



# WHY YOUR DOG KEEPS GETTING MATTED

Discover The **(7) MISTAKES** Most Dog Owners Make



Written by a Professional Dog Groomer

## Before We Start...

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If you're reading this, there's a good chance you've already been through it at least once. **The call from the groomer.** The moment at drop-off when their expression changes. The conversation you dread — "she's pretty matted under here." The shave-down you didn't want. The bill that's higher than it should be. And then the guilt that quietly follows you home.

Or maybe you haven't been through the full shave-down yet — but you feel it coming. You run your fingers through your dog's coat and find a clump that wasn't there before. You're brushing, but something isn't working, and you don't know what.

**Here's what I need you to hear first: you are not a bad owner.** You are an owner who was never given the right information. Those are completely different things.

I'm a professional dog groomer. I work hands-on with dogs every single day — every breed, every coat type, every level of maintenance. I see the exact same mistakes made by loving, well-intentioned owners week after week. Not because they don't care.

Because nobody ever showed them what actually causes matting and what to do about it.

This guide is everything I wish every one of my clients knew before they walked through the door. Read every mistake carefully. Apply even two or three of these and your next grooming appointment will be a completely different experience.

### WHAT YOU WILL WALK AWAY WITH:

The 7 specific mistakes that cause painful, expensive matting — with the exact professional fix for each one. Written the same way I'd explain it face to face.

**Let's dive into it. —**

Eli from Honeycomb Pet Care

# 0 1

## Brushing the Top of the Coat — Not All the Way Through

### Sound familiar?

You brush your dog regularly. You put in the time and use the brush faithfully — maybe every few days, maybe every single day. And yet you still end up at the groomer's counter hearing those words again: "She's pretty matted under here." The fee gets added. The guilt hits. How is this possible when you brush them all the time?

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

Mats don't start on the surface — they start deep at the skin, where your brush never actually reaches. When you brush the top layer of the coat, everything looks smooth. But underneath, where air can't circulate and friction happens with every movement, tangles are quietly locking together into mats. If your brush isn't penetrating all the way to the skin on every stroke, you're styling the top while mats form underneath. Your dog looks fine on the outside. Underneath it's a completely different story — and your groomer sees it every time.

### ✓ THE FIX:

After every brushing session, take a metal comb — not plastic, metal only — and run it all the way through the coat from root to tip. If it catches or stops anywhere, there's a mat forming that your brush completely missed. This is called the comb test. It is the only reliable way to know you've actually brushed through. Do it every single session, no exceptions.



# 0 2

## Bathing Without Brushing First — Then Letting Them Air Dry

### Sound familiar?

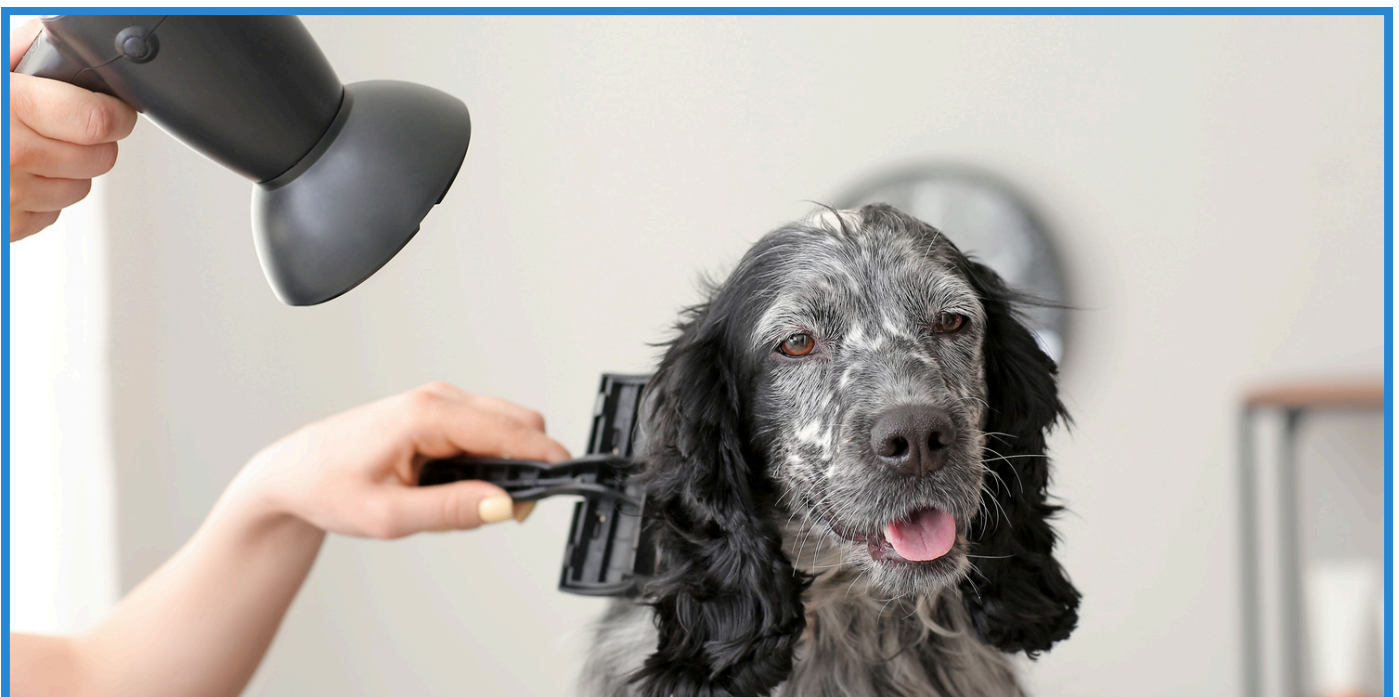
Bath time feels productive. You lather, rinse, your dog smells amazing. But within a few days — new mats. Worse than before the bath. You're not imagining it and you're not doing anything wrong on purpose. You just weren't told about the one thing that turns water into mats.

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

Water is a mat's best friend. When you wet a coat that has even small invisible tangles, the water causes those hair fibers to swell, tighten, and lock together permanently. What was a minor tangle before the bath becomes a dense set mat after. And if you let the coat air dry? As it dries naturally it curls and twists — especially in Doodles and Poodles. A dog who goes for a swim and air dries can develop significant matting within 24 to 48 hours.

### ✓ THE FIX:

Always brush and comb through the full coat completely before any water touches your dog. After bathing, use a blow dryer on low or cool heat and brush through in sections as it dries. Get the coat 80 to 90 percent dry while brushing — never let a curly or long-haired dog air dry completely. For lake or beach swims, plan 15 minutes of brush-and-dry when you get home.



# 0 3

## Using the Wrong Brush for Your Dog's Coat Type

### Sound familiar?

You went to the pet store. You picked a brush — maybe an expensive one. You've been using it consistently for months. The mats keep forming in the same spots and you genuinely can't understand why brushing isn't working.

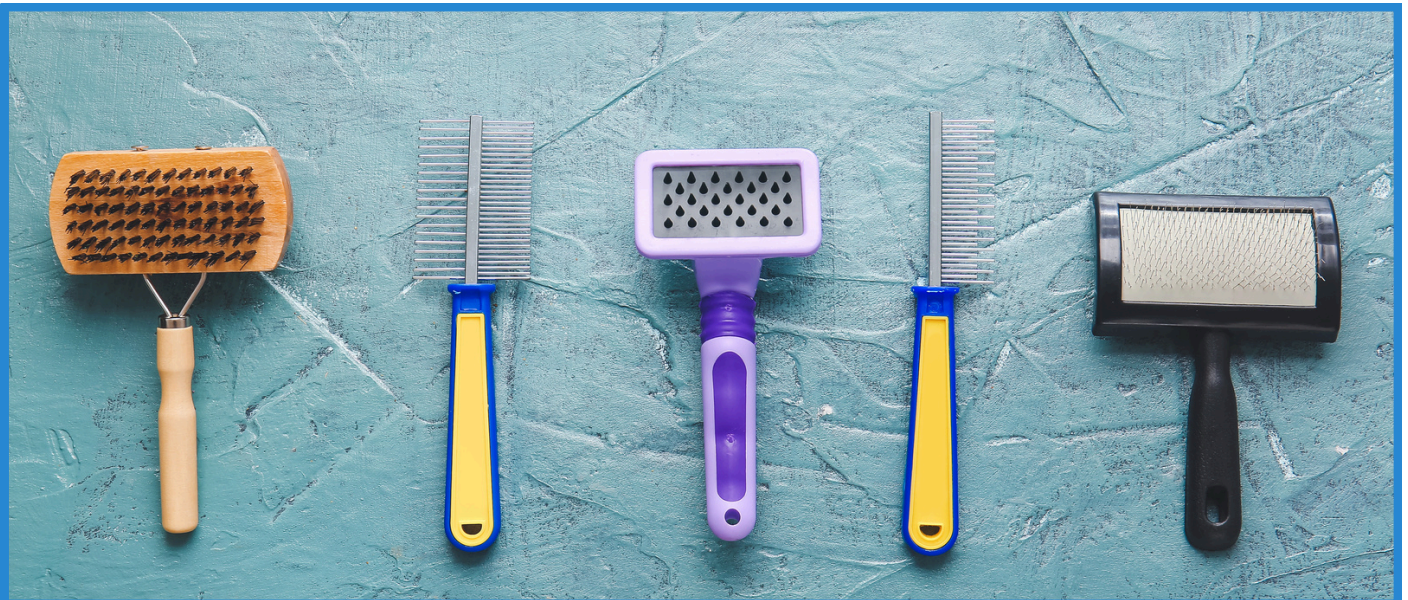
Here's why: the brush is the problem.

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

Using the wrong brush is almost worse than not brushing at all — it gives you a false sense of security. A slicker brush alone will not prevent matting on a Doodle or Poodle. A paddle brush glides over the top without catching the undercoat. A wide-tooth plastic comb won't penetrate deep enough. Each coat type has completely different needs, and most owners are using one generic brush that's wrong for their dog.

### ✓ THE FIX:

Professional tool guide by coat type: • Doodles / Poodles / Curly coats: Slicker brush + metal greyhound comb. Both. Every session. • Double coats (Huskies, Shepherds, Golden Retrievers): Undercoat rake first, then slicker brush. • Silky / long coats (Maltese, Shih Tzu, Yorkies): Pin brush + metal comb. • Short coats (Labs, Boxers): Rubber curry brush + bristle brush. If you own nothing else — get a metal greyhound comb this week. It is the single most important tool a dog owner can have.



# 04

## Ignoring the Friction Zones

### Sound familiar?

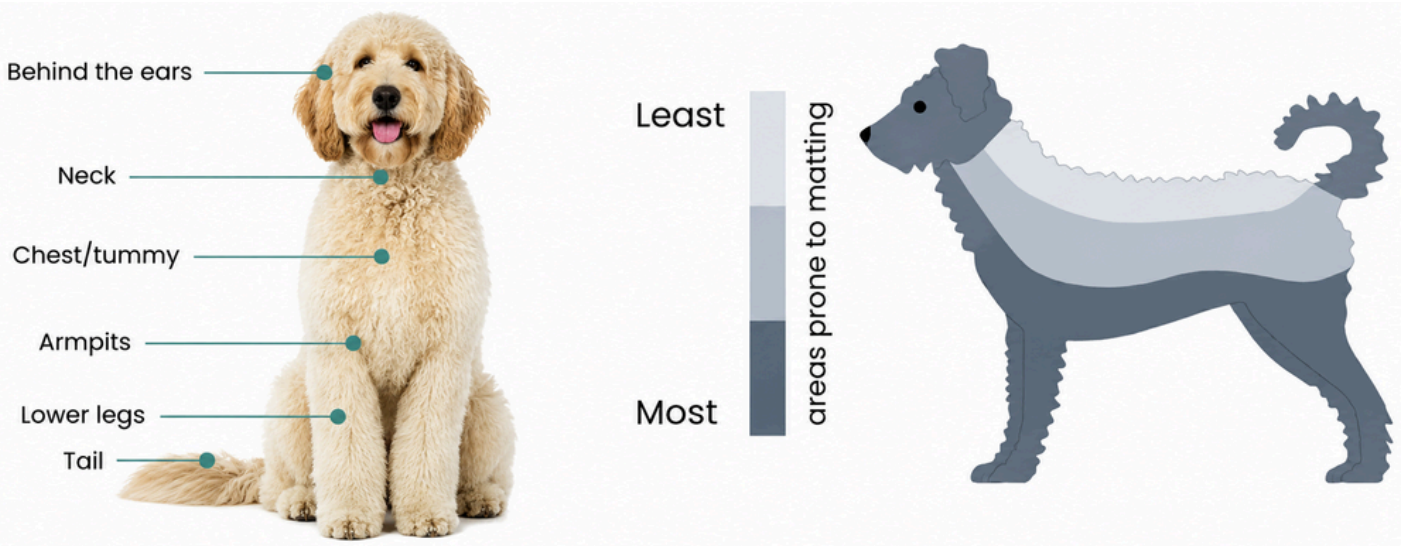
You brush the back, the sides, the tail. You do a thorough job. And yet the mats always come back in exactly the same spots: behind the ears, under the armpits, around the collar, between the back legs. Every single time. You've started to wonder if your dog is just built to mat.

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

Your dog doesn't mat randomly — they mat in friction zones. These are the specific areas where skin presses against skin, where the collar sits, where the harness rubs, where the legs swing against the body thousands of times per walk. The constant motion in these areas tangles the hair faster than anywhere else. Most owners brush right past these spots without specific attention — they're hidden, awkward, and easy to miss. But they're where 80 percent of matting begins.

### ✓ THE FIX:

At the start of every grooming session — before you brush anything else — check and brush these specific spots: behind both ears, under both armpits, around the collar line, between the back legs, and under the harness straps. Use your fingers to gently separate any tangles first, then follow with your metal comb. Always remove the collar before brushing. These five minutes at the start prevent the majority of the mats your groomer is currently finding.



# 05

## Stretching the Time Between Grooming Appointments Too Long

### Sound familiar?

Life gets busy. You push the appointment from 8 weeks to 10. Then 12. Then 14. The dog seems fine. You figure a few more weeks won't hurt. Then you show up at the groomer and they tell you the coat is too matted to save. The shave-down happens again.

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

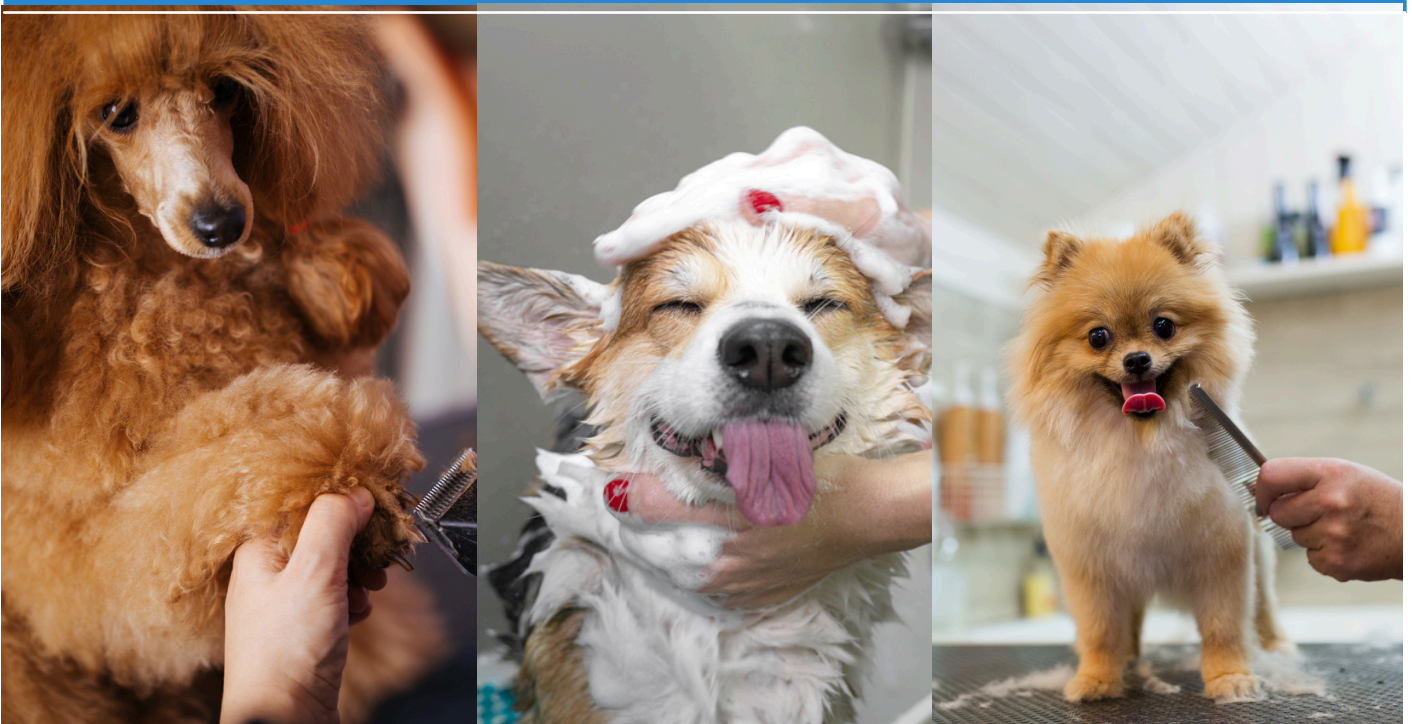
Every week beyond your dog's recommended grooming interval isn't a linear increase in matting risk — it's exponential. A tangle that takes two minutes to brush out at week 6 becomes a dense mat at week 10 that takes 30 minutes and causes real discomfort. By week 14 it may be completely impossible to brush out, which is the moment your groomer has no choice but to shave. The coat doesn't pause while life gets busy.

### ✓ THE FIX:

Know your dog's schedule and treat it as non-negotiable:

- Doodles, Poodles, Bichons, Shih Tzus: Every 4 to 6 weeks. No exceptions.
- Cocker Spaniels, Maltese, Yorkies: Every 6 to 8 weeks.
- Double-coated breeds: Every 8 to 10 weeks plus seasonal deshedding.

Book the next appointment before you leave the salon. Set a repeating phone reminder. Dogs on a consistent schedule almost never need shave-downs.



# 06

## Letting a Wet Dog Air Dry After Swimming or Rain

### Sound familiar?



Your dog got soaked in the rain or jumped in the lake. They shake off, seem fine, you let them dry naturally. Two days later you find dense matting behind their ears and under their legs that wasn't there before.

### WHY THIS IS CAUSING THE MATTING:

Air drying is one of the fastest ways to create mats — especially in curly, wavy, and long-coated dogs. As the coat dries naturally, the hair fibers curl and twist together, particularly in the friction zones where the coat is already most vulnerable. A Doodle or Poodle who air dries after a swim will almost always develop matting within 24 to 48 hours. And because the mat sets as the coat dries, by the time you feel it, it's already locked in.

### ✓ THE FIX:

Any time your dog gets significantly wet — bath, swim, or heavy rain — dry them with a blow dryer on low or cool while brushing through in sections. Getting 80 to 90 percent dry while brushing is enough to stop mats from setting. Keep a dog towel near the door for rainy walks. For swims, plan 15 minutes of brush-and-dry when you get home. This one habit eliminates one of the most common sources of unexpected matting.

<p><b>AIR DRY</b> After Swimming or Rain</p>  <p>Letting your dog air dry can lead to mats, tangles, and discomfort.</p>	<p>AFTER SWIMMING OR RAIN</p>  <p>Wet coat after swimming or rain.</p>	<p>AFTER AIR DRYING</p>  <p>Coat is matted, tangled, and uncomfortable.</p>
<p><b>PROPER DRY &amp; BRUSH</b> After Swimming or Rain</p>  <p>Proper drying and brushing keeps your dog comfortable, healthy, and mat-free.</p>	<p>AFTER SWIMMING OR RAIN</p>  <p>Wet coat after swimming or rain.</p>	<p>AFTER PROPER DRYING &amp; BRUSHING</p>  <p>Coat is fluffy, tangle-free, and healthy.</p>

# 07

## Brushing Straight Into a Mat Instead of Working It Out Correctly

### Sound familiar?

You found a mat. You went at it with your brush — pulling, pushing, working from every angle. Your dog lasted about 30 seconds before squirming, whining, or trying to get away. You gave up. The mat is still there, only now it's tighter — and your dog doesn't want to be near the brush anymore.

### WHY THIS MAKES EVERYTHING WORSE:

Brushing directly into a mat doesn't remove it. It compresses and tightens it while pulling the skin with every stroke — and that pulling is genuinely painful. Do this enough times and your dog learns that brushing equals pain. They become brush-shy, resist every session, and the whole process gets harder. Most dogs that "hate being groomed" learned it from repeated discomfort at home that could have been avoided entirely.

### ✓ THE FIX:

The correct method for working through a mat: 1. Hold the BASE of the mat with your fingers between the mat and skin — this absorbs the tension so it doesn't pull the skin. 2. Apply a detangling spray to soften the mat first. 3. Use a mat splitter or metal comb working from the OUTSIDE EDGES inward — never start in the middle. 4. Work in small sections with treats and praise throughout. 5. If the mat is dense and close to the skin — stop. Do not use scissors. Call your groomer. The best mat is one that never forms — which is exactly what this entire guide is designed to prevent.

 <b>WRONG WAY</b> Brushing Directly Into a Mat	 <b>RIGHT WAY</b> Fingers at the Base, Comb from Edge Inward
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Pulls and causes pain</li><li>✗ Pushes the mat tighter</li><li>✗ Can break the coat</li><li>✗ Creates more tangles over time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Supports the coat at the base</li><li>✓ Works from the edges inward</li><li>✓ Gently loosens the mat</li><li>✓ Keeps your dog comfortable and safe</li></ul>
 <b>This makes mats worse and can lead to skin irritation.</b>	 <b>Be patient and gentle.</b> This is the safest, most effective way to remove mats.

**YOU NOW KNOW THE 7 MISTAKES.**

**Now It's Time to Fix Them — For Good.**

Knowing the mistakes is a powerful first step. The Mat-Free Dog System is the complete routine that keeps your dog's coat healthy, beautiful, and mat-free — permanently.

**Introducing:**

## **The Mat-Free Dog System**

*Stop Paying Dematting Fees — Starting With Your Next Appointment*

### **WHAT YOU GET INSIDE THE SYSTEM:**

- ✓ The complete weekly brushing routine — by coat type — that stops mats from forming
- ✓ The professional bath protocol: before, during, and after every bath
- ✓ The printable Friction Zone Weekly Checklist — 5 minutes a week, prevents 90% of matting
- ✓ The Groomer's Product Guide: exact tools and sprays used in the salon
- ✓ Breed-by-breed maintenance schedule — never stretch appointments too long again
- ✓ BONUS: Expert groomer video filmed live at the salon — full professional brush-out walkthrough

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