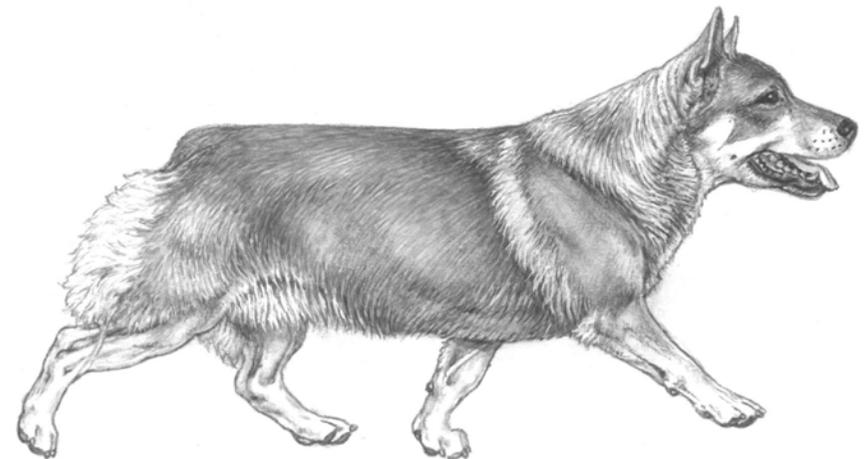


*The Swedish Vallhund
(Västgötaskets)
A Legacy of the Vikings*

The Judge's Guide



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Photographic Breed Type



Stub Tail



Incorrect Breed Type
Long Coat with light eyes

REFERENCES

Special Klubben for Västgötaspets – Sweden

Breed Standards – UK, FCI, AKC and ANKC

Royal N.S.W. Canine Council Limited
Photographic Breed Standard

The Swedish Vallhund (Västgötaspets):
A legacy of the Vikings Leonie Darling – 2005

The Swedish Vallhund
Nicky Gascoigne - 1989

Structure and Terminology
Gilbert and Brown

Canine Terminology
Dr Harry Spira

Illustrations
Margaret Davidson and Robert Cole
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HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS

The Swedish Vallhund is a very old Swedish Spitz, as a type has been known since the Viking era. The breed is original and Wolfish in all but size.

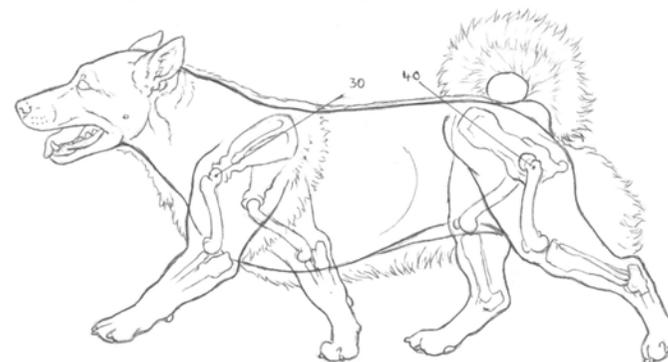
The breed was nearly extinct in 1942 when two Swedish enthusiasts, Count Bjorn Von Rosen and Karl Gustav Zettersten made a concerted effort to revive the breed. They found just a few, of acceptable breed type which were the foundation of the breed you see today. The breed was recognised by the Swedish Kennel Club in 1943 and its original name for the native Swedish breed was the “Swedish Shepherd Dog”. It was later changed to “Västgötaspets” after the province, where it was found Västergötland –meaning a small Spitz from the West Goths.

The Swedish Vallhund (Västgötaspets) has been utilised as an all purpose farm dog. They have herded the cattle, guarded the hens from foxes, controlled vermin, functioned as a baby sitter and announced the arrival of strangers or anything out of the ordinary. Swedish Vallhund (Västgötaspets) is versatile and suitable for many activities such as; tracking, search and rescue, obedience, agility, flyball, in ground hunting and enjoy lure coursing and herding.

Characteristics

Appearance and expression denote a watchful, alert, energetic dog

A sound healthy breed that is robust and resilient with longevity. Balance, outline, intelligence, temperament and movement are of overriding importance. This breed matures slowly and individual dogs may not reach their prime until as late as 4 years of age or older.

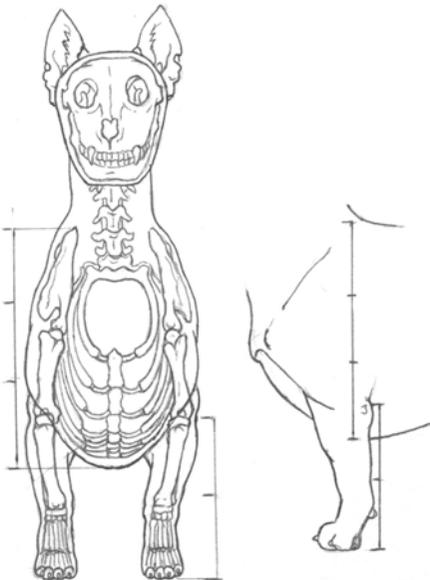


Ideal Gait depicting good reach and drive and correct foot fall

TYPE / GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Swedish Vallhund (SV) is a very old Spitz-type breed known since the time of the Vikings. For centuries the SV has been kept as a farm dog and used for herding cattle. The SV is a small, powerful, fearless, sturdily built Spitz herding dog. The correct relationship of height to length of body is 2:3. The SV has a wedge-shaped head, prick ears, and a close-fitting hard coat of medium length and sable coloring. The double coat and the characteristic "harness markings" are essential features of this breed. Tail may be natural (long, stub, or bob) or docked. The appearance of the Swedish Vallhund conveys intelligence, alertness and energy. Balance, outline, temperament and movement are of overriding importance. The SV is a thoroughly sound animal, versatile in its desire to do traditional herding or with proper training compete in companion events such as obedience, tracking and agility, and/or serve as a family companion.

The breed should never be so heavy as to appear clumsy nor so light as to appear racy.



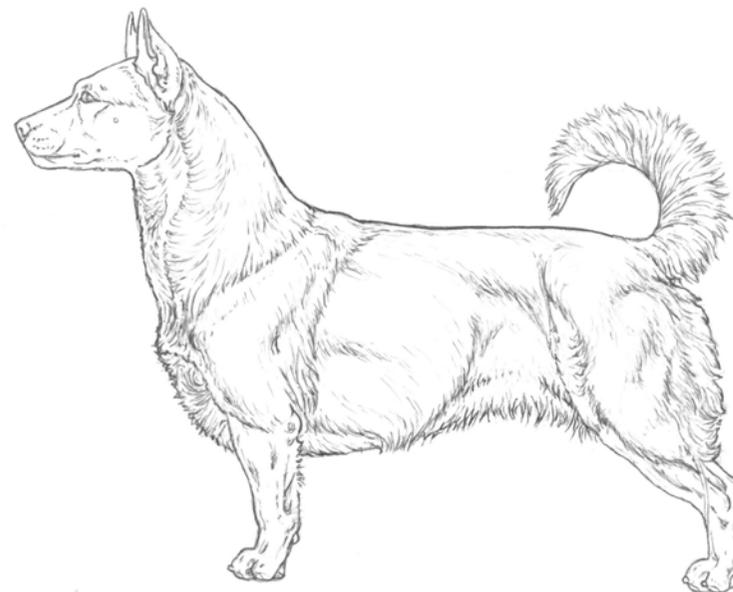
Ideal Front Proportions

BALANCE, TEMPERAMENT

Balance - to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye, and move correctly a dog must be balanced, that is angulation must be compatible front and rear. If a dog is not balanced then he will not be able to move without showing a number of faults.

Temperament- The breed is watchful, energetic, fearless, alert, intelligent, friendly, eager to please, active, and steady, making a good herding and companion dog. Sound temperament, neither vicious or shy.

Any display of shyness, fear or aggression should be penalised.



Good Type

Tails

Born with or a natural bob tail

Tails-- Tails may be long, stub, or bob. May be shown natural or docked.

Tail Carriage - all types of carriage are equally acceptable.

Tail Set - set on position to blend with slightly sloping



Tailless



Stub



Sickle



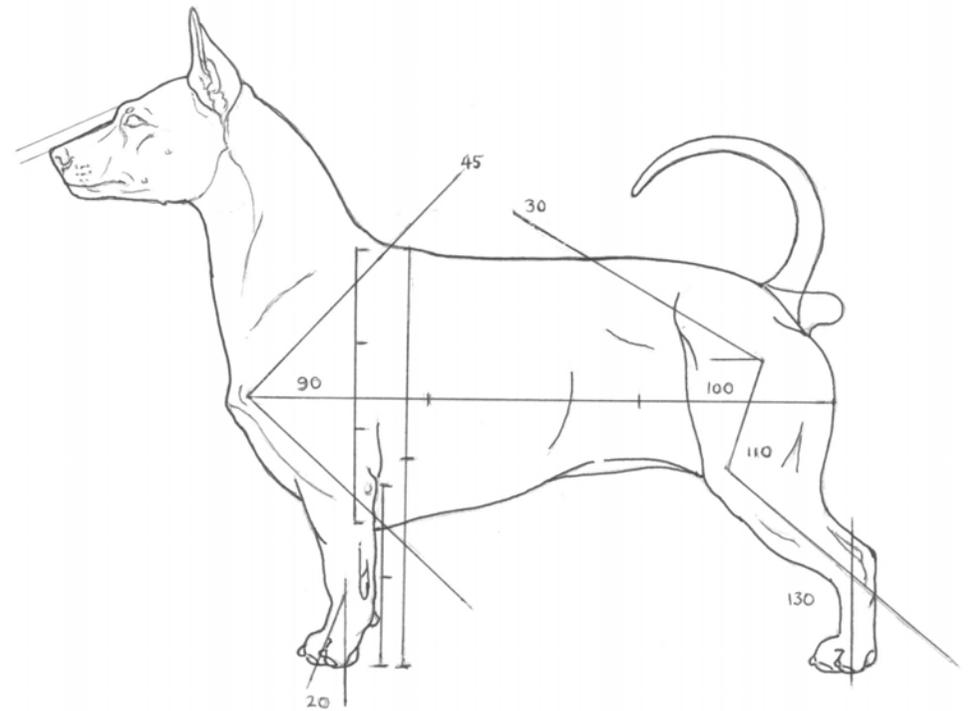
Spitz

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

Height-- Height at the withers for dogs ranges from 12.5 - 13.5 inches and bitches 11.5 - 12.5 inches. Minor variations may be seen; however, more important is the proportion.

Proportion--The relationship of height to length of body, as measured from the prosternum to the rearmost portion of the buttocks, should be 2:3.

Substance-- Strong, well boned, well developed, neither refined nor coarse, and a solidly built, muscular body.



Ideal Length to
Height Proportions
and Angulation

HEAD

Rather long and clean. Viewed from above, the head forms an even wedge from skull to tip of nose and is well filled-in under the eyes. **Skull**-- Broad and almost flat. **Stop**-- Well defined. **Muzzle**-- Viewed from the side, the muzzle should look rather square, slightly shorter than the skull. **Planes**-- The top lines of the muzzle and skull are parallel to each other. **Nose**-- In profile, the nose is on the same line as the muzzle and does not extend beyond the forepart of the muzzle. **Pigmentation**-- Black. **Lips**-- Black and tight with no noticeable flews. The head is the hallmark of all breeds; a correct head, sets and establishes the breed's type. Heads may vary in quality, but the characteristic shape for that breed must be present. A Swedish Vallhund should display parallel planes, in other words, when viewed from the side the skull and muzzle, should lay on the same planes.

A head that is lacking in some facial markings at least around the eyes, seems to lose that Spitz look and is incorrect.

Faults- lack of or shallow sloping stop, prominent or shark nose, Roman nose, weak under jaw, loose jowls, fleshy cheeks, poorly filled muzzle, short skull and lack of masking.

Expression - should be watchful, alert and eager. Gaze should be keen but friendly.

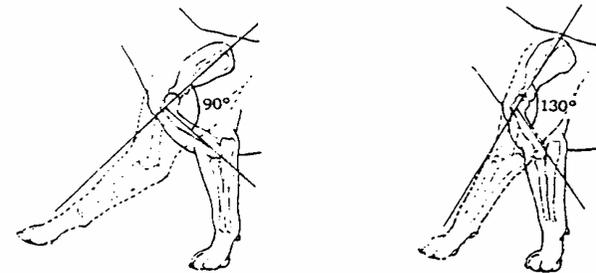
Ideal head proportions depicting parallel planes and blunt wedge



MOVEMENT

Gait - Sound with strong reach and drive. The Swedish Vallhund is a herding dog requiring agility and endurance. Viewed from the front, the legs do not move in exact parallel planes, but incline slightly inward to compensate for shortness of leg and width of chest. The forelegs should reach forward in a free stride without too much lift. Hind legs should drive well under the body and move on a line with the forelegs, with hocks turning neither in nor out. Feet should travel parallel to the line of motion with no tendency to swing out, cross over or interfere with each other. Short, choppy movement and overly close or wide movement is faulty.

Movement is a co-operation between forequarters and hind. Good angulation facilitates a long stride. Poor angulation shortens stride because the bones meeting at the shoulder joint and hip are steeply set, forming joints with wide angles. Balance facilitates good foot timing. Bones need to be in balance to work in unison. For example, the length of shoulder should correspond with the length of the pelvis, upper arm length with the length of upper thigh, forearm length with the length of the second thigh and the length of front pastern to



Shoulder placement and angulation in relation to length of stride

the length of rear pastern.

A Question of Movement

Due to the slight crook in the fore leg, the SV will have the front legs slant in as much as possible but will not single track, with the rear legs travelling parallel to one another.

Shorter legged breeds do not have a footfall, where the reg leg reaches as far forward as the front paw prints. When the gait is out of rhythm, the hind legs may hop or skip to get into step or break into a gallop. Therefore, shorter legged breeds are best observed at different speeds to determine the balance of front to rear angulations.

There are many possible deviations from normal gait caused either by poor conformation or conditioning. Any deviation from the straight-line column of bones during the entire swing of the limb is a fault. Paddling is incorrect and energy wasting movement of the forequarters in which the pasterns and feet perform circular, exaggerated motion, turning or flicking outwards at the end of each step. When toeing-in the forefeet are rotated towards each other and the center line instead of being in direct continuation with the line of the pastern. Dog's who toe in front usually have poor muscle attachment/ or loose ligaments. Toeing-out involves the opposite rotation of the forefeet. Weaving, also called crossing over, dishing, plaiting, knitting and purling, occurs when, in front or hind quarter motion, the free foot at first swings around the support foot and then forward and inward, eventually crossing the latter's path before being set down on the ground . A dog platting or crossing in front indicates a lack of drive from the rear as the dog is actually pulling itself along using its shoulders.

Frequently a clever handler can conceal cow hocks or bow hocks by deft manipulation when stacking a dog but the fault will be demonstrated on the move.

Swedish Vallhund Facial Masking

Jämthund



Swedish Vallhund



Note how alike the mask markings are between the two breeds, Count Von Rosen called for these markings not to be lost and remarked they should be the same as the Jämthund

EYES

Eyes-- Medium size, oval in shape and dark brown with black eye rims.

The soft melting expression, typical of this breed is an important breed characteristic that we as breeders should strive to maintain. The eye rim colour and nose should be dark in pigmentation. Dark rims absorb sunlight and do not reflect the sun's rays into the eyes.

Faults - protruding, sunken, round, small, incorrect colour, oblique eye set.



Correct oval eye



obliquely set eye



Round Eye, incorrect



Almond eye, incorrect

The eye should be oval shaped with a tight fitting rim to protect from debris.

HINDQUARTERS

The Croup- Broad and slightly sloping.

Angulation-- To balance the front. Well angulated at stifle and hock.

Legs-- Well boned. Upper and lower thighs are strongly muscled. Lower thigh is slightly longer than the distance from hock to ground.

Stifles-- Well bent.

Hocks (*Metatarsal bones*)-- Perpendicular to the ground and viewed from the rear, parallel.

Feet, toes and pads-- Same as forefeet.

Faults - croup flat or too steep, over angulation, cow hocks, open hocks, slipping or double jointed hocks, thin or weak thighs, and fine bone.

Rear Pasterns



Normal



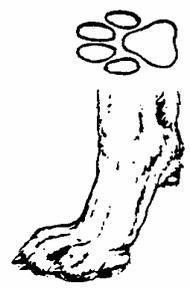
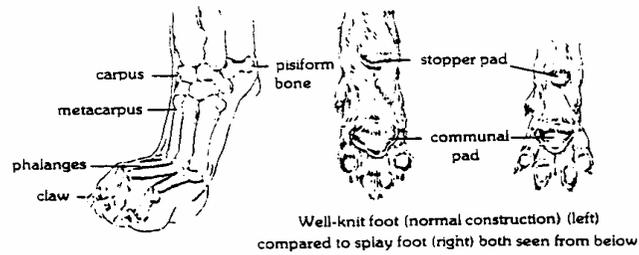
Too Straight



Too Long



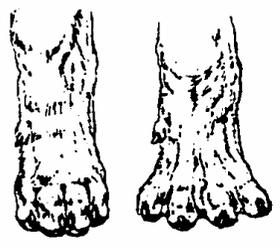
Sickle



Oval, spoon-shaped foot



Round, cat, circular or compact foot



Well-knit foot (left) compared to splay foot (right): front view



Flat foot, down in pasterns



Hare foot

EARS

Ears-- Medium size, pointed, prick. Set at the outer edge of the skull above a line drawn from the corner of the eye. Ear leather should be firm from base to tip, smooth-haired and mobile. The dog should make good use of them.

Faults - ears set too low, ears too large, hanging or drop ears, soft ears.



Ideal Ear Set



Too Upright



Corgi Pembroke type



Corgi Cardigan Type



Dropped, incorrect

The eyes and ears work together as a sensory team

TEETH

Teeth-- Strong, well developed, with full dentition in a scissors bite. Any deviation is a serious fault.

Faults - undershot or overshot. Missing pre molars and Molars.

The scissor bite is indicative of a correct jaw assembly.



Scissor Bite



Under Bite



Level Bite



Over Bite

LEGS

Legs-- Well boned

Front legs very slightly bent in the forearm to allow for the drop of the chest, but the lower part and feet pointing straight ahead. It should be noted that due to the curve of forearm, the wrists will move somewhat closer than the elbows, allowing the centre of gravity to be more efficient. The short legs enable the Swedish Vallhund (Västgötaspets) to duck kicks from stock.

The rear assembly should be, straight normal.

Faults - lack of curve in foreleg, too much curve in fore leg, fine bone, round bone.

PASTERNS, FEET

Pasterns-- Slightly sloping, elastic.

Dewclaws-- May be removed.

Feet-- Medium sized, short, oval, pointing straight forward.

Toes-- Tightly knit and well knuckled.

Pads-- Thick and strong.

When the dog is standing still the most correct position is to have the paws directly under the centre of the shoulder blade.

Faults - pasterns too upright, splayed feet, poorly cushioned pads



Oval, correct

Pastern, correct

Cat, incorrect

Pastern, weak

COAT, COLOUR

Coat - Medium length hair, harsh; topcoat close and tight. Undercoat is soft and dense. Hair is short on the head and the foreparts of the legs and slightly longer on neck, chest and back parts of the hind legs. Dogs are to be shown in an untrimmed, natural state.

Faults include - wooly, curly, or open coats. Fluffy coats (longer hair on body and furnishings, with ear fringes) are a serious fault.

Color - A sable pattern seen in colors of grey through red and combinations of these colors in various shades. All are equally acceptable. Lighter shades of these colors are desirable on the chest, belly, buttocks, lower legs, feet and hocks, with darker hairs on back, neck, and sides of the body. Lighter harness markings are essential. Although a dark muzzle is acceptable, a well-defined mask with lighter hair around eyes, on muzzle and under the throat, giving a distinct contrast to the head color is highly desirable. White is permitted as a narrow blaze, neck spot, slight necklace, and white markings on the legs, and chest. White in excess of one third of the dog's total color is a very serious fault. Any color other than described above is a very serious fault.

Colour - Whites / Dilutes – blue, Apricot, and Liver, extreme dilutes and mismarks being more than 30% white. Dilutes will lack the characteristically dark guard hairs with most Blues and Livers having light tipped guard hairs and slate or liver pigmentation. Whites will have black eyes and pigmentation.

Faults - absence of harness markings and facial mask, white over the eyes, body patching, more than 30% white and all colour dilutes.



NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

Neck-- Long, strongly muscled with good reach

Topline-- Level when standing or moving

Chest-- Good depth. The ribcage is long with fairly well sprung ribs. Viewed from the front, the chest should be oval; from the side, elliptical. In a mature dog it should reach down two-fifths of the length of the forelegs and, when viewed from the side, the lowest point of the chest is immediately behind the back part of the foreleg. The prosternum is visible and not excessively pronounced.

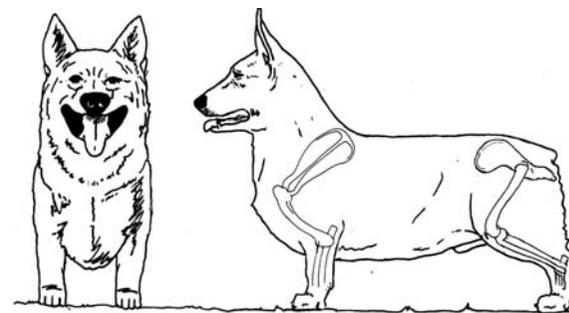
Underline-- Slightly tucked up.

Back-- Well muscled.

Loin-- Short and strong.

Harness markings - should be clearly defined.

Faults – flat or barrel ribs, arched back, too prominent or no visible sternum, too steep or flat croup, too much tuck up, no harness markings



Too Low to
Ground but
good
angulation

A firm muscular body is important to the athlete and is reflected in the conditioning. This contributes to overall fitness and agility and is a prerequisite for a working dog.

FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders-- Strongly-muscled.

Shoulder blades-- Long and well laid back.

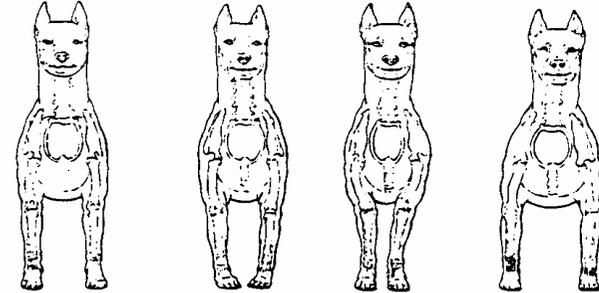
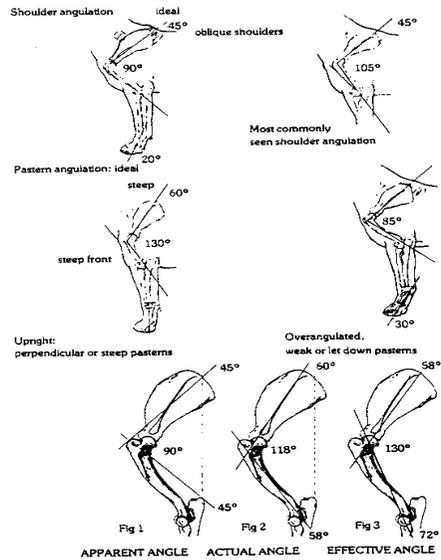
Upper arms-- Slightly shorter than the shoulder blades, set at an approximate 90 degree angle, close fitting to ribs, but still very mobile. A line perpendicular to the ground can be drawn from the tip of the shoulder blade through the elbow to the ground.

Elbows-- Move parallel to the body, turning neither in nor out.

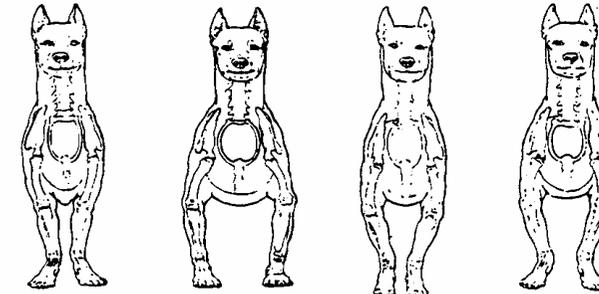
Forearms-- When viewed from the front, slightly curved to give free action against the lower part of the chest; the pasterns and feet are parallel. Viewed from the side the forearms are straight. The height from ground to elbow is almost half the height from ground to withers.

The crook in the front legs enables the dog to let the legs converge and approach a single track.

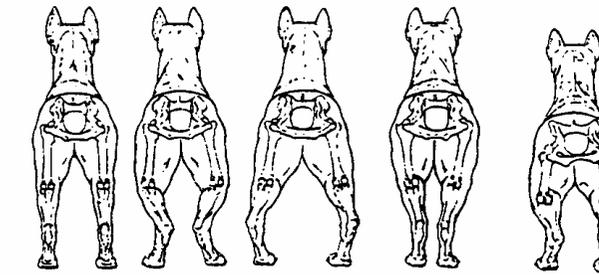
Faults - overly short upper arm, out at elbows, tight elbows, steep or upright shoulders and or upper arm.



Straight, gun-barrel front Pigeon-toed front Narrow front Wide front



East-West feet: French front Bandy, bowed or out in elbows front Horseshoe front Chippendale, fiddle or cabriole front



straight normal cow hocks Bandy, wide narrow over-angulated: weak