



HOW TO DEAL WITH SIMPLE MATTS

Even with daily grooming using a brush or comb, matts can still develop - and some cats (especially with health issues) are especially prone to matts despite regular grooming.

The best way to keep on top of matts is to use a combination of:

1. using a particular comb that we recommend (details below)
2. using fingers and thumbs to gently pull the matts apart

At least once a day, cuddle your cat (if it is receptive), and stroke it - all over, head, top and sides – **with just your hands** - so that it becomes relaxed. Perhaps even give it a little treat. Next, take the comb and gently comb through the cat's fur. As soon as you feel some resistance, **immediately stop** combing. Do **not** force the comb through the fur as this will hurt your cat. (You do not want it to associate combing with pain).

Remove the comb from the fur and at the place of removal, use the index finger and thumb of **BOTH HANDS AT THE SAME TIME** to gently pull the matt apart (so you're using 2 thumbs and 2 fingers). Keep changing the direction of pulling, and pull apart from different directions. You'll soon get used to doing this almost automatically. Sometimes little pieces of fur will come off in your hands. This is normal. Then re-introduce the comb and resume combing through the fur to check for the presence of matts. When you again encounter resistance, as previously, **immediately stop** combing, and start using your fingers and thumbs again. (The comb is only used after the "finger and thumb" work to gently check for the presence of further matts - rather than to "comb out" the matts).

It's the kind of thing you can do easily whilst, for instance, watching TV, and it's pleasurable, therapeutic and relaxing for the owner as well as the cat!

It is easy to do the above with many cats. However, some cats, (whilst they are **not** stressed), will simply not stay motionless long enough to allow you to do the above – and since you need two free



hands to pull the matts apart, **you will need the help of a second person to hold the cat steady.** And the help of this second person is very often the key to success.

We've tried this ourselves with many cats and not only does this not bother most cats, but many really seem to enjoy the process and the attention, and often purr away whilst we're doing it. We get the feeling that many cats almost understand that this process is good for them.

Whilst a cat is free of matts, it's then very easy to comb through the fur (whereas trying to comb through fur that contains matts is painful for the cat and non-productive for the owner).

The above process of using fingers and thumbs may sound simplistic - but it is incredibly effective if done on a regular basis and will stop the formation of matts in the early stage - before they get to the point where the only solution is to remove by clipping.

We personally use a particular design of comb to groom cats - with alternating teeth set a particular distance apart, and it does a brilliant job. It's very efficient at removing excess fur and matts – especially the top and side of a cat's back towards the tail – an area that some cats sometimes struggle to groom properly.

The comb that we recommend is the “Ancol Cat Moulting Comb”. If you type this phrase into google you will find that it is available at a number of online shops and is usually priced at around £3 to £4.

Happy grooming!



(Please note that where a cat has excessive and extensive matting all over its body, the matts will need to be removed professionally by a vet or experienced groomer using vet-standard clippers. But it's clearly better not to allow the situation to develop to that point).