

## Itchy Dog After Grooming

**Get insight on what a dog's constant scratching and rubbing after being groomed may indicate.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

**Q.** My Bichon was recently groomed (shaved pretty closely) and now he is walking up to things and throwing his hips into things such as the cabinets, couches, etc. He seems to be doing this on both sides and he arches himself sideways and knocks his hips into things. Do you have any idea why?

**A.** You didn't mention why your dog was shaved so closely, but usually when a dog is clipped very close — what we call a "strip" in groomer terms — it's because the coat is so badly matted that it cannot be brushed out, a necessity if the groomer plans to perform a scissored haircut.

The Bichon Frisé is spectacularly beautiful when its fluffy white coat is sculpted into its traditional rounded "powder-puff" look, but to accomplish this, it's essential for the coat to be totally mat free. Dematting a severely matted dog can be a painful process and reputable groomers cannot be expected to do something they consider inhumane. We are here to make pets healthy, happy, beautiful, and always put their comfort and safety first.

When we encounter cases of severe matting in my salon, we ask the owner to sign a release form allowing us to remove and regrow the matted coat. It spells out the possibility of skin irritation and nicking which may occur and grants us permission to give the pet a medicated bath to prevent itching and soothe the skin after shaving.

Sometimes owners honestly think they are doing a good job of brushing, but may be treating only the coat's top layer, missing tangles underneath. It helps to check your brushwork with a double-sided stainless-steel comb to make sure you have penetrated the entire coat. Your dog needs a thorough brush-out at least twice a week if you want to keep him fluffy. Even as short as your dog is now, he should at least be brushed weekly. It's a good idea to establish a grooming routine so your Bichon won't get this matted again.

Because he is probably rubbing and bumping to relieve itching caused by the close shave, I recommend calling your groomer to schedule a follow-up medicated bath to give your dog some relief or getting a quality medicated pet shampoo and doing it yourself at home. Using a medicated spray such as Micro-Tek by EQyss would also help stop the itching.