

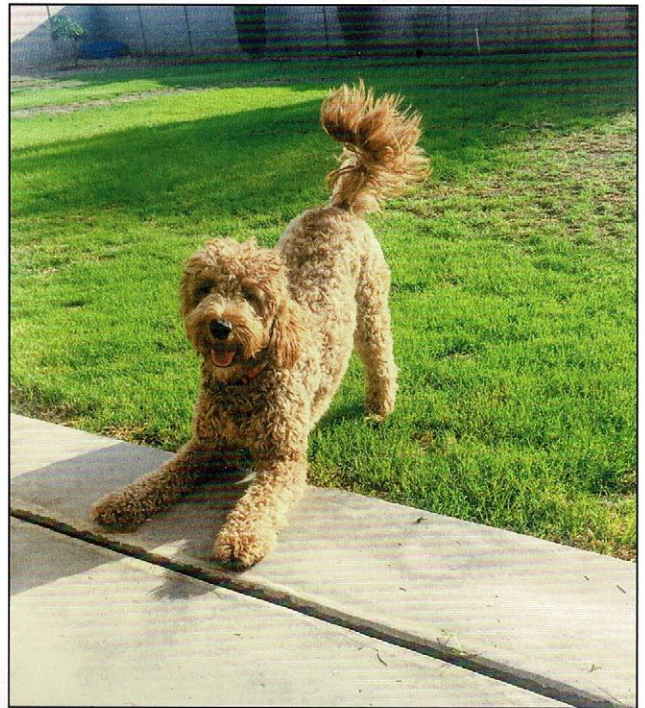
Do You Have A Doodle?

By: Nancy Secrist, Easdale: the best pet care

Log into any groomer's message board or sit in at a table in a Pet Expo and you are sure to hear about the groomer's pet peeve and yet steady client, the Doodle. Doodles come in many flavors as the first breed; the Poodle can be three sizes, toy, miniature and standard. Then mix in another popular breed and you have Sheepadoodles, Labradoodles, Bernedoodles, Goldendoodles, Aussiedoodles, and...well, you get the idea. There are exploitative breeders making over 100K per year by selling these puppies and sometimes the new owners, entranced by the cute balls of fluff that is a Doodle puppy, want to believe whatever they are told.

Worse, the lack of owner education causes frustration for the owners, potential pain and discomfort for the doodles. Groomers are frustrated from trying to correct the issues caused by miscommunication all around! Let's look at some of the exaggerated claims that are told to doodle shoppers: non-shed, don't need grooming - for a year, 18 months, or ever, hypoallergenic, free of genetic health problems, low maintenance and so on. What I would like to do is to address some of these issues.

Groomers are frequently presented with a two-year old Doodle with a pelt matted to the skin and have no alternative other than to shave to the skin to free the coat to start over. Owners are upset because they want the long coat but don't know how to achieve and maintain it. The dog that is matted isn't happy either! The BIG lie is "low maintenance!" The prospective doodle owner should expect and prepare for daily home maintenance. This includes brushing AND combing – everyday - with a slicker brush and metal



greyhound comb. The comb needs to pass from the skin to tip of the hair without resistance. Start with the slicker brush and finish with the comb to check for anything the brush missed.

"But we give him a bath every week!" Tell your groomer this and watch them try to diplomatically explain why that is the worst thing to do. Without the proper tools, baths at home will only cause matting and make it worse. Doodles need to be blow dried completely, and if they are towel dried and then left to air dry without thorough brushing out, they form mats. These mats are at the level of the skin and may not look bad on the surface of the coat. Mats left for months can cause and also conceal skin sores and infections. The coat care becomes a matter of health maintenance, not just looks!

We groomers generally see three types of doodle coats. The first is a wiry coat that is like winning the genetics lottery - this one really is easy to maintain and never really grows long or fluffy or gets matted. The second is a dense coat with some stiffer texture that grows long and often curly. With bathing and trimming every eight weeks, these coats are very attractive. The third coat is soft, a bit like cotton candy and just as hard to get a comb through it. While it feels nice and plushy, it will mat within six weeks of being shaved to the skin. Grooming every six to seven weeks with a bath halfway between grooming appointments will maintain these coats but they really need this attention!

We as groomers enjoy creating a beautiful trim on a well-maintained coat to make a happy dog and satisfied owner. When you know what it will take to prepare your Doodle and its coat for that stunning beautiful coat you always envisioned!

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