

# Maintenance of your Poodle Or Doodle

## Topics covered include

- Coat Types
- Grooming Tools
- Prevention of Matting
- Nail Care
- Ear Care

## Coat Types

Throughout all types of breeds from the tall Irish Wolfhound to the tiny Chihuahua all dog coats will fall into one of these 6 categories.

1. **Smooth Coat:** A smooth coat dog has short hair that lays close to the skin. These dogs are easy to maintain with light brushing with a rubber brush and a bath. Examples Doberman Pinchers or Chihuahuas.
2. **Double coat:** A double coated dog has first a soft fur that lays close to the skin as well as a top coat that is a bit coarse to the touch. These dogs do need regular brush out and shed continuously but twice a year the coat will blow out or have a heavy shed, getting ready for weather changes. Examples include Siberian Huskies, Labradors, and Golden Retrievers.
3. **Silky or Drop Coat:** Silky coats are often similar to human hair. The hair is in a constant state of growth and normally grows straight or wavy. This type of coat if left long needs regular maintenance to prevent matting. Examples Shih Tzu, Yorkies, and Maltese
4. **Wire Hair:** Wire hair coats are similar to the silky coat. This coat continues to grow out and requires frequent brushing. The coat has a rough feel to it and often a special grooming technique called hand stripping is used on this type of coat. Examples would include Schnauzer, Cairn Terriers, and West Highland Terrier.
5. **Wool Coat:** Wool coats are known for their cotton texture and appearance. This coat is one of the most intensive coats to maintain and is prone to matting. Regular visits to groomers are needed to help keep the coat healthy. Examples include Poodles, Bichon Frise, and Bedlington Terrier.
6. **Combination:** The combination coat is relatively new to the dog world. These are often dogs who share two of the above coat types. For example a Goldendoodle who can have both the Wool coat from its Poodle parent and the double coat from its Golden Retriever parent. These dogs require high maintenance and frequent trips to the groomers. Examples include Labradoodles, Goldendoodles, Chipoo, and Pomchi.

## Grooming Tools

There is an inside joke that says, “Owners try to brush their dogs with bananas”. I wrote this paper to teach you all of the tools that you will ever need to properly care for your wooly or combination coated partner. Using these tools properly, and maintaining your dog’s coat can cause your grooming times to go down. It could possibly lower the price of your groom as well.

- **Leave in Conditioner Spray:** This is a wonderful help for brushing out a dog and can cut your time in half. A little goes a long way, so only use it before your brush outs and after baths.
- **Greyhound Comb:** A Greyhound comb looks like a regular plastic comb but it is made of a sturdy metal. The tips should be rounded so it’s gentle on the skin. This brush is used once the Wide Tooth Poodle Comb can easily glide through your dog’s coat. This tool will find hidden knots missed by the first comb and ensure your dog’s coat is fully brushed out. This is an important step; leaving mats in your dog’s coat causes the coat to continue matting faster.
- **Wide Tooth Poodle Comb:** The wide tooth poodle comb is your best friend for longer coats. The wider the tooth is, the easier it is to use for breaking the coat up. Use this comb to find tangles. Then grab the tangled area in your hand and use your slicker brush to untangle the knotted area. Continue using this comb and slicker technique section by section all over your dog to ensure you do not miss any areas. The comb should glide through the coat easily once your dog is brushed out.
- **Hard Slicker and Soft Slicker:** Hard slickers are best for dematting your dog. The bristles on the slicker brush are stiff but still have some “give” to them. Soft slickers give a lot and are not good for dematting. These slickers are better to use for back brushing while clipping your dog down. Either of these slickers can be harsh on the skin and cause brush burn if the same area is brushed too much. To avoid brush burn try holding the skin in your hand and letting the slicker brush on your hand; this technique should prevent brush burn.
- **Mat Breaker:** Despite all of your hard work mats still happen sometimes. The tangles can become mats but a mat breaker can help split the mats. Once the mat is split, you can use your slicker to gently tease the hair apart. Caution must be used with this tool! Yes, this tool has rounded edges, but it still has a blade which can cut your dog, even possibly causing serious injury. To prevent injury, work slowly to ensure you won’t have any such accident. If you are unsure of yourself, please at this point schedule a trip to the groomer. Also if the matting has come to the point where this tool needs to be used for brushing out your dog, the process can become painful, especially if the dog is matted all over. Work on small sections of fur at a time. Take breaks, and remove the mats over a course of time. If this process is causing your dog trauma, please consider the idea of letting a groomer shave the coat down. I know it is sad to see the “fluffy” gone, but fur

does grow back. With proper maintenance after a clip down, you will be able to maintain these beautiful fluffy cuts.

- **High Velocity Dryer:** These dog dryers not only help dry the dog but will also help the coat separate during the drying process. It can help to pull matting away from the skin which helps in the dematting process.
- **Nail Clippers:** To use the basic squeeze nail clippers, first make sure that the clipper is the right size for your dog. Small clippers will have a hard time going through large dog's nails and clippers that are too large have a better chance at quicking a small dog's nail.
- **Quick Stop:** This powder is used to stop the bleeding from a quicked nail.
- **Ear Powder:** This powder is used on the hair inside of the dog's ears to help you get a grip on the fur to pull it free from the ear.
- **Hemostats:** Sometimes ear hair can be too thick for your fingers to remove properly. DO NOT put the Hemostats INSIDE the ear! However, you can carefully use them to remove small sections of the hair as they can give you a better grip to remove the hair with more ease. (Never use locking Hemostats to twist the hair then pull! Doing this is extremely painful and can cause damage to the ear canal.)
- **Ear Cleaner:** Once the hair is removed there could still be wax in the ear. Use cotton balls or make up remover pads with some ear cleaner to make a quick wipe out. Now your dog has clean ears!

### **Prevention of Matting**

First of all, you should know what causes the coat to mat. Even though these dogs are often labeled as “non shedding” breeds, this is not entirely accurate. When you brush your dog, it is true that you will not get out the same amount of fur as you would with a double coated dog. However, what you do comb out is dead fur that will tangle up with the healthy fur causing matting. Combination coated dogs have a very high risk with this. Since this breed has the undercoat of its parent dog, this undercoat will fall out faster than the wooly coat. Another cause for matting is friction. Your dog's underpits that are in a constant state of motion, the area around the collar that moves about the neck, and even the belly area that lays on the floor are all going to mat up more quickly. All these actions will cause the fur to tangle, and if it is not brushed out properly the matting starts.

It is also important to understand why it is unhealthy to allow your dog to remain in a matted state. While early matting does not cause too much harm, it does start blocking the skin from the air. Your dog's body heat begins to build up under the matted fur and the mats trap this excess heat. Also, as the dog's mats continue to grow, the dog begins feeling their hair pulling each time they take a step. This can become very painful and usually by this point, the air can not reach the skin. To make matters worse, if the dog becomes wet, the dense parts of the matting can take a long time to dry which allows bacteria growth. This bacteria along with the skin

unable to breath properly from the thick coat, can start to create skin rashes. At this point if the matting is still allowed to continue, the pulling from matting will actually begin to cause bruising on the skin. Once the coat has reached this point, even shaving the dog down is painful for them. It is a sensation similar to taking a too tight pony tail out after it has been left in for too long. Extreme neglect of the coat can even lead to accidental amputations. The knots continue to tighten around tails, legs, or ears cutting of the blood flow to the limb which then dies. Usually these extreme cases are found on dogs that have not had their fur groomed for a year or more.

To prevent matting, regular brushing is needed with your hard slicker, poodle brush, and greyhound comb. Your dog can live to over ten years; that is a long time with your partner. Make yourself a mandatory appointment including a day and time of the week. Make a habit of caring for your fuzzy companion at this appointed time. I find the best way to go about this task is to make it a time to relax; I put on a movie, or play some music and set a timer for a half hour or so. It is very important for you to be aware of your emotional state. You don't brush your companion if you are feeling grumpy. Your dog can feel your emotions and this will be make being groomed a bad experience. Your dog will begin associating grooming with your bad moods. It is also important to note that all harnesses, clothing, bows, and collars need to be removed from your dog before you begin grooming.

Brush out times depend on the length of your dog's coat. The longer the coat the more time you will need to spend brushing, shorter cuts require less brushing time. If you are not able to spend much time grooming but you prefer the longer cuts, an alternative is to schedule more frequent grooming appointments. Your pet will need to be seen by your groomer every six weeks or even more often. There are also some cute cuts that are between the long and short lengths that a groomer can do for you as well. The idea is to find what works best for you and your pet; customize your own schedule and cut length while factoring in how much time, and/or money you can invest, and what works best for your dog.

An extremely important time to brush is just before and after a bath. If your pup's coat is full of tangles and you place him into water these tangles can grow tighter. Then, following the bath, if a velocity dryer is not used to dry the coat, the matting of the coat gets even worse. If you plan on letting your pup go swimming in a pond or lake, be sure to schedule enough time to brush out your dog both before the swim and then once again after the dog has dried. This is very important because mats form very quickly when water comes into play.

These next instructions cover how to brush from start to finish when your dog has a tight curls. First, begin by using a hard slicker brush over the entire body. This step will help break apart the curls. Next, begin going section by section through the coat using both the Poodle comb and the hard slicker; continue this process until all of the tangles and the knots are gone. Pay close

attention to the legs, belly, armpits, ears, top knot, muzzle, cheeks, tail, and even between the toes, as these areas are sometimes missed. Use the mat breaker on area's that have become matted (Use extreme caution while doing this because it is easy to injure your dog if you are not paying close attention to the skin. See above.) Once the poodle brush can easily glide through all area's of the coat without catching, move to the smaller greyhound comb to ensure all knots have properly been removed.



This is a dog that is fully matted even if it does not seem that way at first glance.



When the fur is parted no skin can be seen. This means that excess heat and moisture can not be released from the dog's coat near the skin. The only option available at this point is a close shave.



The matting comes off the dog almost like a blanket. This process can be painful if the skin is already bruised from the close matting near the skin. Groomers charge dematting fees for just shave downs for two reasons. First, it takes special skills to not cut or burn the dog's skin while removing these mats. Another reason for the additional fee is because the dog is not bathed prior to this procedure. Your groomer is using their equipment on a uncleaned dog which put a lot of wear and tear on equipment that the groomer has to pay to keep meticulously maintained. Look at the grooming loop around this dog's neck. See how oversized it is for the neck. The grooming loop fit properly just prior to being shaved. This image shows just how much excess fur had grown on this dog.





These cuts may not be the fancy, pretty cuts that most people prefer, but this is a much kinder solution to the matting problem than require the dog to endure having all of this brushed out.





This photo was taken after a severely matted coat was removed. Look closely at the tail area of the dog; notice how it is stained. That is caused because this animal was not able to relieve itself properly.

**Final Groom:**

I am going to share a personal story that comes straight from my heart. This is a pup I used to groom, named Precious. I was her groomer for over two years while I lived in Georgia. I saw her return to the groomers once since this hair cut. I think about Precious quite often. Your groomers grow to love your dogs and want nothing more than to help them have happy lives. They often think about the dogs they groom on a regular basis. When a groomer tells you that they treat your dog as if the dog is their own, usually this is very true. I have cried over dogs that have left my life. The happier side of this is that I also can celebrate with owners as they introduce a new dog to their family. I have also fumed over the neglect I have witnessed. It breaks my heart to see the condition some of these animals that enter my salon. All of these emotions stem from the love and passion most groomers share.

**Nail Care:**

Nail care is just as important as coat care. Overgrown nails are painful to your pet. Imagine if your nails are too long and you put your shoes on anyways. Your nails would constantly be

pressing into your nail bed which causes pain. This is what your dog feels when their nails are too long. Overgrown nails can also cause deformities in paws as well as back pain that develops from their not being able to walk properly. A sign of properly clipped nails is when you can not hear the click - click of the nails on the floor when the dog is walking normally. If you hear click - click, it's time for their nails to be cared for. It is recommended that nails are trimmed once a month to maintain a healthy length. If your pup will not let you clip their nails, another option is to have your groomer do it. Salons often offer nail trimming as a walk in service; going routinely will keep your pup's feet happy. Salons also may offer nail filing or dremeling services for nails. The filing is safer than just clipping alone because it is easier to avoid the quick of the dog's nail when using a file. Traditional nail clippers can be a little painful when squeezing to clip because of the pressure it puts on the quick inside of the nail, regardless if you hit the quick or not. Another benefit of using the file is that the nails can be trimmed shorter than with clippers. When this is done frequently, the nail's quick can be trained to recede to a healthy length, which allows the nails come back smoother. However, many dogs do not like the sound of the file, and the vibration on the nail is a strange feeling at first. These new strange, things may cause the dog to act out. Also, if the hair around the paws is long, there is a chance of the hair getting caught in the dremel which will wind it up quickly and pull. The price on nail filing also can be a bit more expensive than clipping, as it takes more time. Regardless of the way you decide to do your dog's nails, always be sure to have your Quick Stop nearby to stop the bleeding, just in case of accidents.





Here is a photo of a dog's paw that had not had the nails clipped for a long period of time. Notice how the nails twist and lay sideways. If the toes are forced to stay at this angle for days, it will begin causing deformity of the foot itself. Some nails instead of growing sideways, as these do, will actually curl and grow up into the dog's paw pad. Due to the graphic nature of those photos, they will not be shown. The right paw is the same paw freshly clipped. Observe how the paw instantly returns to a normal state of rest. Walking will once again be pain free for this dog.

### **Ear Care**

Dogs who grow their coats out continuously like the Silky, the Woolly, the Combination coats, and the Wire coat's, will also grow hair inside of their ears. Some dogs can grow it thick while others will grow it lightly. If this hair remains inside of the ear canal, the ear canal can build up with wax and moisture. This condition can lead to bacteria growth that can cause ear infections. To avoid these conditions, the hair is routinely plucked from the ear canal. Removing hair a little bit at a time helps to not irritate the ear too badly, also it is not as painful for the dog as it would be to remove all of it at one time. If the ear hair is maintained the dog will grow used to the sensation, similarly to how a human becomes accustomed to having their eyebrows plucked. Groomers provide this service as well.



In this photo you can see the dog's ear on the left is full of hair blocking the ear canal from air flow. The photo on the right shows the same ear after plucking the excess hair. See how the air is able to flow and is now able to reach the ear to keep it dry.

I hope this information has helped you learn more about how to care for your companion in between their grooms. We all love our pets and want what is best for them. Below I will list all the tools as well as how you can acquire them. Now you can begin right away to keep your pet's grooming needs in check. With that being said, a well maintained pet can come home with some pretty amazing haircuts!



The Stuff is my favorite leave in conditioner and detangling spray. I don't often like the bottle it comes in, so I purchase a bottle that gives a finer mist spray. A little goes a long way when it comes to this stuff! You will notice that the coat is much softer with it and it is easier to brush with it in the coat. I normally use this product after bathing a dog.

This sold on many sites. I often get mine from Amazon

[https://www.amazon.com/The-Stuff-16oz-Conditioner-Detangler/dp/B0002H3RLU/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=pets-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506004654&sr=1-1&keywords=the+stuff+conditioner+and+detangler](https://www.amazon.com/The-Stuff-16oz-Conditioner-Detangler/dp/B0002H3RLU/ref=sr_1_1?s=pets-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506004654&sr=1-1&keywords=the+stuff+conditioner+and+detangler)



Greyhound Comb - One side is wide tooth the other side fine tooth. This is your finishing comb. You can find these in most large pet shops including PetSmart or PetCo.

[https://www.amazon.com/Paw-Brothers-Greyhound-Teflon-Coarse/dp/B014PFSBK6/ref=sr\\_1\\_7?s=pet-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006134&sr=1-7&keywords=greyhound+comb](https://www.amazon.com/Paw-Brothers-Greyhound-Teflon-Coarse/dp/B014PFSBK6/ref=sr_1_7?s=pet-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006134&sr=1-7&keywords=greyhound+comb)



The Poodle Comb - The long teeth help with going all the way down to the skin while the wide tooth gaps assist in gently separating the curls and breaking mats apart. Make sure to order the coarse comb when placing your order.

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NPQY1A/ref=oh\\_aui\\_detailpage\\_o05\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001NPQY1A/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o05_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)



The Slicker Brush - These brushes are sold at your local pet stores. Pick the one with the bristles that have the most resistance to your touch. Those are the brushes best for dematting. A soft slicker brush is only needed when doing hair cuts.

[https://www.amazon.com/Paw-Brothers-Extra-Slicker-Brush/dp/B014PFS2VE/ref=sr\\_1\\_11?s=pet-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1514314904&sr=1-11&keywords=slicker+brush](https://www.amazon.com/Paw-Brothers-Extra-Slicker-Brush/dp/B014PFS2VE/ref=sr_1_11?s=pet-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1514314904&sr=1-11&keywords=slicker+brush)





Mat Breaker Tool - This is the tool you need to use Caution! However, with careful handling is a life saver. Some pet shops do sell these tools.

[https://www.amazon.com/Safari-W6116-De-matting-Comb/dp/B0002ARR2W/ref=sr\\_1\\_12?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006233&sr=1-12&keywords=mat+breaker+for+dogs](https://www.amazon.com/Safari-W6116-De-matting-Comb/dp/B0002ARR2W/ref=sr_1_12?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006233&sr=1-12&keywords=mat+breaker+for+dogs)



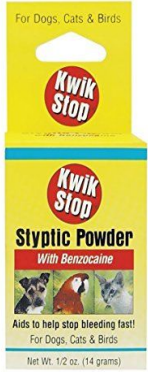
High Velocity Dryer - There are very nice ones out there, but this lower end model works fine for just a few dogs at a time.

[https://www.amazon.com/SHELANDY-dryer-force-grooming-blower/dp/B06WLQPJ58/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006382&sr=1-3&keywords=dog+dryers+grooming](https://www.amazon.com/SHELANDY-dryer-force-grooming-blower/dp/B06WLQPJ58/ref=sr_1_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006382&sr=1-3&keywords=dog+dryers+grooming)



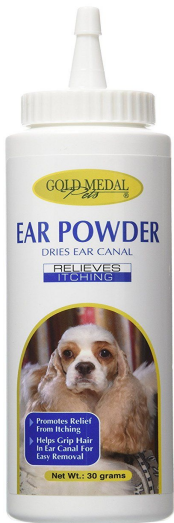
Nail Clippers - These clippers can be found at most pet shops.

[https://www.amazon.com/SHELANDY-dryer-force-grooming-blower/dp/B06WLQPJ58/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006382&sr=1-3&keywords=dog+dryers+grooming](https://www.amazon.com/SHELANDY-dryer-force-grooming-blower/dp/B06WLQPJ58/ref=sr_1_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006382&sr=1-3&keywords=dog+dryers+grooming)



Quick Stop - There is a form sold at most pet shops and they all work well.

[https://www.amazon.com/Kwik-Stop-1-2-oz/dp/B0002XIZAM/ref=sr\\_1\\_13?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006735&sr=1-13&keywords=quick+stop+for+dogs](https://www.amazon.com/Kwik-Stop-1-2-oz/dp/B0002XIZAM/ref=sr_1_13?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006735&sr=1-13&keywords=quick+stop+for+dogs)



Ear Powder - Most pet shops carry a type of ear powder.

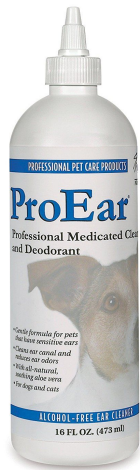
[https://www.amazon.com/Gold-Medal-Groomers-Powder-Grams/dp/B000P0SPX4/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006862&sr=1-2&keywords=ear+powder+for+dogs](https://www.amazon.com/Gold-Medal-Groomers-Powder-Grams/dp/B000P0SPX4/ref=sr_1_2?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506006862&sr=1-2&keywords=ear+powder+for+dogs)



Hemostats for ear plucking

[https://www.amazon.com/PetEdge-Stainless-Straight-Mosquito-Hemostat/dp/B004C32AIQ/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506007008&sr=1-3&keywords=hemostat+for+dogs+ears](https://www.amazon.com/PetEdge-Stainless-Straight-Mosquito-Hemostat/dp/B004C32AIQ/ref=sr_1_3?s=petsupplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506007008&sr=1-3&keywords=hemostat+for+dogs+ears)

Ear Cleaner - Most large pet shops will carry some brand of this product.



[https://www.amazon.com/Top-Performance-ProEar-Alcohol-Free-Cleaners/dp/B005N2O6WI/ref=sr\\_1\\_17?s=pets-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506007107&sr=1-17&keywords=ear+cleaner+for+dogs](https://www.amazon.com/Top-Performance-ProEar-Alcohol-Free-Cleaners/dp/B005N2O6WI/ref=sr_1_17?s=pets-supplies&ie=UTF8&qid=1506007107&sr=1-17&keywords=ear+cleaner+for+dogs)