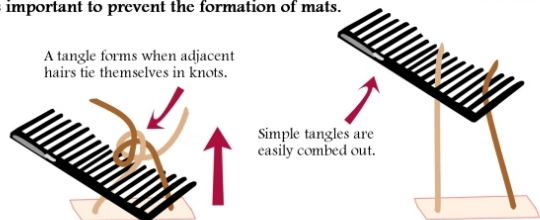


Detangling your pet's coat on a regular basis is important to prevent the formation of mats.



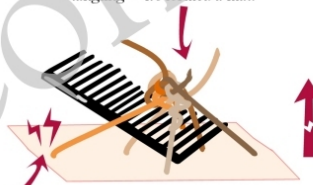
Tangles are Trouble!

The amount of work it takes to keep your pet tangle-free depends on:

- * **texture:** Fine, soft coats tangle more easily and more tightly than coarse, wiry coats.
- * **length:** The longer hair is, the more easily and tightly it tangles.
- * **condition:** Broken and burred hairs catch on each other while healthy hairs are more likely to slide away from each other.
- * **uniformity:** Coats with different lengths or textures of hair mixed together tend to tangle more easily than uniform coats.
- * **lifestyle:** Dirt, moisture, and debris encourage formation of tangles.
- * **friction:** Hair that is rubbed together tangles quickly.

Towel-drying fluffy coats after bathing or swimming often creates terrible matting. Pets are prone to mat quickly in armpits, behind ears, around their mouths, and anywhere else hair tends to get wet, dirty, and rubs together.

Run a comb through your pet's hair. If it catches, the hair has gone beyond tangling -- it's formed a mat.



Your groomer will be happy to evaluate your pet's coat and discuss appropriate grooming options with you.

Dematting vs. Shaving factors:

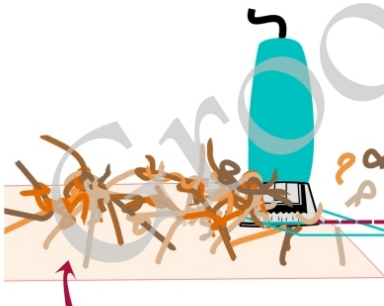
- * how tight the matting is
 - * how much of the coat is matted
 - * the location of the matting on the animal
 - * the level of cooperation from the animal
 - * client commitment to future grooming
 - * the amount of time the groomer has to spend
 - * the amount of discomfort dematting will cause
 - * the level of damage dematting will do to the coat
- In borderline cases, it can be difficult to accurately assess a coat before it has been cleaned, conditioned, and blown out.

A conditioning spray is designed to coat hairs to make them smooth and slippery for easier detangling.

Slicker brushes are great for gently encouraging mats to unravel. Unlike a comb, which will get caught in anything it can't untangle, the bent metal pins of a slicker brush will let go of the matted hair. This means you still have to use a comb after brushing to make sure the mats are gone.



Spot shaving is a great solution for areas that mat easily but are too sensitive for excessive brushing (ie. armpits, groin, belly, throat, and behind the ears).



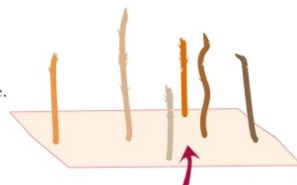
Mats collect moisture and debris, creating an ideal environment for bacteria and fungus and promoting skin infections. They are painful, pulling at the skin and interfering with blood circulation. Severe matting blocks the coat's ability to insulate against the elements, invites insects, and hides injuries. Refusing to have a severely matted animal shaved is considered animal cruelty and punishable by law.

Sliding a blade through a mat can sometimes break it up enough that the pieces left are more easily brushed and combed out.

Brushes and blades can injure your pet. Use with caution.

Removing severe matting requires shaving just under the level of the knotting. A clipper blade cannot cut the mats -- it has to go beneath. The closer the matting is to the skin, the closer the shave has to be.

Mats constantly pull on your pet's hair, which pulls on the underlying skin. The pain doesn't stop until the mat is removed or the mat pulls the hair out at the root.



Serious dematting causes serious hair damage! While it's recovering, a dematted coat will tangle faster and tighter than before. It will need increased grooming attention to prevent mats in the future.

After a matted shave:

- * Prevent sunburn with a pet-friendly sun block, clothing, or limited time outside.
- * Keep pets cozy in the cold with a fitted sweater or jacket.
- * Check your pet for half-healed injuries and skin damage.. Pre-existing wounds should heal well after grooming thanks to renewed cleanliness and air flow, but have your veterinarian check out anything that is slow to heal, is red or hot to the touch, has an unpleasant odor, or emits discharge.
- * Razor burn is skin irritation caused by shaving too close. It is often unavoidable with badly matted coats and will heal quickly if you keep your pet from scratching.

- * Mild redness or bruising is fairly common in areas where blood has rushed quickly back to the surface after a matted shave. The skin should return to normal within several hours. However, in some cases, particularly with badly matted ears, the blood can overflow the tissues. If swelling is severe and affects a delicate area, your pet should see his vet as soon as possible to prevent the blood from bursting through the skin.
- * You may see naked patches where the matting has unrooted large numbers of hairs.
- * Preventing mats is important to your pet's health and well-being. If you cannot commit to the kind of grooming your pet needs to stay tangle-free with a fluffy coat, having him clipped short multiple times per year to prevent future matting is a perfect solution.