for sensitive pets, pets with medical issues, cat grooming, anti-social pets, new puppies, and rehabilitation to the grooming process). They are booked with an Assistant to help hold and comfort the pet and scheduled after hours with no other animals at the salon. (Note, these high demand appointments book in advance, are available after 3pm on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, and incur additional fees.)
- **Paws & Anchor takes the care of your pet very seriously.** Unfortunately the pet grooming industry is largely unregulated and no certification or safety requirements currently exist. **Safety, Experience, and Education are our core values. Paws & Anchor Groomers are proudly; Red Cross Pet First Aid & CPR Certified, A.K.C. Salon S.A.F.E. Certified and IPG (Internationally Professional Groomers) Certified Groomers.** We do our very best to give your pet the best care.