

FREE BONUS GUIDE

The Mat-Free Doodle Guide

A soft, tangle-free coat, and a dog who enjoys grooming.

Bonus guide for The Complete Bernedoodle Guide

Before We Begin

That soft, fluffy Doodle coat is one of the things people love most about the breed. It's also the thing that catches many owners out. Doodle coats can tangle quickly, and small tangles turn into tight mats close to the skin. Mats are uncomfortable, can hide skin problems, and often mean a full shave-down at the groomer.

The good news: with the right tools, the right technique and a few minutes a few times a week, you can keep your Doodle's coat soft and mat-free.

This guide shows you how, step by step.



Understanding the Doodle Coat

Doodle coats vary a lot, even within one litter:

- **Straight or flat coats** are more like a Bernese Mountain Dog's. They shed more and tangle less.
- **Wavy (fleece) coats** are a mix. They shed less but tangle more easily.
- **Curly (wool) coats** are more like a Poodle's. They shed least, but tangle and mat most easily.

Why Doodle coats mat

Loose hair doesn't always fall out. Instead, it gets caught in the surrounding coat. Add friction (from collars, harnesses, lying down, scratching) and moisture (rain, swimming, baths), and those loose hairs twist into tangles, then mats.



Understanding the Doodle Coat

The mat hotspots

Check these areas most:

- behind the ears
- under the collar and harness
- armpits
- the chest
- the inside of the back legs
- the tail and bottom
- the paws and between the pads



The Grooming Toolkit

- **A slicker brush:** fine wire bristles for working through the coat.
- **A metal comb** with wide and narrow teeth: your mat detector.
- **A detangling spray** made for dogs.
- **Blunt-ended scissors** for trimming around the eyes and paws (with great care).
- **Nail clippers or a grinder.**
- **A towel and a dryer** (cool or warm setting).
- **A non-slip mat** for grooming.
- **A lick mat** to keep your Doodle busy.
- **Treats:** plenty of them.



The Line Brushing Method

Many owners brush only the top of the coat. It looks lovely, but underneath, mats are forming. Line brushing gets all the way down to the skin.

Step 1: Part the Coat

Start at the bottom of one leg. With one hand, hold the coat up so you can see a line of skin.

Step 2: Brush Down From the Line

Use the slicker brush to brush the hair below the line, down and out, in small strokes. Brush gently; slickers can scratch skin if you press hard.

Step 3: Move the Line Up

Let a little more hair down, and brush again. Work your way up the leg, a line at a time.

Step 4: Comb Check

When you've finished a section, run the metal comb through it, right down to the skin. If the comb snags, brush that spot again.

Step 5: Section by Section

Work around the body: legs, chest, sides, back, neck, ears, tail. Don't try to do the whole dog at once.

The Line Brushing Method

How often?

- **Curly and wavy coats:** 3–5 times a week, plus a full line brush once a week.
- **Straight coats:** 2–3 times a week.
- **During coat change** (often around 6–12 months, when the puppy coat changes to the adult coat): daily. This is when many Doodles mat badly.



Making Grooming Enjoyable

Step 1: Brush Meets Treat

Show the brush, give a treat. Put it away. Ten times.

Step 2: One Stroke, One Treat

Brush once, treat. Build up slowly.

Step 3: Lick Mat Station

Stick a lick mat with wet food to the wall or floor. Brush while your Doodle licks.

Step 4: Short Sessions

Five to ten minutes. Stop before your Doodle gets fed up.

Step 5: Easy Areas First

Start with the back and sides. Work up to legs, tail, ears and paws over time.



Dealing With Tangles & Mats

Small tangles

1. Spray with detangling spray.
2. Hold the hair at the base, close to the skin, so you're not pulling.
3. Gently work the tangle apart with your fingers.
4. Use the end of the comb or slicker to tease it out a little at a time.

Big or tight mats

- Don't try to pull them out. It hurts.
- **Never cut mats out with scissors close to the skin.** It's very easy to cut the skin by accident.
- Ask your groomer to clip them out safely.



Dealing With Tangles & Mats

When a shave-down is kindest

If your Doodle is badly matted, a short clip by a professional groomer is often the kindest option. Brushing out lots of tight mats is painful. The coat will grow back, and you can start fresh with a better routine.



Bathing & Drying

Step 1: Brush First

Always brush out tangles before a bath. Water tightens tangles into mats.

Step 2: Wash

Use lukewarm water and a dog shampoo. Work it down to the skin. Rinse very thoroughly.

Step 3: Condition

A dog conditioner can help with curly coats.

Step 4: Towel Dry

Squeeze, don't rub. Rubbing causes tangles.

Step 5: Dry Completely

Use a dryer on a cool or warm setting, brushing as you dry. A damp coat close to the skin can lead to skin problems and mats.



After swimming or rain

Rinse off mud, salt or pond water, then dry and brush. Wet Doodle coats tangle fast.



Ears, Eyes, Paws & Nails

Ears

Doodle ears are floppy and often hairy inside, which can trap moisture.

- Check weekly for redness, smell or dark wax.
- Dry ears after swimming and baths.
- Ask your vet or groomer whether hair in your Doodle's ear canal should be removed. Don't pluck it yourself unless they advise it.
- See your vet if your Doodle shakes their head or scratches their ears.

Eyes

Keep the hair around the eyes trimmed (by your groomer, or very carefully with blunt-ended scissors) so your Doodle can see.

Paws

Trim fur between the pads, and check for grass seeds after walks.

Nails

Trim every 2–4 weeks.

The Groomer

Most Doodles need a professional groom every 6–8 weeks.

- **Start young:** book a puppy introduction visit.
- **Be clear:** tell your groomer what length you'd like. Shorter coats are easier to maintain.
- **Keep up at home:** regular brushing between visits means less time on the table and fewer mats to remove.



Your Weekly Grooming Plan

- **Mon:** quick brush (10 minutes).
- **Wed:** quick brush and ear check.
- **Fri:** quick brush.
- **Sun:** full line brush, comb check, nails and paws.



10 Popular Questions Answered

1. How often should I brush my Doodle? Several times a week for most coats, daily during coat change.

2. Why is my Doodle matting so much? Not enough line brushing, or the coat change.

3. Can I cut mats out? Not with scissors near the skin. Ask your groomer.

4. Should I shave my Doodle? A shorter clip is often fine for Doodle coats, and kinder if they're matted.

5. How often should my Doodle see a groomer? Every 6–8 weeks for most.



10 Popular Questions Answered

6. Why does my Doodle hate being brushed? It may have hurt before. Go back to One Stroke, One Treat.

7. What's the best brush? A slicker brush and a metal comb.

8. Should I bath my Doodle often? Only when needed, and always brush first.

9. Why does my Doodle get ear infections? Floppy, hairy ears trap moisture. Check weekly.

10. Is my Doodle hypoallergenic? No dog is truly hypoallergenic.



CHECKLIST

Your Quick Checklist

- ☐ Slicker brush and metal comb.
- ☐ Line brushing once a week.
- ☐ Quick brushes several times a week.
- ☐ Comb check for hidden mats.
- ☐ Ears checked weekly.
- ☐ Groomer every 6–8 weeks.
- ☐ Brush before every bath.



A Final Word



A mat-free Doodle is a comfortable Doodle. With a few minutes a few times a week, you'll keep that famous coat soft, healthy and huggable.

