

Dematting Dilemmas

Regular brushing and trips to the groomer can prevent bad matting before it's too late.

By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG

Q. My adorable apricot Miniature Poodle has a couple patches of pretty bad matting and I can't get it out. What should I do?

A. If we find a mat is too solidly set in to be split with a dematting tool and/or loosened up with a dematting solution, sometimes we do a "spot shave," removing the clump with our clippers, usually with a #10 blade that allows us to shave under the mat to remove it. If the mat is not in a highly visible area on the dog – behind the ear, under the armpit, in the belly area or inside the rear legs – most of the time, you won't even notice the "hole."

If it is on a leg, the back, the sides, facial whiskers, or tail, and it needs to be shaved out, the dog may look funny for a while until the hair in that area grows back. The other option is to have your little Poodle clipped down evenly all over and re-grow her coat. Since it will only grow ¼" to ½" per month, it will take a while for her to look like her old fluffy self, but rest assured, it will grow back and eventually she will look the way you like her to once again. While her coat is growing in, try to set up a regular routine to keep her brushed and combed so she will not mat up again.

As groomers, we know that sometimes health issues and work or family demands can make it extremely difficult to keep a dog like yours brushed and combed properly. For some of our busier clients, we have the pet come in between grooms for a good brush-out so we can keep it styled the way the owner likes. As a Poodle owner myself, I am well aware that if I don't brush and comb my little guy all the way to the skin twice a week, he will morph into a tangled mess. A couple of romps at the beach or a few rolls in the wet grass in my backyard, and he will be well on his way! When he is freshly groomed and looking handsome, he struts around the house like a movie star, so I know that being clean and well-groomed makes him happier and more comfortable too.