

# When Your Pet Needs A Smoothie

## *How matting happens*

Callie, the kitty, hid every time her owner wanted to brush her. Her long, beautiful hair got so matted that it looked like she was wearing a turtle shell on her back.

Buffy, the Cocker Spaniel, didn't like to be groomed and would bite the brush. His hair became matted in big lumps all over his body—making the little cocker look like the muscle-bound Incredible Hulk.

Susie, the Lhasa Apso, loved to be brushed and her owner brushed her every day, but her owner used the wrong kind of brush and did not know the correct brushing technique. Susie looked fluffy and beautiful on the outside, but the coat next to her skin was a solid mat that was getting thicker and tighter everyday.

## *Matted Pet Hair can be Serious*

Mats pull tightly on the pet's skin, causing them constant discomfort and often times suffering. But even more serious is the fact that air cannot circulate through the hair and skin, which can lead to major skin irritations and infections.

As a highly trained professional, your pet's groomer/stylist understands how serious matting is and what health consequences your pet can suffer as a result of the matting. She will evaluate the condition of your pet's coat and recommend what is best for him.

## *The Solution...*

When a pet's hair becomes severely matted, there is simply no way to remove it except to give the pet a very short haircut, often referred to as a 'smoothie'.

## *What is a Smoothie?*

A *smoothie* groom is very time consuming, as the groomer must use extreme caution as she removes the tightly matted coat from your pet. You don't *just shave the hair off*. It is much more involved. Your groomer uses specialized equipment to separate the matting from the pet's skin. It is incredibly difficult to delicately work to release your pet, inch by inch, from the hairy prison surrounding him.

Great care must be taken. As the matting is removed, it may reveal skin conditions, parasites, or even foreign objects imbedded in the pet's hair. The skin can become unhealthy under matting, sometimes to the point that immediate medical attention is needed.

### *After the matting is removed...*

Your pet will feel different after its matted coat is removed. After finally being free of the matting that confined him like a straight jacket or body cast- he may feel itchy or his skin may have become irritated and sore from the matting.

He may want to rub and scratch, but you must not allow him to further irritate himself. Be especially aware that your pet's freshly clipped nails may be sharp and could cause secondary problems if he scratches or digs at his tender skin.

You may apply pet first aid cream or gel to your pet's skin. If his skin is tender, the cream can provide welcome, soothing relief from itching and will encourage his skin to heal.

Never allow anyone to make fun of how your pet looks. Going from being encased in hair to almost no hair can be traumatic for your pet. Reassure your pet with lots of praise and love. Tell them they look beautiful!

### *A New Beginning...*

Now that your pet has very short hair, you have the opportunity for a fresh start. This is the time to form a working partnership with your pet care specialist.

Begin by putting your pet on a regular schedule of grooming appointments. Then you and your groomer should discuss how you can maintain your pet at home between professional grooming.

Together you can make sure that your pet is cared for properly and comfortably, and that his hair never gets into such bad condition again. Make it a real team effort!

### *The Right Equipment and Products...*

Your groomer can recommend and supply the grooming equipment that you will need to correctly care for your pet. There are specialty brushes and combs designed for different types of coats and your groomer can explain which ones are best suited to your pet's needs.

Your groomer will be happy to show you how to properly use these grooming tools on your pet. She will also teach you the correct brushing techniques that will enable you to brush his hair completely down to the skin. She will recommend and explain how to use the hair care products that will enable you to brush his hair completely down to the skin.

She will recommend and explain how to use the hair care products that will be especially beneficial for your pet. Products such as soothing therapeutic shampoos, de-tangling conditioners, and grooming sprays that make brushing easier, will enable you to make grooming time at home an enjoyable experience for you and for your pet.

### *The Big Payoff... A Happy Pet!*

One of the most wonderful, caring things you can do for your pet is to spend time together. Make grooming a special bonding time between you and your pet.

If you begin brushing while his hair is short and not tangled, he will be more accepting of it. Start with very short sessions and gradually lengthen them as your pet learns to enjoy daily grooming. Use treats and plenty of praise to reinforce a positive grooming experience.

Be sure to use the brushing technique that your groomer demonstrated to you; also see the pamphlet *Learning to Brush Your Pet*. The importance of a complete combing cannot be overemphasized.

This small investment of your time can pay off with tremendous benefits in your pet's happiness and well being, not to mention his appearance.

Working together with your groomer to obtain the proper products for your pet's care, and to learn how to use them correctly, will ensure that your pet looks and feels his best at all times.