

# FROM GROOMERS TO DOODLE OWNERS

...AN OPEN LETTER TO YOU

So what I want to do is address these issues, include these owners in the conversation that's happening in grooming salons all over the globe because as groomers we are frustrated! We are frustrated because so often we have to shave doodles due to matting, and those owners are frustrated because they don't know what they're doing wrong and like their dogs fluffy, and in turn get upset with the groomers, who are upset with the breeders for not giving out proper information to the owners when they take home a puppy! This can really hurt the rapport between a groomer and their clients, something we'd all like to avoid.

The BIG untruth I'd like to address about these dogs is that they are low maintenance. This could not be further from the truth. If you are getting a doodle, you need to expect and prepare for daily home maintenance. This includes brushing AND combing, everyday. (With a slicker brush and metal greyhound comb). The end result should be the ability to get the comb from the root to tip of the hair. You always want to start with the slicker brush, as this will help break up any knots, and finish with the comb. Now, because doodles are not purebred (meaning they do not breed true, which is the characteristic of being able to predict and expect how the puppies will turn out) you may end up with a doodle that has a very thin and easily manageable coat, but you should always go in expecting the alternative. With all that being said, and this may seem counterintuitive, but what this routine should NOT include is baths at home. Without the proper tools, baths at home will only cause and expedite matting. Long coats need to be blow dried completely, and if they are towel dried and left to air dry and not brushed out, they will



mat up. I will attach some pictures to show some examples of matting, because when you don't use a comb and go all the way from the root to the tip, the top coat may seem mat-free while the root of the coat is completely matted.

In addition to this point, if you want your doodle to have that well-known long and fluffy coat, they should be at the groomer every 4-6 weeks. This is in addition to the daily home maintenance. Bringing them to the groomer will ensure that they are clean and thoroughly brushed/combed. You can get them full haircuts or just trim ups – the possibilities are many if the coat is well-maintained. The cost of grooming a doodle is not small. That's the plain and simple truth of it. Doodle baths/grooms can range anywhere from \$50 to upwards of \$200. There are many things that are factored into this price.

The type of coat the dog has, the condition of the coat, his/her behavior during grooming, and the time spent on the service. Many groomers have a base price for the breed, but this price will increase based on all of these factors.

The last thing I want to address is when breeders say that doodles should not/do not need to be groomed before they are a year old. When this happens, their first groom is almost always a shavedown, right to the skin. **Introducing grooming at an early age is imperative!** Most groomers will have a puppy special of some sort, which is offered as

early as 8 weeks. This will typically include nail clipping, ear cleaning, a bath, and a trim around their face, paws, and potty areas. If you don't want your puppy to have a full haircut, you don't have to! But you will still need to bring them in every 4-6 weeks both to get them acclimated to the grooming process and to keep them in the best shape possible. Their coat changes around six months of age and transitions from light, fluffy puppy hair to their adult coats. Their adult coats can have a variety of thicknesses and textures, but this transition can often lead to matting which is another reason to establish a regular home grooming routine and to be in to see your groomer every 4-6 weeks.



Attached you will see a variety of pictures, volunteered from my peers around the country, demonstrating different types of matting. Many of them don't look matted in the before pictures, but as you can see, their coats come off in complete sheets.

It is DIRE to add that when dogs are in this shape it is EXTREMELY painful for them. Quite often underneath the matting we find bruising, hematomas, skin infections, etc. There is no option other than shaving to the skin in those cases. Please note that this is fully avoidable with proper and regular maintenance!

\*\*\*\*\*Please note! I am in no way saying that you must or should keep your dogs in longer lengths. If your dog is active or you prefer them short for easy maintenance, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that! I am just trying to avoid any animal from becoming so matted that they face severe skin problems and injuries. And trying to prevent heartbroken or angry owners from vilifying their groomer for shaving what can only be shaved.

Article credits go to Ragamuffin: A Full Service Grooming Salon



***A dog that is groomed every 3-6 months see the groomer's as a punishment , while a dog that is groomed every 4-6 weeks see it as a part of life !***