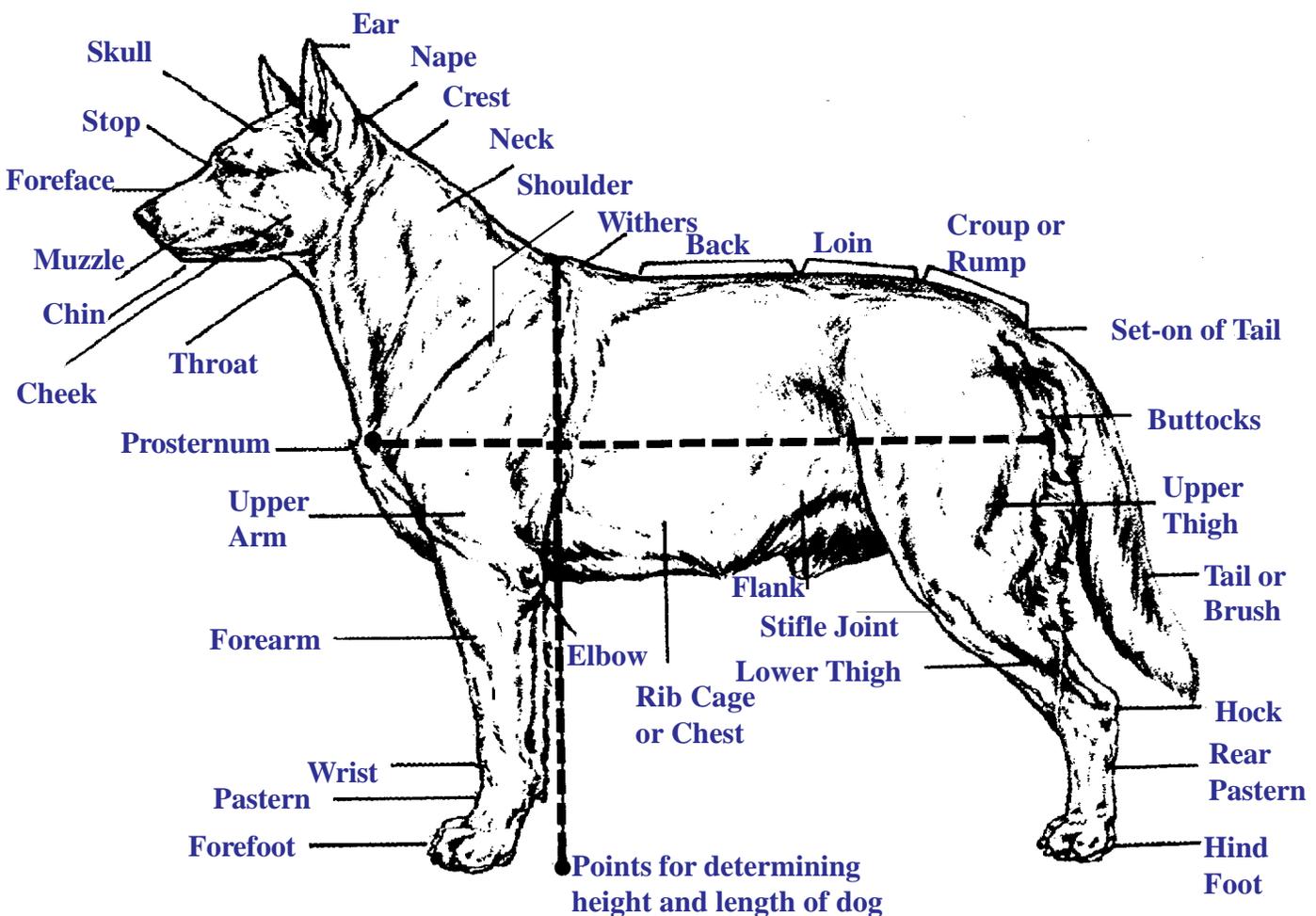


### SAY IT RIGHT (Or let everyone know you're a novice!)

Every profession has its own specialized language. Call it jargon, if you will! The dog game is no exception. Old-time breeders of livestock, particularly horses, developed a language that served their needs for clarity and precision in defining the faults and virtues of their stock. The same terms with only minor changes carry over to the description of canine anatomy.

In addition, livestock breeders used certain terms to have special meanings that they each understood. A sire, of course, is the father of the dog, while the dam is the mother. The offspring of the male are his "get" while the offspring of the female are her "produce". But, both males and females can be notable "producers" of champions. The parentage of a dog is described as "out of the dam" and "by" the sire. Tell someone that your dog was a result of a mating "by" that well-known bitch and you will hear muffled chuckles in the background.

Even the so-called experts are prone to overlook the esoterica in the use of anatomical terms. Take the word "hock", for example. The hock is a joint on the hind limb located between the lower thigh and the rear pastern. Some breed standards, however, incorrectly use the term to mean the rear pastern, thus such phrases as "short in hock" or "long in hock", which are technically incorrect. To say that the hocks are "well let down" or "set low" is correct and implies short rear pasterns.

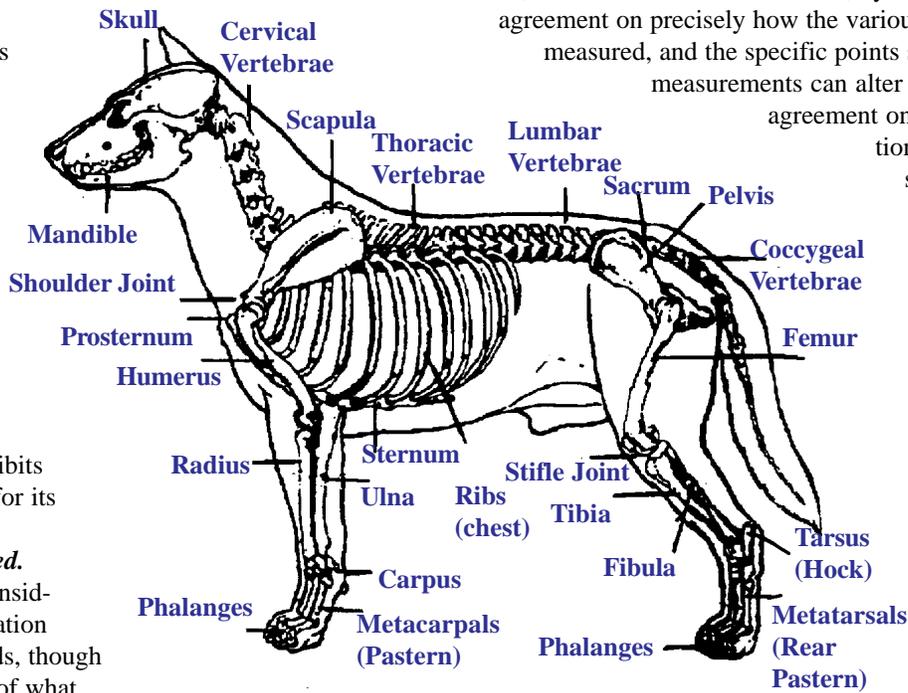


As time and space permit, we will insert some anatomical terms and the definitions that are most relevant to the dog hobbyist. We start this series with a diagram of a dog and point out the major features with their proper names and locations. The source for these diagrams is the book, *Canine Terminology*, by Harold R Spira. This book is generally considered a primary reference in the development of breed standards.

According to Spira<sup>1</sup>, angulation is probably one of the most frequently used (and often misused) terms among dog fanciers.

Angulation refers to the angles formed by bones meeting at various joints (articulations), especially at the shoulder, stifle, and hock; the pastern and pelvic regions may also be involved. In general the terms *forequarters angulation* and *hindquarters angulation* are used to describe the combined joint angles of these regions. A dog that exhibits the proper joint angles for its breed is said to be *well-angulated* or *well-turned*.

Variations in what is considered to be proper angulation occur between the breeds, though there is a commonality of what constitutes good angulation for most breeds if the individual dog is to move with ease and grace. If a dog's forequarters angulation generally matches his hindquarters angulation he will be said to be *in balance* even if both front and rear angles are less than the ideal for his breed.



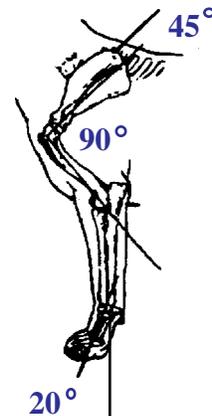
A dog that is in balance will usually move better and have greater stamina than a dog with greater angulation, front or rear, that is not balanced. There is, by no means, common agreement on precisely how the various joint angles should be measured, and the specific points selected for these measurements can alter the results. Nor is there agreement on what degree of angulation constitutes the ideal standard for the generic dog, that is, the dog that will move most fluidly, with speed and stamina.

In particular, the so-called shoulder layback angle measured along the spine of the scapula (shoulder blade) from the vertical is often considered ideal at 45 degrees (Spira<sup>1</sup>, Lyon<sup>2</sup>). This is hotly disputed by Elliott<sup>3</sup> who considers the 45 degree angle to be extreme and notes that such an angle

would bring the lower end of the scapula so far forward as to lose the support of the chest wall. Elliott prefers an angle more like 60 degrees as expressing the normal ideal for most breeds.

A common method for evaluating the slant of the bones in the forequarters is to take a line from the uppermost edge of the scapula to the frontmost prominence of the humerus (the point of shoulder), then take another line from there to the elbow. As a general rule, the distance between these points of reference should look or feel about equal, and if the front is balanced the elbow will be set approximately on a line dropped from the rearmost angle of the scapula. Another way to measure this angle is to feel the ridge of the scapula, and to determine the angle between this ridge and the slant of the humerus (measured from its upper center to its lowest end (not the elbow)). These latter measurements differ from the first procedure and will give the impression of less shoulder layback and a greater angle between shoulder and humerus, but the findings are more realistic as to the actual bone placement and joint angulation. The nominal ideal for this angle is 90 degrees, however, most breeds will be found to measure closer to 105 degrees, and terrier breeds in particular will probably measure at more than 130

degrees. The angle the pastern makes with the vertical should be about 20 degrees in most breeds, a greater slope indicating weak pasterns (down in pasterns).



**Forequarters  
(Thoracic Limb)**

<sup>1</sup> Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, Howell Book House, Inc., New York, 1982

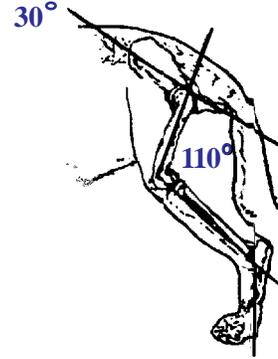
<sup>2</sup> Lyon, McDowell, *The Dog in Action*, Howell Book House, Inc., New York, 1985

<sup>3</sup> Elliot, Rachel Page, *The New Dogsteps*, Howell Book House, Inc., New York, 1983

## CANINE TERMINOLOGY - Angulation

*(Continued)*

Most standards suggest angles within the range of 90 to 110 degrees for the hindquarters angulation to bring it in line with the forequarters angulation. The rear angle (the stifle joint angle) is measured along the longitudinal axes of the femur (thigh bone) and the tibia/fibula (lower thigh bones). In practice, most stifle angles vary from 110 to 130 degrees with the Chow Chow as the major variant at 150 degrees<sup>1</sup>. A reference to hindquarter angulation sometimes also includes the angle of the pelvis from the horizontal (the pelvic slope). Length and slope of the pelvic assembly can be approximated by taking a line from the forward edge of the pelvis (ilium) to the buttock (ischium). Pelvic slope and outline of the croup are not one and the same. While the outline of the croup and set-on of the tail may be influenced by the slant of the pelvis, the outline may be more affected by the arch, dip or straightness of the lumbar section of the spinal column. The angle between the lower thigh and the rear pastern (the hock joint) is also significant. The rear pastern should drop vertically, however, if the hock angle is too great (straight in hock), the rear pastern will slope backwards, and if the hock angle is too small (sickle hocks), it causes the dog to “stand under itself”.



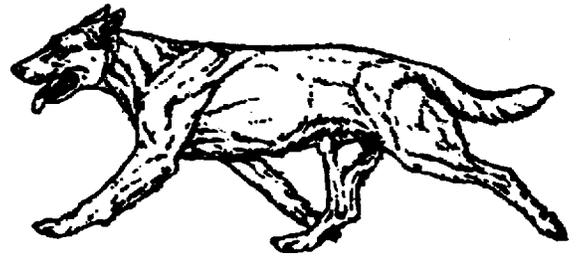
*Hindquarters  
(Pelvic Limb)*

## CANINE TERMINOLOGY - GAIT

3rd in a series - compiled by J. Seltzer

The term **gait** means the pattern of footsteps at various rates of speed, each pattern distinguished by a particular rhythm and footfall. The **walk**, **trot** and **gallop** are the most commonly recognized gaits, but the **amble**, **pace**, and **canter** are also normal ways in which many quadrupeds move. The principal gait in the show ring is the trot, and when a judge requests an exhibitor to "Gait your dog," he means the dog is to be led at a trot across the ring in a prescribed pattern.

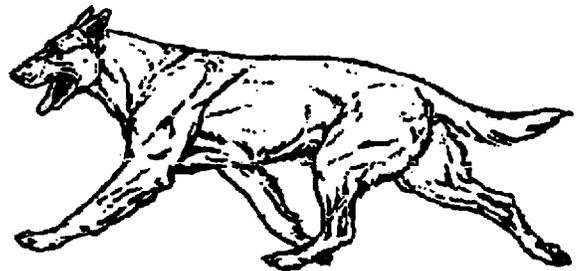
The **trot** is a rhythmic two-beat, diagonal gait in which the feet at diagonal ends of the body strike the ground together. Because only two feet are touching the ground at a time, the dog must rely on forward momentum for balance. At a normal trot, when the weight is transferred from one pair of legs to the other, there is an almost imperceptible period of suspension as the body is propelled forward. Some people call this spring.



**The Trot**

The **suspension**, or **flying trot**, is a fast gait in which the forward thrust contributes to a longer and more obvious period of flight during each half stride. Because of the long reach, the hind feet actually step beyond the imprint on the ground left by the front foot. But the suspension, combined with coordination and good foot timing, is important to avoid interference.

The **pace** is a two-beat lateral gait in which the legs on each side move back and forth exactly as a pair causing a rolling motion of the dog's body. Structure and proportion (as well as fatigue) influence a dog's inclination to pace. The gait is typical of a few large breeds, but is frowned upon in the show ring. Pacing is sometimes called side-wheeling.

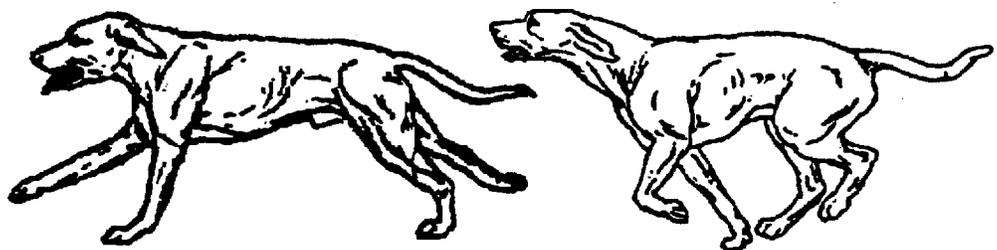


**The Pace**

The **amble** is also a type of gait in which the front and hind legs on the same side move in unison with each other as a pair. The amble is similar to the pace in all respects except that it is slower, and, while in the pace both feet on the same side hit the ground simultaneously, in the amble the rear foot of the pair is raised off the ground just a fraction sooner than the front foot, and the rear foot is also brought into ground contact a little earlier. The amble can also be described as a fast rocking walk which is often seen as a transition movement between the walk and faster gaits. As a transition movement it should not be confused with pacing.

The fastest movement of the dog, the **gallop**, is a four-time gait in which the dog is fully suspended or airborne once during each motion sequence. The actual movement pattern is: right front foot, left front foot, right rear foot, left rear foot. Suspension occurs immediately after taking off from the left rear foot. According to Stonehenge<sup>1</sup>: "Perfection of the gallop depends upon the power of extending the shoulders and

forelegs as far as possible, as well as bringing the hind legs rapidly forward to give the propulsive stroke. If the hindquarters are good and well-brought into action, while the shoulders do not thrust the forelegs well forward, the action is labored and slow. On the contrary, if the shoulders do their duty, but the hind legs are not brought well forward, or do not thrust the body onwards with sufficient force, the action may be elegant, but it is not powerful and rapid. For these purposes, therefore, we require good shoulders, good thighs, a good back, and, lastly, for lodging the lungs and heart, whose actions are essential for the maintenance of speed, a well-formed and capacious chest"



**The Gallop**

<sup>1</sup>"Stonehenge," *The Dogs of the British Islands*, Second Edition, London, 1872, p 180.

Elliott, Rachel Page, *The New Dogsteps*, Second Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1983.

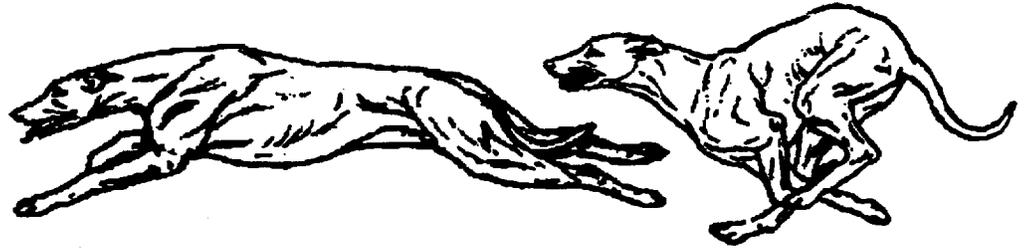
Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, First Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1982.

## CANINE TERMINOLOGY - GAIT

*Continued*

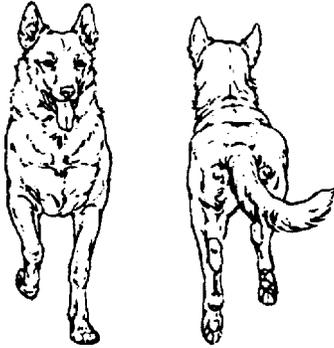
The gallop of the Greyhound and several of the other sight hounds differs from that of most other dogs in that it consists of a series of gigantic leaps, leaving the dog totally airborne for considerable periods of time, twice during the sequence of motion. This type of motion is referred to as the *double suspension gallop*.

The *canter* is a term not generally used to describe canine movement. It is basically a slow form of gallop, and not as tiring. It has three beats per stride, two legs move separately and two as a diagonal pair. Canter-ing is sometimes referred to as the *collected gallop* or the *lope*.



**The Double Suspension Gallop**

The *walk* seems so uncomplicated there is no need to analyze it other than to draw contrast with the faster gaits. It is the least tiring and the slowest of all gaits: a four-time gait with each limb moving one after the other. At the walk three legs support the body at all times, each foot lifting from the ground one at a time in a given sequence: right hind, right front, left hind, left front.



**Straight - Normal**

The **normal gait**, as viewed from the front, should be a free, effortless, easy gait without physical contact between individual members. The legs should be carried straight forward from the point of last pad contact to the next one, and the back legs should follow in the same angled plane. Watching the dog move away from you should also show a straight column of bones - from hip socket to pad. The rear leg will angle inward toward the center line as the speed increases, moving in the same plane as the front leg.

This inward angling, called **single tracking** is normal in canine gait. The tendency is for the legs to incline more and more under the body as the speed increases. Eventually, the paws, as seen by their imprints, come to travel in a single line.



**Single Tracking**

Correct single tracking requires that the column of bones from shoulder to pad remains in a straight line and should be distinguished from **moving close**, either front, back, or both. When moving close, the fore or hind limbs are insufficiently well separated from each other during movement, and, in extreme cases the legs may interfere by brushing up against one another along their inner borders.



**Out at Elbows  
Paddling**



**Toeing-Out**



**Weaving, Crossing Over,  
Plaiting, Dishing or Toeing-In**



**Bandy, Moving  
Wide in Front**

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. The most commonly seen are among those illustrated here. **Crossing over** is an abnormality of gait in which the feet when extended cross over in front of one another as well as over an imaginary center line drawn under the body. **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. **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. Frequently a clever handler can conceal **cow hocks or bow hocks** by deft manipulation when stacking a dog. These structural faults are revealed however, when the dog is being gaited.

## References:

Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, First Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1982

Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, Third edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989



**Close Behind**



**Cow-Hocked**

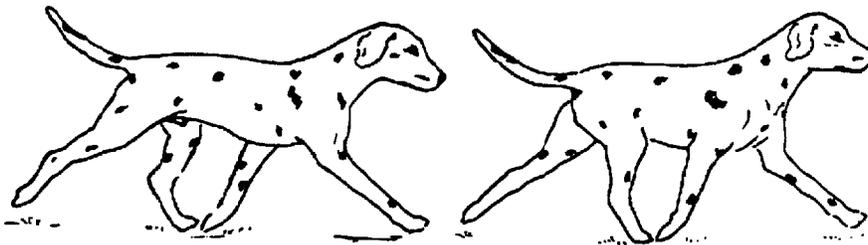


**Bow-Hocked, Bandy,  
Moving Wide Behind**

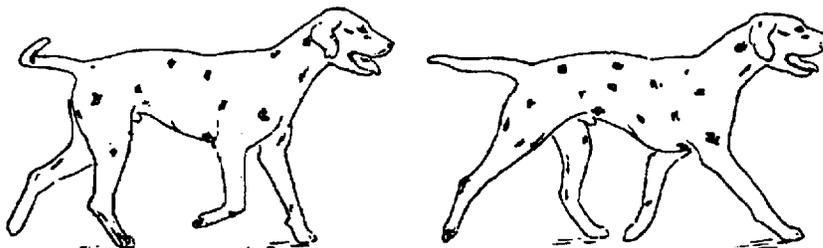
*Crabbing or sidewinding* is faulty forward movement in which the spinal column is not pointed in the direction of travel, rather, it deviates at an angle so that one rear leg passes on the inside of the front foot, while the other does so on the outside of its partner, instead of traveling in a straight line with them.

Front and rear views (covered in the previous article) probably show us more action faults than side views, but the side views show us the blending of front and rear actions for smooth, graceful passage. The foundation of gait is evident in the front and rear views, and the beauty is revealed by the side view. Two other important factors can be better observed from the side: the flexing of the legs and the supporting action of the pastern under weight, which is often revealed by the bobbing rather than level movement of the withers.

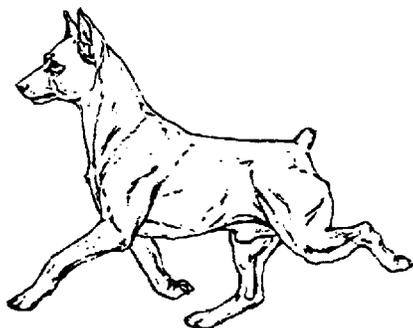
In some dogs, easily detected in a faulty Dalmatian, excessive rolling of the torso caused by too wide a gait, loose shoulders, or general lack of soundness can be observed in the side view as the spots along the topline disappear from view and reappear again with each stride.



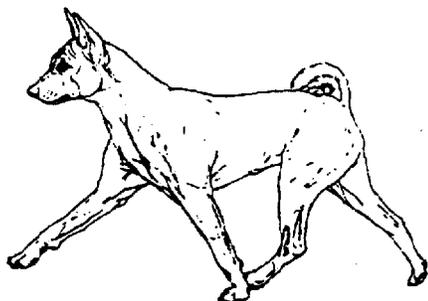
*Good Angulation facilitates a long stride. Balance facilitates good foot timing.*



*Poor Angulation shortens stride because the bones meeting at the shoulder joint and hip are steeply set, forming joints with wide angles.*



*Hackney Gait. Correct for a Miniature Pinscher but generally faulty.*



*Goose-stepping Basenji. Faulty in any breed.*

The importance of angulation cannot be overemphasized when evaluating gait. The most significant angles are at the shoulder and hip joints. These joints counterbalance one another as they lift, open and shut with the swing of the limbs. The front of the dog normally carries about 60% of the total body weight and works like a shock-absorbing mechanism as it coordinates with drive from the rear and absorbs impact with the ground. Lack of angulation or stiffness at the pastern restricts the shock absorption and exacerbates the pounding. Whether viewed from the side or from front or rear, the action should be smooth and harmonious with no twisting or jerking. Problems arise when one part has to overwork or compensate for lack of balance, injury or weakness in another. It is important to note that excessive angulation in any part of a dog's body is detrimental to joint support and endurance. It is never a question of the more angulation the better - it is a matter of just how much is needed for functional efficiency.

A dog with good angulation and balance will have joints that flex easily and smoothly, providing strong thrust from the rear and spring and resilience in the front. Dogs with poor angulation must take shorter steps, and more of them, to get where they are going. Their action is bouncing rather than smooth. A dog that is straight, front and rear, has a short, stilted gait, but, if in balance, may be better off than a dog lacking balance, where one end has to compensate for the faultiness of the other.

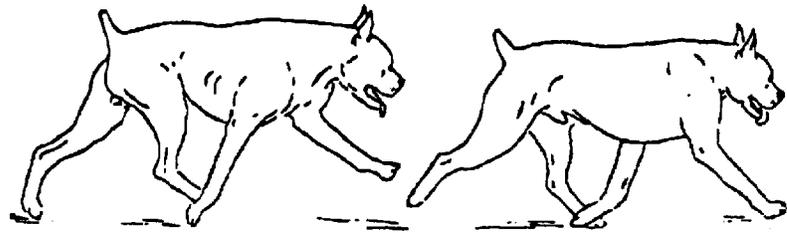
**Hackney action** as a fault is caused by more angulation and drive from behind than in front. The dog resorts to extra high action of the forelegs in order to keep the paws out of the way of the oncoming back feet. The term is taken from the hackney horse which exemplifies this action. Although specifically requested in some breeds standards, e.g., Miniature Pinscher, hackneying is an abnormal movement that requires rather steep shoulder angulation, coupled with upright pasterns.

References:

- Elliott, Rachel Page, *The New Dogsteps*, Second Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1983.  
Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, Third Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989.  
Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, First Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1982.

**Goose-stepping** is a movement typified by accentuated lift of the forelimbs, similar in most respects to a hackney gait, but coupled with full extension of the front pasterns and feet before placing them in contact with the ground. The dog seems to have good reach, but close observation will reveal that the actual front foot contact with the ground is delayed, and therefore the effective reach is considerably shorter.

**Overreaching** at the trot is a common fault, caused by more angulation and drive from behind than in the front, so that the rear feet are forced to step to one side of the front feet to avoid interference or clipping. This is one of the many forms of poor foot timing, but it must not be confused with the natural overreach in the suspension trot, or in the canter or gallop. Overreaching is a common fault in puppies as they develop through “leggy” stages when the height at withers may exceed length from buttocks to shoulder joint by a fractional difference. As the puppy develops and the body proportions come into balance, the overreaching ceases.

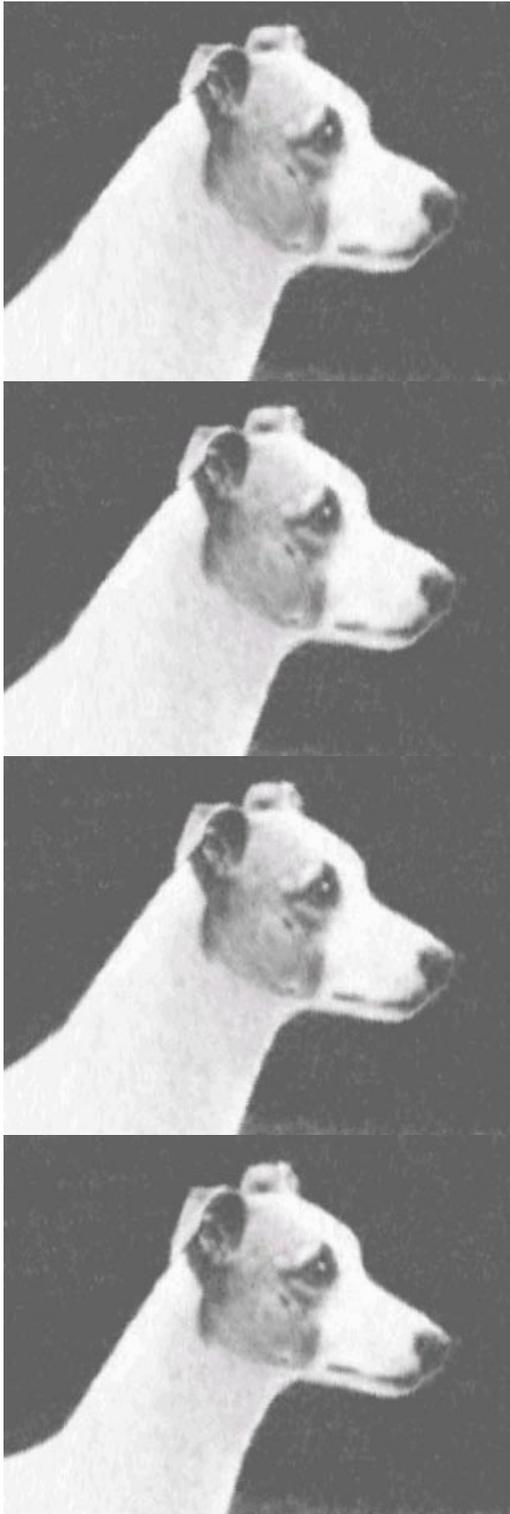


*Over-reaching Boxer. Observable in profile and especially when moving fast, in which the hind feet are thrust past their front counterparts.*

## CANINE TERMINOLOGY - TYPE

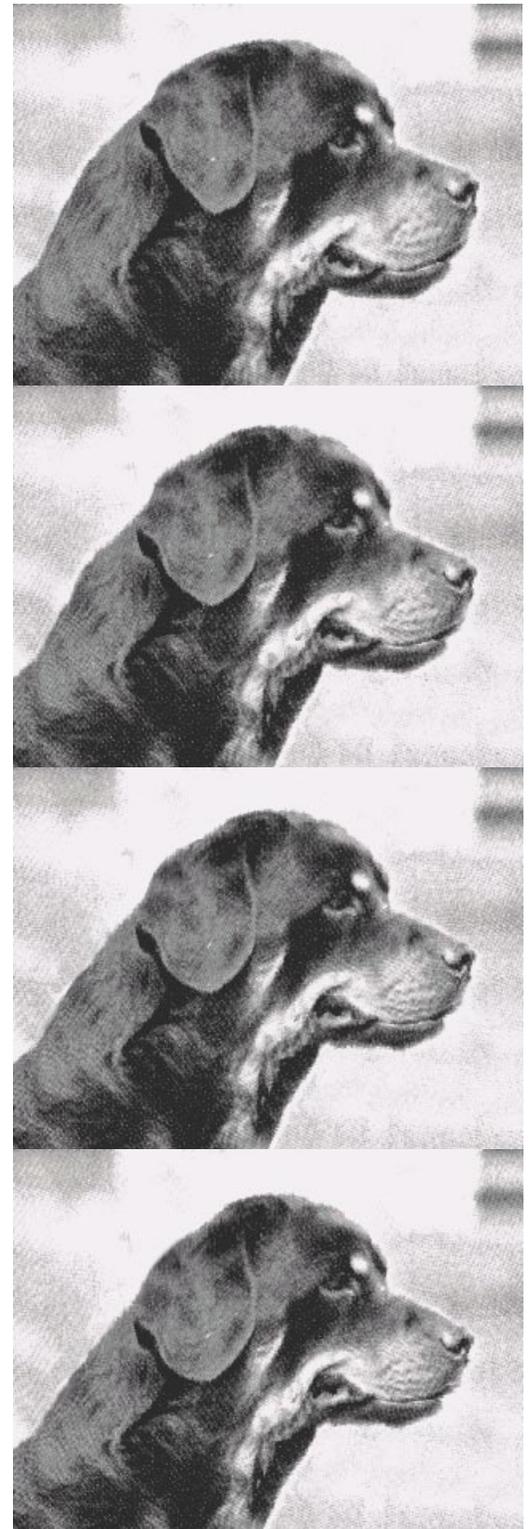
6th in a series - compiled by J. Seltzer

A Rottweiler is not a Whippet; a Whippet is not a Rottweiler! This seemingly inane statement actually defines the essence of type, for type when used to discuss purebred dogs is synonymous with breed character. It has been defined by the American Kennel Club as: the characteristic qualities distinguishing a breed; the embodiment of the Standard's essentials<sup>1</sup>. However, perhaps the best discussion of type comes from Anna Katherine Nicholas in her excellent book, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*:



**It refers to the combination of distinguishing features which add up to make each breed's stamp of individuality. A dog to be "typey", or of correct type, must be strong in these points, or features, considered by the Standard as characteristic of his breed. The word "type" is constantly abused by fanciers who misuse it as an expression of personal preference, and incorrectly in other ways. This is extremely confusing to those who wish to learn. We often hear a person say that a dog is, or is not, the type Pointer, or Poodle, or Boxer he does or does not prefer. Actually, there can be only one correct type within a breed. There are breeds in which the males are stronger in breed characteristics than are the females, but not of a different type. In all breeds, type is never a matter of personal preference, but rather an adherence to desired breed characteristics. A dog of good type is as just described. One of poor type is incorrect in those special features peculiar to his own breed. And one lacking in type is weak in distinguishing breed characteristics.**

**Variations within a breed do not make dogs of different type. The fact that a dog is small, or large, or heavily boned, or light in bone,**



References:

<sup>1</sup>*The Complete Dog Book*, 16th edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1980, p 763.

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, 3rd Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989, p 21.

extremely muscular, or overly refined, does not make a different type dog from others of its breed. Dogs of the same breed are basically the same type. Differences in individual features and conformation are exactly that. These features and the dog's general conformation must be evaluated point by point, faults against virtues, to decide which dog most closely conforms to the ideal type described in the Standard, and is thus the more typical, or better specimen of his breed.

A typey dog catches the expert eye on sight, being the very embodiment of his breed's heart and character. It is not just balance, nor flashy style, nor sound action, but a living example of the distinguishing features which make him of one special breed. A dog lacking in type is a common dog with little to offer his breed, even though he may be well-balanced, sound, and beautifully presented. A dog excelling in type is a valuable asset to his breed, even should he possess minor flaws in other respects.<sup>2</sup>

Nicholas considers the understanding of type to be one of the key elements in qualifying a person to be a dog show judge. Her five essentials: **Type, Balance, Style, Soundness**, and **Condition** she considers to be the key words in the vocabulary of a dog show judge. But of these, type is the *sine qua non*, for without it the dog is not a true representative of his breed and cannot be judged against the Standard for that breed.

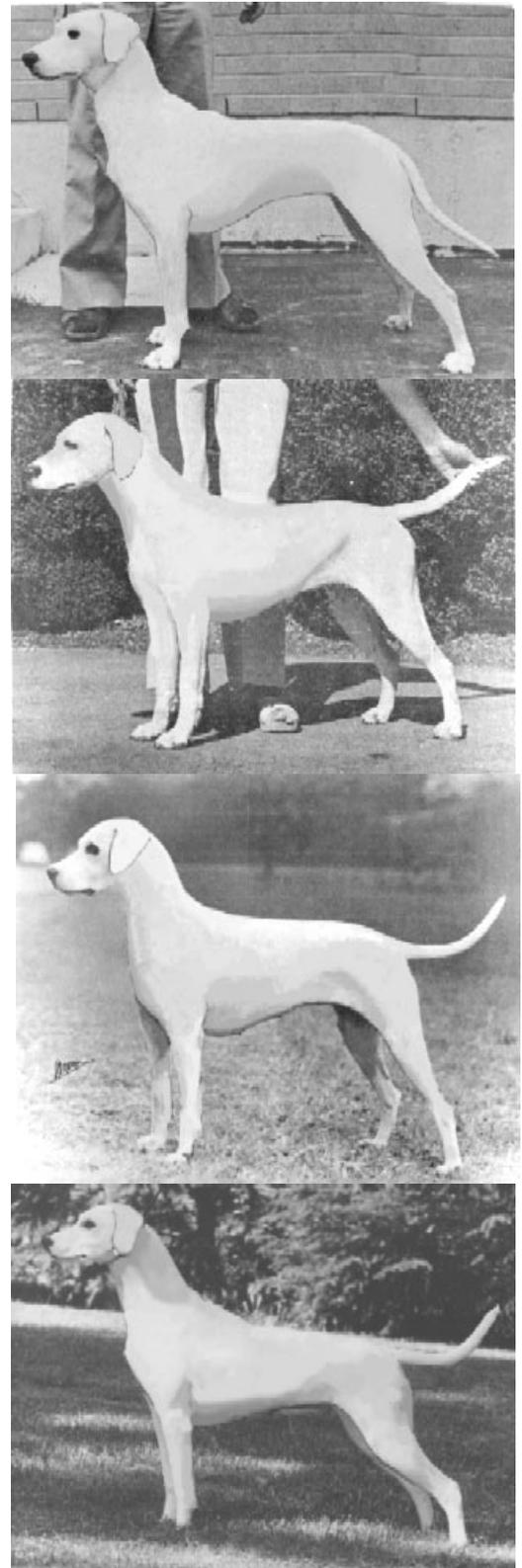
In the previous article I introduced the subject of **breed type** and quoted extensively from Anna Katherine Nicholas who argued that there can be only one breed type - that which exemplifies the breed by conforming to the Standard for that breed. Others might claim that most breed standards are not sufficiently detailed to define the breed thereby allowing diverse interpretations. In this case, and I believe it to be the rule rather than the exception, each breeder and each judge forms his own picture of the ideal for the breed. In a recent issue the *AKC Gazette*<sup>1</sup> discussed the issue of type with several notable judges; their comments are of considerable interest.

Edd E. Biven: "A fad or whim in a breed can do irreparable harm. In the more than 30 years I have been judging, I have seen the 'commonization' of several breeds - a process by which breeds migrate, under the influence of several individuals, from their original intended type to that which more closely resembles the breed that is enjoying great favor. . . Some people try to justify changing a breed by saying it makes the breed prettier or gives it a better chance to win or place in its group. . . Some people referred to this process as modernization. I happen to feel it is an aberration. Breeds must be preserved beyond the integrity of the registry. Type is steeped in the past and must be guarded in the present for the future."

Anne Rogers Clark: "Type, to me, is what makes the dog look like its breed. First we must read and understand the standard for the breed we are evaluating . . . Next we must apply what we've read to the animal at hand. . . Now, how does the dog move from the side? . . . Now look at the dog's soundness coming and going . . . What we have done is judge the overall picture, made the first selection on type and rewarded the soundest of the typical specimens. An untypical dog that is sound is worthless; a typical dog that is sound is priceless."

Derek G. Rayne: "A judge new to any breed is unable to recognize that the current winners may be of a far different type than those of another era. . . . Frequently today we hear exhibitors and judges say a certain dog is the greatest living example of that breed. Unfortunately, this dog may be very showy and sound but is not, in reality, the true type of this breed as were the winners of 20 or 30 years ago. Many breeds today have lost their true type. . . We must realize that true type is the quintessence of any breed. A healthy farm dog trotting down a country lane has all the attributes that are found in most standards of most breeds - all it lacks is type!"

R. William Taylor: "There are those who will say that there can be only one correct in a breed, others that a breed should have various types needed to breed and maintain the ideal. . . While these different types perhaps are necessary in the breeding kennel, it is seldom that a judge will vary his or her idea of type when judging both sexes of a breed, taking into account the variations of the sexes. . . It is the virtues of a breed, when found together in abundance, that will decide type in an individual dog. All dogs possess faults in varying degrees, most of which will not alter type. A Pekingese must have a bowed front. If it has a straight terrier front, that fault will preclude the dog from being typical. It is therefore lacking in type. Back in the 1950s Ernest Eberhard wrote, 'An ability. to recognize type at a glance is a breeder's greatest gift. Ask the successful breeders to explain this subject. There is no other way of learning.' "



<sup>1</sup> "What is TYPE?", in *AKC Gazette*, August 1994, pp 34-39.

*A study in breed type - - Dalmatians all!  
And each a champion bitch. Only the  
spots have been removed to protect the  
innocent.*

## **CANINE TERMINOLOGY - TYPE REVISITED**

*Continued*

Dorothy Welsh: “Certainly, when we view old paintings depicting dogs of the past, type was different. . . . A trip to the Dog Museum in St. Louis makes us aware of basic breed types and how they have evolved. As our civilization progresses, change is the only constant. So what do we mean when we call a dog “typey” or lacking in breed type? The essence of the reason for the breed’s existence should be easily visible, definable and reproducible. In my opinion the true test of type is in the whelping pen. Unless a dog or bitch can reproduce the best of his or her breed type, the term has no lasting effect on the future of that breed. We, as fanciers, breeders and judges, must be able to define type and find it, or the lack of it, in dogs in the show ring. We must constantly work to hold that type, so that 100 years from now we will be known as good stewards of the breeds we are involved in.”

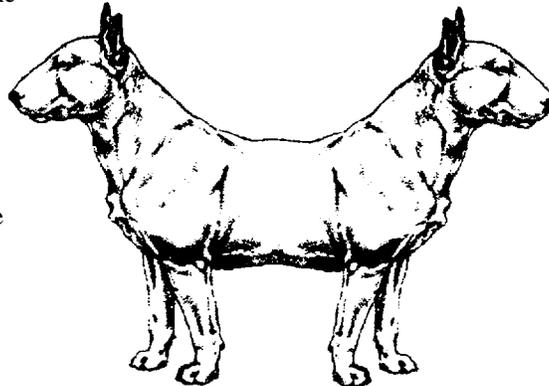


As a novice in the world of show dogs many years ago, I deemed it essential that I become totally conversant with the AKC Standard defining my breed of choice. Not only was I to become expert on canine anatomy and the special terms used in the field, but I felt it important that I memorize all the essential elements of the standard. I was somewhat taken aback very early when I came upon the phrase "symmetrical in outline" in the general description of the breed. Since I worked as an applied mathematician and wrote and published technical articles in the field, I was sure that I knew what was meant by the word, symmetrical. So here was the



puzzlement! Every large animal on earth possesses what is called bilateral symmetry, while some few smaller species are radially symmetric and some microorganisms are even spherically symmetric. Why state the obvious! Unless the dog was horribly deformed, it had bilateral symmetry the same as every other dog, that is, its right side was essentially a mirror image of its left side.

However, there is another meaning for the artist and composer than the mathematician means something like well-proportioned means that sort of unity of several parts whole.<sup>1</sup> Beauty is bound up with this sense that the words are used in the



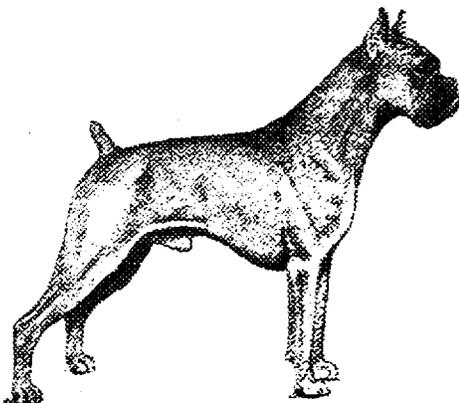
word symmetric more common to the mathematician. In the broader sense symmetric connotes, well-balanced, and symmetry which integrate into a balanced sense of symmetry, and it is in this standard.

According to Nicholas, symmetry (in the layman to understand than type.

sense of balance) is far easier for the

**Balance in dogs, as in everything else, means proportion. A well-balanced dog possesses neither glaring faults nor one outstanding feature. He pleases the eye by his nicely proportioned appearance. The various features of the well-balanced dog are in correct relation one to the other, height to length, neck to back, head to neck and body, length and width of skull to foreface, all fitting to each other in the manner described by the standard. Balance is an invaluable asset to a show dog, attracting and appealing instantly by its look of rightness.<sup>2</sup>**

Of the various elements that make up balance in a dog the easiest to depict is that of angulation where we assess the match of front to rear. Good angulation is essential to long, effortless stride and smooth action. Nonetheless, a dog with poor angulation, but in balance front and rear, may often move better than a dog with better angulation that lacks balance.



We examine the balance of three of the various Boxers depicted in Enno Meyer's 1945 book. First, presented as the ideal male showing both the proper type and balance, is the dog depicted on the left. This dog manifests the robust build and distinct musculature which is not exaggerated or overdone, presenting the proper balance and symmetry that is demanded of the working dog. Working dog structure requires that all component parts contribute to the exercise of the required activities. Both the front assemblage and the rear are well angulated and balanced.

## References:

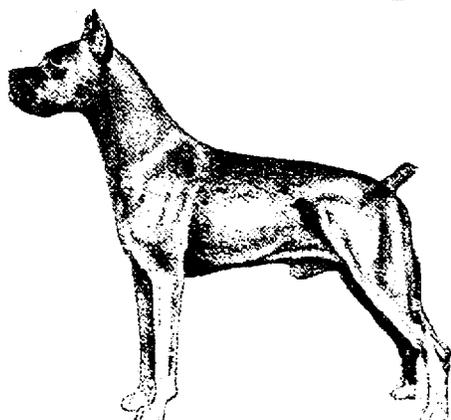
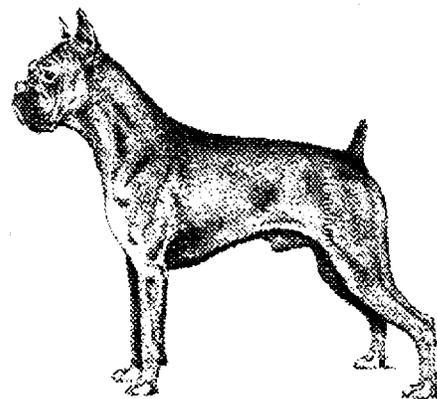
<sup>1</sup>Weyl, Hermann, "Symmetry," in *The World of Mathematics*, vol 1, p 671, Newman, James R., ed.

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, p22, 3rd ed, Howell Book House, New York, 1989

Meyer, Enno, *Judging the Boxer*, 1945, as quoted by Nicholas



The boxer depicted on the top right, on the other hand, is of fair, overall squareness, but with easily apparent faults, the most noticeable of which is the over-angulation of the hindquarters. As a fault of conformation, this mars the general outline of the dog, and more than that, it may impede the movement and staying power of the working dog not endowed with the long body needed to help compensate for the unmatched drive from the rear.



The Boxer on the bottom left, though somewhat lacking in Boxer type, is of good, sound stance and conformation. More nearly showing the terrier type with a straighter front and corresponding wider angles at the stifle. Nonetheless, this specimen is in balance, front and rear, and as such can be expected to show better movement and greater staying power than his less fortunate brethren lacking the balance he possesses.

Of the five essentials that the dog show judge must consider in evaluating a show dog, style is probably the most difficult to describe in words. Yet it is the most obvious quality that can be discerned by both novice and professional alike when observing the dogs competing in the show ring.

**Style results from a combination of balance, elegance of carriage, showmanship and personality. A stylish dog possesses an air of pride, eagerness and alertness which is extremely attractive and appealing.<sup>1</sup>**

The self confidence, poise and subdued dominance (manifested especially by the males but not uncommon among the bitches) expressed as an obvious sense of presence, what we might call “owning the territory,” goes a long way’ to attracting the eye of the judge in the show ring. Insofar as this characteristic is innate in the show dog, it is my impression that its foundation is largely hereditary. Often one can perceive this quality when observing the puppies in the litter box. One puppy will stand out shortly after the eyes are open and the littermates begin to challenge each other for their positions in the hierarchy. That puppy, if properly trained and socialized, will almost certainly continue to display an exceptional air of self assuredness throughout its life.

As with most hereditary characteristics, however, the manifestation of this quality depends to a great degree on training and presentation. The dog must know, almost as a matter of second nature, exactly what it is expected to do in the show ring. This requires that the handler at a very early stage of the puppy’s life demonstrate exactly what is required in the way of stacking and gaiting. The training sessions, of course, must be short and playful, and the puppy must be rewarded for good performance. Early exhibition at match shows will build on this confidence if the puppy can be made to enjoy the experience. Do not hesitate to ask the judge to be excused from the ring (even at point shows) if the weather or other factors seem to be having a negative impact on the puppy .

As the dog matures and the show ring skills improve so that he will gait and set up properly, there is no need to rehearse him at it every two or three days, or even the day before a show. To do so is to push him to the point of boredom, which may never be overcome.<sup>2</sup>

According to George Alston, one of the most successful of the professional dog show handlers, you should make every effort to “find your dog’s buttons.” Try out different things to see what makes him respond. If he likes to be scratched behind the ears, then, if you want him to do something, give him a little scratch and a little encouragement. Finding a dog’s buttons may happen right away, or it may take months. Sometimes it happens by accident. Maybe bait will work, maybe a squeaky toy, maybe scratching under the chin.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, though the dog may have all the qualities and stylishness to make it a top contender, the handler must also have a positive mental attitude. Your own psychic energy translates itself to the dog and fosters greater energy in the dog. The two of you as a team will fuel one another so that you both will feel better, look better and project a better image to the judge. When you enter the ring, you must mentally condition yourself to win whatever the odds you believe may be encountered. In this way you always perform at the peak of your ability. Stage fright or nerves must be avoided at all costs. Animals sense this and will not perform well with a nervous person at the other end of the lead.

When preparing the dog for the ring and during the grooming process, use the time to mentally prepare your dog. Assess your dog’s mental attitude and your own feelings on the day. If your dog is up too high, use the time to relax him. If you are both down and not alert, gradually try to increase your own enthusiasm level, so that by the time the dog is ready to come off the table and go into the ring, you are both up and showing.<sup>4</sup> If both you and your dog are mentally prepared, your dog has his best chance of displaying his best qualities and the style that will attract the judge’s attention to put him in the running as a top contender.



*CH. King’s Creek Triple Threat, top beagle shown in the 60s. A classic and very stylish dog, multiple Best in Show, sire of 90 champions. photo from Nicholas, p. 70.*

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### References:

<sup>1</sup>Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, 3rd Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989, p 22.

<sup>2</sup>Forsyth, Robert and Forsyth, Jane, *Successful Dog Showing*, Howell Book House, New York, 1988, p 75.

<sup>3</sup>Alston, George G. and Vanacore, Connie, *The Winning Edge*, Howell Book House, New York, 1992, p 22.

<sup>4</sup>Alston, *op. cit.*, p 101.

Of the five essential conformation show-judging qualities discussed by Anna Katherine Nicholas, condition is the one quality over which the owner has most control and ultimate responsibility. Nicholas defines condition as well-being. She asserts: "A dog in top condition carries exactly the right amount of flesh, being neither fat nor miserably thin. His eyes are bright, clear and sparkling. His coat is full, healthy and shows good care."<sup>1</sup> According to George Alston, "Level of fitness is usually what separates the Best-in-Show dogs from the also rans."<sup>2</sup>

How can one determine whether a dog has excess fat? While palpating the rib cage and the loin, one should be able to feel the bones of the vertebrae and ribs under the skin. How can one judge whether a dog is fit? Stand behind the dog and, with your right hand, push on the outside of the dog's right hind leg, thereby causing the dog's center of gravity to shift to the left leg. The muscles should be firm and well-defined. Repeat this process for the other leg.<sup>3</sup>

Good condition means as hard as a rock. Some dogs are that way naturally and some have to work at it. Dogs that are not normally active need some help in exercising, but no dog should be given any involuntary exercise until it is two years of age or older.<sup>4</sup> All dogs need to be shown in hard flesh, even the Toy breeds. When the judge physically examines a dog he does not want to feel flab. A judge must feel that the dog is in firm condition. Proper exercise will stimulate the circulation as well as help hair growth.

When you begin exercising the dog, whether jogging with you on a lead or putting it on a trotter (though many top handlers believe that use of a trotter often leads to a short, choppy gait), do it only until the dog begins to labor, then quit, whether it's a mile or 100 feet. If a dog is forced beyond its comfortable endurance, muscles that compensate will eventually turn into bad habits in movement. Your dog will take these learned negative patterns into the show ring and they will be practically impossible to break. Build up the dog's endurance gradually so that it can do more and more, but always at its own pace. Walking is better exercise than galloping. If you are doing roadwork, either behind a car or bicycle or on a trotter, it should be done every other day. It takes twenty-four hours for the muscles that are injured to recuperate.<sup>5</sup>

Jogging with your dog can help a sloppily moving dog tighten up or enable the basically correct moving dog to develop a gait that is smooth, fully extended, and animated. Done incorrectly, however, jogging can actually cause a show dog more harm than good. Therefore, the most important factors to consider are: not to run the dog too many miles or train on a surface or at a speed that could inhibit movement. Also, never run a show dog downhill, as this causes the dog to restrict his reach and can cause other movement problems. Running uphill may cause both of you to pant a little more but can benefit a show dog by strengthening a weak rear or developing rear drive.

The speed at which a show dog jogs can cause improper movement in the ring, so try to run at a speed that encourages the dog to move out freely, reaching and driving to full extension. Never allow a dog to run so slowly that he switches to a pace or moves in a choppy, restricted gait. Dogs with correct angulation, and, therefore, a longer stride will trot faster than ones with steeper angulation and more restricted reach. If the dog is running so fast that it breaks into a gallop, slow down so that the dog reverts to a fully extended trot. Pat Craige, the top-winning owner-handler of the Vin-Melca Norwegian elkhounds, in her recent lecture at the Berks County Kennel Club, remarked that she prefers long walks over jogging to maintain the fitness of her very athletic breed of dogs.

However, if a show dog is run properly and the mileage is kept to a reasonable level, the dog's gait should show significant improvement over a period of time, and he should be a pleasure to watch.<sup>6</sup>



*A less common way of exercising. Handler, horse and dog must be well trained to avoid accidents. Some object to the use of the dog harness, feeling it impairs the action of the forequarters. photo from the Forsyth Guide to Successful Dog Showing, p 58.*

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### References:

<sup>1</sup>Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, Howell Book House, New York, p 22.

<sup>2</sup>Zink, Christine, *Coaching the Canine Athlete*, *AKC Gazette*, Feb 95, p 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 36.

<sup>4</sup>Alston, George G. and Vanacore, Connie, *The Winning Edge*, Howell Book House, New York, p 20.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p 22.

<sup>6</sup>Gallup, Davia Anne, *Running with Man's Best Friend*, Alpine Pubs., Inc., Loveland, CO, p 33.

Anna Katherine Nicholas' fourth of the five key words in the vocabulary of a dog show judge is Soundness, and unlike the other terms that had quite specific meanings, the use of this word is fraught with ambiguities. It is not unusual for dog people to give a slight twist to the meaning of ordinary words - but these words then take on a special meaning, well-understood by themselves. The various meanings attributed to soundness by dog fanciers was brought to my attention this past summer when I was exhibiting my puppy, Punky, at a local match. She had won her class, breed, and group and had just left the ring after competing, unsuccessfully, for Best Puppy in Match. A well-known AKC judge of non-sporting dogs whose husband, also an AKC judge, had just awarded Best Puppy to another dog, approached and asked permission to examine Punky. I gladly obliged. After the examination, she remarked on how well she liked my puppy, exclaiming, "She's really very sound. Many Dalmatians competing in the show ring today are not, you know!" I left, feeling quite proud, but not quite sure what this compliment really meant. I knew the dictionary meaning of soundness, but couldn't be certain that was what was meant. By the dictionary, soundness means freedom from disease, flaw or defect, but it seemed not to have the right connotation in this case, especially since most Dals in the show ring can certainly be assumed free from disease.

When I got home, I turned to Anna Katherine Nicholas' book, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, where I read: Soundness refers to freedom from disability. It is the word most used to describe the manner in which dogs gait. A dog traveling correctly in accordance with its breed requirements is habitually referred to as a sound dog, though it might be more specific to say that such a dog is a good mover or typical in action.<sup>1</sup>

I took this as the meaning that the judge wished to convey, since I was aware that my puppy, for whatever faults she might possess, was a competent mover, reaching and tracking better than any puppy I had previously owned. But, I wasn't absolutely sure. . .

The AKC lexicon defines soundness as the state of mental and physical health when all organs and faculties are complete and functioning normally, each in its rightful relation to the other.<sup>2</sup>

Spira defines soundness as referring to construction, both physical and mental, that enables a dog to carry out those duties for which it was originally designed. A sound dog, by definition, is one not only physically capable of work, but also one possessing the willingness to perform it. Defining anatomical soundness is a relatively simple task Gauging an animal's mental aptitude in the show ring is another matter entirely: working and/or obedience tests may be necessary to establish it satisfactorily.<sup>3</sup>

De Prisco and Johnson provide a similar definition stating that soundness refers to physical and mental well being. A dog is said to be physically sound when it can perform well the task(s) for which the breed is intended, i.e., sledge pulling, guard work, etc. For house dogs, or purely pets, soundness can be defined as a dog that is free from disease, has good nutrition, and is well constructed. Mental soundness is a dog's willingness and ability to execute the task(s) for which the breed is intended. Thus, the dog's ability enables it to cope with the mental stress presented to it during the execution of the task(s). For house dogs, mental soundness includes an even temperament, good intelligence, and an overall contented attitude.<sup>4</sup>

So there we have it, four different sources and four somewhat different definitions, only the first of which specifically calls out proper gait while the other three lean more toward the health and fitness attributes. Now a dog certainly needs to be physically healthy and fit to move properly, but the converse does not hold since many healthy and fit dogs are abysmally poor movers. Hence, we are truly left with distinctly diverse usages of the term soundness. The most prominent (by sheer count of references) meaning parallels the usual dictionary definition which is where I started out. The minority opinion holds with the use of the term to connote proper movement.

At this point, I am inclined to side with the minority regarding the meaning to be attributed to the judge in discussing my puppy's merits. However, to be sure, next time I might rather discreetly, so as not to appear the complete novice, ask for clarification.



*An obviously sound Dalmatian enjoying a seaside romp.  
photo from Canine Lexicon by DePrisco and Johnson.*

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, Howell Book House, 1989, p 22.

<sup>2</sup>AKC, *The Complete Dog Book*, 16th ed., Howell Book House, 1980, p 761.

<sup>3</sup>Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, Howell Book House, 1982, p 123.

<sup>4</sup>DePrisco, Andrew and James B. Johnson, *Canine Lexicon*, T.F.H. Publications, 1993, p 773.

“What the judge sees is what you get!” This is the principal thesis in the very informative book, *The Winning Edge, Show Ring Secrets*, by the noted handler, George Alston. A judge can only judge what is presented in the ring. The judge is allowed only about a minute and a half per dog and cannot wait to assume. He or she must judge what is seen, and, if you do not present what the judge wants to see, you are certain to lose. Hence, you must learn to present your dog as efficiently as possible in the least amount of time. This requires work, practice and dedication.

Alston notes that professional handlers weren't born with a lead in their hands. They have developed and honed their skills by diligence and sacrifice. They know exactly what they intend to do with each of the many dogs they must handle in the course of a day. Yet amateurs have a great advantage, if they will use it to their own benefit. They usually have only one dog to show, so they have the time to train the dog, condition it, learn about its strong and weak points and practice showing it under all kinds of circumstances. When they go into the ring, there should be no surprises.

There are several attributes that go into the makeup of what Alston calls “the perfect handler.”

**Invisibility** - The perfect handler is invisible. You should be able to watch a Best in Show lineup, walk away from the ring and say, “That was an absolutely gorgeous dog that went Best in Show. Who handled it?” If you overhear, “Boy that was a good handler. Did you see him work?” Then that handler is not doing his best, for the handler should fade into the background, putting the dog forward with a minimum of hand motions. The judge should think that the dog is doing it all alone, so a good handler does not continually fuss with the dog, move around the dog, adjust its position, stroke, push, pull or poke at it or draw the judge's eye away from the dog itself at any time. A good handler does not constantly smile, grin or talk to the judge to get attention. Judges hate exhibitors who fawn over them in the ring.

**Adaptability** - The reason that adaptability is so important is that you will never show the same dog exactly the same way twice, even on the same day. The dog will react to its environment differently, and at every level there will be different competition, different judges, different ring conditions. The ring may be small or large, the weather hot and dry or rainy and cool, the grass may be slick or the ground may be hilly. Some dogs react differently to being shown in the morning than later in the day. You must prepare yourself to adapt to all these variables by training yourself and you dog to respond to these different conditions.

**Consistency** - The most difficult thing in showing a dog is to be consistent in the way you show it. Once you have learned to do any one thing correctly, you must do it correctly every single time thereafter. Your dog must look the same in the Group and Best in Show ring as it did in the breed ring, and it must handle in the same top form. That takes practice, practice, and more practice.

**The Handler as an Artist** - When in the show ring, you will emphasize strong points and attempt to conceal faults. You position the dog in a way that will look good to the judge. In order to do this, you must know your dog's good points and its faults. You must have studied your dog standing and gaiting so that you are familiar with all its parts. Just as an artist creates an illusion on canvas or paper, the handler creates an illusion for the judge. Professional handlers know what the judge wants to see, owner handlers must practice in order to create the picture they wish to present.

**Pride** - You must have pride in your dog, and you must treat it with respect and make that pride evident to the judge. Just as an artist takes pride in his work, you must take pride in presenting your dog as the best animal you have ever seen; you are doing the judge a favor to allow him to put his hands on this valuable animal. Exhibitors who manhandle their dogs, pulling them around, grabbing them by the muzzle or yanking them here and there, are saying that this is just a piece of meat. If they have no pride in their dogs, why should the judge? If you do not believe that your dog is a precious commodity, get a different attitude, or a different dog.

Anyone can handle a dog, but it takes skill to present one so that judges think this is the greatest specimen of the breed that they have ever seen and they are honored to have it in their ring.



*The handler is presenting the head of this dog as if it were a work of art. Photo from *The Winning Edge, Show Ring Secrets*, p 9.*

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### REFERENCE:

Alston, George G. and Vanacore, Connie, *The Winning Edge, Show Dog Secrets*, Howell Book House, New York, 1992, pp 2-11.

Sportsmanship has been defined as: the conduct and attitude considered as befitting participants in sports, especially fair play, courtesy, striving spirit, and grace in losing. As one of the oldest sports in this country, the Sport of Dogs has a long tradition of sportsmanship, and it is, most assuredly, the responsibility of all of the participants from junior showman to dog show superintendent to uphold this tradition and pass it along unsullied to future participants.

Yet it is a rare occurrence when I can stand by the ringside during a dog show without once overhearing some heated and less than charitable remarks regarding either the judge's style or selections, or, more commonly, disparaging comments on the qualities of the dogs being exhibited, particularly if the dogs selected for the purple ribbons are not of their own breeding. Perhaps this is in line with the quintessential American disrespect for authority commonly voiced in an equally old sport with cries of "Kill the umpire!" and "Throw the bums out!" Nonetheless, there is a modicum of civility that indulged by all can make our chosen sport more enjoyable for participants and spectators alike. The following comments on Sportsmanship and Etiquette have been excerpted extensively from George Alston's book for dog exhibitors, *The Winning Edge, Show Ring Secrets*.

"Sportsmanship in the show ring involves more than the obvious. One does not position one's dog to deliberately block the dog in front of or behind you in line. One does not run up on the dog in front, nor stop short in order to throw the dog behind off balance. One does not attempt to distract other dogs with squeaky toys or obvious displays of bait being thrown around the ring. If your dog baits best on a squeaky toy, use it unless a competitor complains that it is distracting his dog. If that happens, use the toy, but do not make noises with it. Exhibitors who brag about their dog before or after it is shown are in extremely bad taste. Don't tell the world that a certain judge loves your dog and that you can't lose under her. Not only are you setting yourself up for disappointment, but your comments reflect badly on the judge.

"Do not stand at ringside running off at the mouth about the awful dogs in the ring. The person next to you probably owns one of them. Keep your comments to yourself, even if you are sure you should have won that class. Wait until you get into your car, roll up the windows and then vent your gripes.

"If your dog loses, do not take it out on the dog. It is not the dog's fault. If it does not behave in the ring, you have not trained it. If it does not show well, you have not taught it. If it is a poor specimen and deserved to lose, you should have known that and left it home. There is absolutely no excuse for ever physically or mentally abusing a dog for any reason, least of all because it did not win a ribbon.

"If you win, whether it be Puppy Class or Best of Winners accept your ribbon politely, thank the judge and leave the ring. If you lose, leave the ring without comment. If you get a fourth of four, accept the ribbon and thank the judge. Do not berate the judge, stomp on the ribbon or throw it into the garbage can. Not only are you demonstrating extremely poor sportsmanship, but you may be called up on charges and suspended by the American Kennel Club.

"If you are really interested in the opinion of the judge under whom you have lost and you would like to find out why, you may engage the judge in conversation. Wait until their assignment is completed and then approach them. Most judges will not discuss an exhibit, except in the most general terms. If you ask why the judge didn't put your dog up, the answer will most likely be, 'Because I liked the other dog better.'

"In order to understand what a judge may have liked or disliked about your dog you must be able to honestly evaluate your dog compared to others in the ring. Perhaps every dog that placed in the class was tall and rangy and your dog is short and cobby. If you were observant, you would know right away that your chances aren't good that day.



*Congratulating the winner is appropriate show ring etiquette. Photo by JS Dorf, American Kennel Club.*

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### Reference:

Alston, George G. and Vanacore, Connie, *The Winning Edge, Show Dog Secrets*, Howell Book House, New York, 1992.

## **CANINE TERMINOLOGY - SPORTSMANSHIP**

*Continued*

“Many owner-handlers complain about politics in the show ring. The most often heard gripe is that the handlers always win. Well, there are politics in everything in life, and that is a fact that the owner-handler has to recognize. However, the amateur often has an advantage over the professional because a judge is going to be more forgiving if an amateur makes a mistake, sets a dog up imperfectly or gaits awkwardly. If the dog is worthy, the judge will usually give that owner-handler every opportunity.

“There is a great deal of controversy about the propriety of showing to one’s friends, or even acknowledging that one knows the judge. Suppose you are well acquainted with a judge because you have shown to this person many times before, or even because you have been at some of the same social events. For appearances’ sake, it is best to be casual and brief in your conversations with that judge if you should meet prior to going into the ring. Exhibitors who hang around the judge, either before or after the breed is completed, show extremely poor taste and put the judge in an awkward position.

“True professional handlers are generally good sports. You will always see losers congratulating winners in the Group ring. They will most often go out of their way to help their competitors outside the ring. Although their livelihood depends on winning with their dogs, human relationships are important and they will rally around if the need arises. Owner-handlers sometimes are not as charitable either as winners or as losers.

“Good sportsmanship is an important lesson to be learned in presenting a dog properly. If you are going to show dogs over a period of many years, you will find it far more enjoyable to be known as a good sport than as a sore loser. Many lasting friendships are made at dog shows. Sportsmanship and a sense of perspective about what is really important in and out of the show ring help foster those relationships.”