

## DEMATTING:

When you are dealing with long coated dogs with or without undercoats, it doesn't take very much neglect to find that you and your dog are in big trouble. If you miss three or four weeks of proper grooming with an Afghan going through coat change, you may have to shave your dog.

Mats are ugly and will ruin a show coat if not controlled; not to mention very uncomfortable for your dog. Mats will pinch and pull the skin and if they get bad enough, the dog him/herself will begin to chew and try to de-mat his/her own coat.

**Most mats are created from external influences.** The most common is **lack of GROOMING** on a regular basis or by a well meaning, but inexperienced groomer. **Fleas, Ticks and Mange or Lice. Irritated itchy skin will make the dog scratch.** Fleas are one of the worst if the dog is allergic to Flea saliva. The **dog's saliva and chewing will set a mat** to where it is almost impossible to untangle. **Ticks** are usually found on the ears or head and in between their toes. If you see a puffed-up female Tick that is engorged in your dog, look for its male mate. **Ticks can cause serious diseases** such as **Encephalitis** and **Rocky Mountain Fever** and should be dealt with immediately. First, kill the tick by applying alcohol or nail polish remover on a cotton swab. Grasp the Tick with tweezers as close to the skin as possible and gently twist and pull, causing the tick to release. There is no cause for alarm if the head remains fixed; rarely will it become infected, But can cause an irritant to the dog that he may chew or scratch at causing not only mats, but skin rashes.

Different types of coats will matt differently. Soft and silky longhaired breeds such as Afghans, Maltese and Shi Tzu can matt in clumps and spots that will have to be removed. Double-coated dogs (i.e., the Alaskan Malamute, Great Pyrenees, etc.,) go through natural shedding processes according to their environment. It is essential that the shedding under coat be removed so the skin can breathe.

For the dematting process you will need patience, time and the right equipment. [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way Antistatic & DeTangle Spray](#) and [Summerwinds Fine-L-Shine Paste](#) used straight from the jar and (diluted) in a sprayer are great detangling aids

If the dog is lightly matted, mist the coat first with [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way Antistatic & DeTangle Spray](#); then carefully brush and comb out some of the mats in a dry coat. If the dog is very matted and you are willing to spend hours dematting while blowing dry the coat, carefully brush or comb out as much as possible before bathing the dog. Once the mats are wet, it can become much more difficult to untangle them, but it will save coat. The heat from the dryer will help to loosen the mat.

You will need a good steel comb (I use a Greyhound [\* brand name] comb or the Untangle [\* brand name] rotating tooth comb), a pin brush and a slicker brush, which is a brush with fine steel needle like pins. If you can take a regular pin brush and brush out any loose hair going with the grain of growth, you may not have a tough job ahead at all.

Get the dog to lie down and become comfortable. One thing that is a must is to start at one end and work down the leg or body in sections. Do not move to the next section until the first one is completely dematted. If you skip around all over the dog, you will get lost and miss many areas. If you spend your whole time fighting the dog to stay still, it becomes very exhausting for both of you. If you can control the dog's head, you have control of the dog and that is imperative. Be sure not to pull so hard that it is painful for the dog, as most will not be co-operative for further dematting. If you tightly hold the tangle between the skin and the knot before combing the mat out, it will prevent most pulling pain and discomfort for the dog.

Take the mat between your fingers and try to separate it with a gentle pulling downward and sideways. Dividing the mat into small sections will help to save a lot of hair loss. Separating it by hand is impossible so try using a slicker brush first. Brushing over and over in a downward motion is careful not to twist your wrist; this will cause more coat breakage. Start at the ends of the hair and work your way into the skin.

### **Mats make noise.**

Listen to the mat. You can hear a mat. When you are brushing with either a pin or slicker brush, mats make noise. You will learn to listen for the sound of the brush moving through the hair. When the brush hits a tangle or a mat it make a defendant sound. When the coat is mat free, the brush or comb will glide through silently. I tell my owners, I cannot only smell a mat, but I can hear it. After the brush gets most of the tangles out, it is best to take the comb and remove any fine hair that still may be knotted. Make sure that the entire mat is removed by taking a long-tooth steel comb through the hair. If it does not get caught up on a tangle you have a dematted dog.

Remember, the more patience you have, the calmer the dog will be and the faster the job will be completed. Good luck.

## **DEMATTING AIDS:**

[Summerwinds Fine-L-Shine Cream Rinse Paste](#) and [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way Antistatic & Detangle Spray](#) are really good aids to help relax a mat and untangle them. If you take a scoop of the [Summerwinds Fine-L-Shine Cream Rinse Paste](#) in your fingers and message it, full strength, into a mat and work the product into the mat. Wait for a few minutes and begin pulling gently downward and sideways, and the mat will begin to loosen. Gently brush through the mat with a pin brush. Finish by holding the mat next to the skin with one hand using your fingers, and with the other hand gently running the long toothcomb through the mat. Start at the bottom of the mat working up to the skin until the mat is totally untangled. Where the dog is lightly matted, spray on [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way](#) and message into matted area, the [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way](#) will help loosen mats both on bathing and grooming days and days in between.

A new product to our line... The [Untangler Pet Grooming Combs](#) have special [rotating teeth](#) that remove tangles easily, without the pain of pulling and snagging. Conventional rigid-toothcombs pull at your dog's coat and tear out hair by the root. The [Untangler](#) combs take away the pain and the tangles in one easy motion. I have found these combs to be very helpful in dealing with mats and is great for coats that are changing and/or going through coat drop. They work great with breeds that have undercoat (thick, very fine fur type coat under their longer top coat). I liked them so much that **Summerwinds** are now distributing them. They come in several different sizes, for cats to large dogs.



Showsheen spray, primarily for horses, can be found in feed stores and tack shops. This is another product that can be helpful in loosening mats during coat changes and when dematting is

a daily routine. Never dry brush a dry coat; always mist with water or [Summerwinds Stat-A-Way Antistatic & DeTangle Spray](#) first.

## GROOMING TOOLS:

The [grooming tools](#) that **you will need** and use the most is:

1. [A Pin Brush](#): A large paddle type pin brush, which should have long pins that have a rubber bottom. Do not use pin brushes with balls on the ends of the pins. They will pull out too much coat.
2. [A Long-Tooth Comb](#): The most popular long-tooth comb is a stainless steel comb called the Greyhound (\*brand name). The long-tooth comb used primarily on long-haired cats. Another great comb is the Untangler comb (\*brand name) with rotating teeth.
3. [A Slicker Brush](#): The slicker brush is a short-handle brush with a flat base and very fine metal bend teeth. Great for puppy coats and detangling a mat if used correctly. It should always be used very carefully in a downward direction and never in a twisting motion. It is great to use on a very heavy coat. I have known many really good groomers that use nothing but a slicker. But they know how to use it. What is good for one person, may not be preferred by another person, due to not knowing how to use the tool correctly.
4. Stand Blow Dryer: Grooming Table with Grooming Arm: Nail Clippers: Hair Clippers: Scissors (thinning and regular), and Tooth Brush: