



The German Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland (Inc)

'A little about the Club and the wonderful German Shepherd Dog'

The German Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland Inc. (GSDCQ) established in 1957 is the official custodian of the breed in Queensland and along with the other GSD State Clubs is affiliated with the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia (GSDCA). Together, these organisations work to safeguard the development of the breed in Australia through the various National Council Breed Improvement Schemes.

The GSDCQ promotes and encourages both responsible dog ownership and dog breeding. Members live in all areas of this large State and the Management and Committee recognises those members and encourages breed activities in regional areas. The club's calendar includes two championship shows, two restricted obedience trials, Open show, State Breed Exhibition and at least five Breed Surveys. We have Club Representatives in both Zone 2 and Zone 3 and we regularly conduct breed events on a needs basis in these areas. Members work closely with the non-profit Breed Rescue Group 'GSD's In Need' as well as running a free GSD rehoming service.

• Breed Description

The German Shepherd Dog is a strong, active, very intelligent and loyal dog making him an ideal family companion. He requires plenty of ongoing socialisation, training, and regular exercise to make him a good canine citizen. The German Shepherd Dog is a medium sized breed with male dogs standing between 60 - 66cms high at the withers and weighing between 30 - 42 kg, females stand between 55 - 61cms at the withers and weigh 22 - 32 kg

The German Shepherd is a working dog and as such he is responsive to a wide range of training. He is employed in many roles including the Australian Defence Forces, Police Dogs, Drug Detection and Search and Rescue. They also excel in other activities such as Obedience Trials, Sheep Herding, Endurance Trials, Delta and Therapy Dogs however the majority of dogs in Australia are faithful family companions.



• Breed Improvement Schemes

The German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia Breed Survey scheme is the cornerstone of breed improvement. Prior to breeding, each animal is presented to a panel of qualified Breed Surveyors who assess its breed value as compared to the Breed Standard. To be classified as suitable for breeding the animal must be considered above the breed average, both physically and temperamentally. Animals that cannot achieve successful classification are not recommended for breeding. Prior to submitting to a Breed Survey, each animal must have passed the GSDCA Hip and Elbow Dysplasia schemes and in certain cases, the Haemophilia Scheme. This dedication by the GSDCQ breeders and the GSD Council of Australia has been responsible for the continued improvement of both the quality and health of the German Shepherd Dog Australia wide.



• Buying a Puppy

Many people buy a cute little puppy without considering the future consequences of a much larger adult dog. In the right home, that puppy will be a loved family member. All dog buyers must carefully consider the exercise, fencing, shelter and particularly the socialisation and training requirements of a new German Shepherd puppy. Are you prepared to find the time in your busy schedule to accommodate the demands of this new family member? You need to remember that this little puppy will, in a relatively short time, become a much larger adult with a lifespan of approximately 10 - 14 years. The initial purchase price is the commencement of outlay.

Unbelievably, a puppy can be quite costly over the course of its lifetime. You will need to budget for vaccinations, worming, food, Council registration fees, membership fees, etc. and the possibility of Veterinary expenses that can become quite high. We recommend you purchase your puppy from a breeder who complies with the GSDCQ 'Puppy Listing' criteria using the GSDCA Breed Improvement Schemes to assist as a safeguard towards good health and more importantly the sound character and temperament of your future family companion.

If you do go ahead and decide to purchase a puppy, you must commence the puppy's socialisation and training from day one. This is essential. It is recommended that you join your local Obedience dog Club to assist you.



• General Health Care and Grooming

The German Shepherd Dog is generally a healthy, hardy dog. However, like all breeds, it can have a few potential health problems about which owners should be aware. Skin and gut sensitivities can occur but adequate coat care and feeding a balanced diet will usually prevent these problems. Like most large breeds, it can suffer joint problems in the form of hip and elbow dysplasia. Excessive weight can exacerbate these conditions. The GSD must never be allowed to become overweight, particularly during times of rapid growth (6 - 12mths). Having a double coat, they do shed and have a major coat change usually twice a year. A quick comb/brush to remove excess hair and dirt at least twice weekly and preferably daily when it's shedding is all that is required to keep the coat in good condition. The ears need regular checking as they are large, erect, and open and can attract dirt and foreign matter causing irritation. The nails should be kept well-trimmed.

• Growth and Development

The German Shepherd is a slow maturing dog. He can go through some unruly growth spurts displaying, at times, some, or all the following; loose ligaments, loose hocks, lack of coordination, ears up and down, soft pasterns, splayed feet, etc. He can be a gawky teenager! These issues will usually settle down as he matures. The ears will usually be fully erect by 4 - 6 months. Sometimes they may take longer. DO NOT OVER SUPPLEMENT as this can cause an imbalance possibly leading to more serious growth problems. Most premium dog foods are already nutritionally balanced. DO NOT OVERFEED. Excess weight can put a strain on his young joints and ligaments. Always keep in touch with the Breeder of your puppy who can advise you if you have any concerns. If your Breeder is not available, contact the Club for advice. (See GSDCQ website for contact details).



Feature Breed

The Queensland Dog World



• Exercise

Should you exercise your young German Shepherd Puppy? A mistaken belief of many owners of our breed is that a young puppy (up to 12 months of age) should have 'plenty' of exercise. In fact, as the German Shepherd is such a fast-growing breed, the opposite is more correct. The strain of over-exercise on the skeletal make-up of the framework can and will do harm to the young puppy and may lead to problems in adulthood. Consider a young Shepherd equivalent to a 3-4-year-old human child – certainly not ready to run a marathon (even though the spirit may be willing!) but with growth and maturity, that time could come. As a rule of thumb and guideline for novice owners, 'on-lead' exercise should be limited until final growth and height is achieved at approximately 10 – 12 months of age. After 12 months, hips and elbows can be x-rayed through the GSDCA Scheme. Until then, it should be 'careful and slow'.

Up to twelve months of age, natural free running is the best form of exercise for a youngster. A young pup can easily stop when they become tired rather than continuing because they wish to please and keep up with you! Of course, you will wish to lead, train and socialise your puppy but on-lead exercise should be limited to that. As a guide, the maximum amount of time spent walking a puppy at a fast trot, up to six months of age, should be about five minutes at one time and then rest. Puppies need plenty of rest and sleep, just like a young toddler. Certainly, they can play and romp in your back yard or in their kennel run but they will stop when they feel tired, rest and then play again. Adults require daily exercise that involves free running, mental stimulation through games and obedience training and walking on lead.

• Exciting Breed News

The German Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland (Inc) is hosting the 45th GSDCA National German Shepherd Dog Show and Trial at Dogs Queensland Sports Grounds, Durack on the 19th, 20th and 21st May 2017. More than 350 German Shepherd Dogs and their handlers will compete in the Show and Obedience Trial over the three days.

This event attracts large numbers of local, interstate and overseas visitors and is a 'must see' for anyone interested in the breed. For the first time, we will have a Community radio station 101FM doing an outside broadcast from the grounds and all the TV stations have been invited to attend.



Queensland Police Dog PD 'Quinn' and his handler, Sean Baxendell, will be there to accept the prestigious 'GSDCA Outstanding Canine Service Award' being presented by the Patroness of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia, Mrs. Dawn Fraser AO MBE. Other members of the Brisbane Police Dog Squad have also been invited to attend.



Please visit our website www.gsdcq.org.au for more information



Photo credits: Supplied by the GSDCQ



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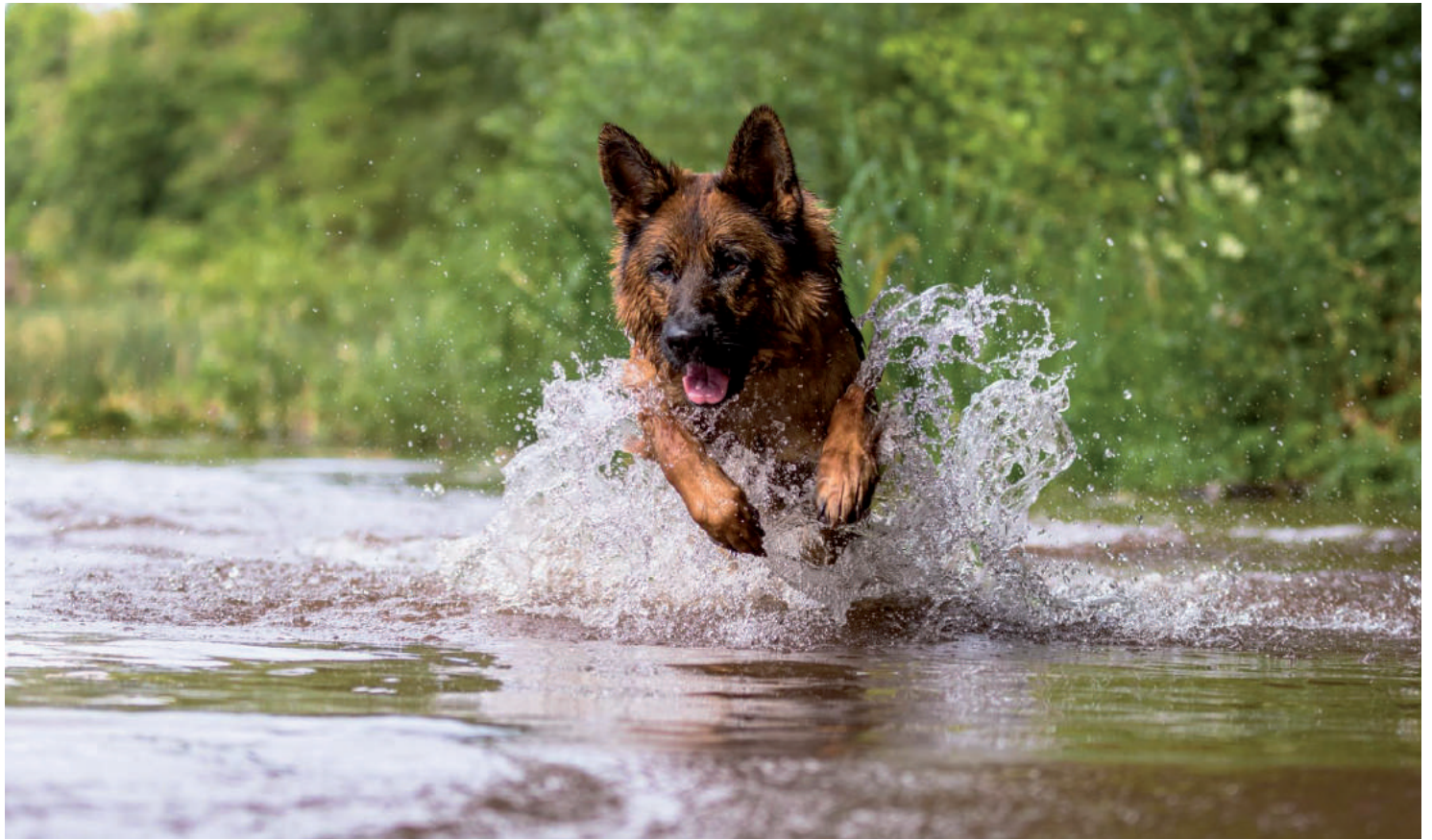
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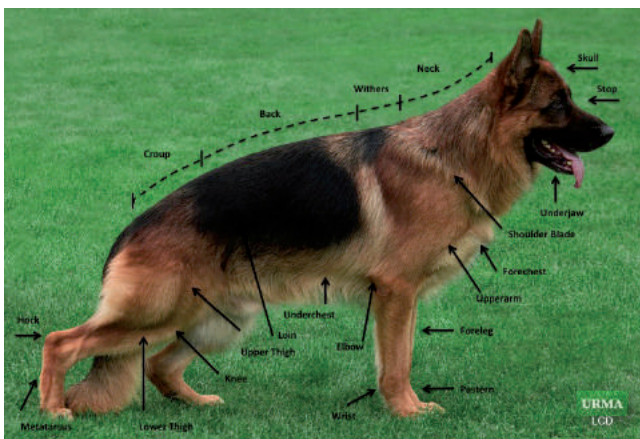
THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG

A General Overview of the German Shepherd Dog

Supplied by the German Shepherd Dog Club of Queensland

The History of the German Shepherd Dog

All dogs are descendants of the wolf and contrary to some minority opinions dogs can be crossed with wolves. Max von Stephanitz wanted to distance the wolf from the German Shepherd Dog as the wolf had some very undesirable characteristics associated with it, but he like many others of that period favoured the look of the wolf in the blueprint for the German Shepherd Dog.



The early 'German Sheepdogs' were exhibited at All Breeds shows; records show that the first two were exhibited in 1882 in Hanover. One was the very popular wolf grey colour and the other was a non-albino white.

A Club was formed in 1892 with the objective of utilising the best of the Sheepdogs to develop a superior German Sheepdog that would be called 'German Shepherd Dog'. This Club was the Phylax Society [guardsman] but it disbanded two years later due to infighting mainly associated with its members being split between some wanting to focus on working dog traits and others preferring to focus on developing show dog traits. Nothing has changed in this regard in over 100 years; in fact it has only got worse and the divide even greater!



Max von Stephanitz who was a cavalry captain was aware of and interested in the Phylax Society and effectively took over where they left off and in April 1899 he formed the 'Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde' acronym SV.



Continued from page 17

He was the first President of the SV and remained so for 39 years. A breed register was established; subject to assessment any German sheepdog could be registered and thereafter called a GSD.

In effect, the day before the SV was formed there were 'German Sheepdogs' and the day it was formed those same dogs on registration with the SV were called 'German Shepherd Dogs'.

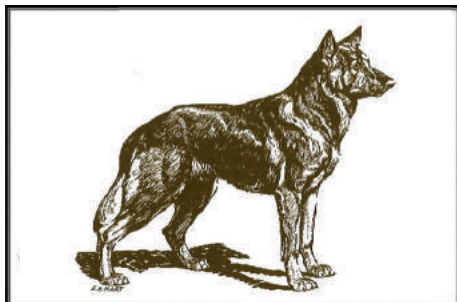
Max von Stephanitz favoured specific regions that they came from, this was gradually tightened and the sheepdogs from Thuringia and Württemberg became the most favoured.



Württemberg Sheepdog



Thuringian Sheepdog



*Horand v Grafrath aka Hektor v Linksrhein
- drawing by Hart*

There was diversity within the dogs in these regions but in general terms Württemberg dogs were seen as the working dogs, they were large, some very large with big bones and a swift gait, many had non-erect ears, a feature not liked by those who preferred the wolf look and show dogs, they had a tendency to curled tails and according to von Stephanitz they did not bubble over with 'joie de vivre'.

The Thuringian dogs were viewed as the show dogs, full of vigour they had the highly prized erect ears, they were wolf grey in colour, wiry and course, they were often small and stocky and according to von Stephanitz highly energetic and often very impudent and even untamable.

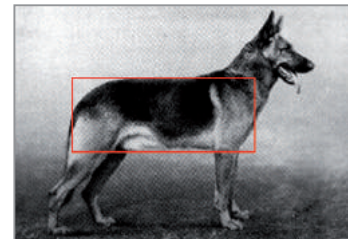
• A Club was formed in 1892 with the objective of utilising the best of the Sheepdogs to develop a superior German Sheepdog that would be called German Shepherd Dog •

Max von Stephanitz sought a dog to be the foundation stud dog and breed model for the SV. At a dog show he attended he saw a dog called Hektor Linksrhein. Hektor was a Thuringian dog bred by a Herr Sparwasser, a very successful breeder of German Sheepdogs who bred under the 'Sparwasser' affix.

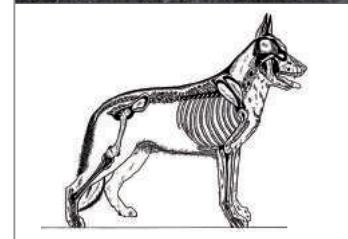
Von Stephanitz in his writing said of Herr Sparwasser "he was unfortunately partial to the "fancy dog". Whilst it's of little importance, logic tells me that Hektor's original name may have been Hektor von Sparwasser; Hektor's litter brother Luchs carried this affix.

Regardless, von Stephanitz renamed him Horand von Grafrath after his own kennel 'von Grafrath'. Horand was recorded in the SV breed register as the first registered German Shepherd Dog.

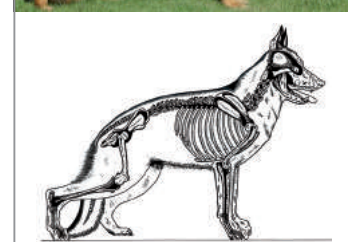
Over 114 years the breed has changed significantly. No other breed of dog has undergone such a profound change. The German Shepherd Show Dog has gone from a body structure that resembled a level rectangle to one resembling a slightly angled egg. Size has always been an issue but more so in recent years and for the SV with its best intent and endeavours over size remains an eluding challenge. However, this is being addressed by the SV currently and that effort will be realised one way or another in 2020.



Past



Present





The Breeds Purpose

The breed was created to be a superior sheep herding, sheep tending, sheep and herdsman protecting working dog inclined to high achievements and by that definition its critical requirements in order of priority for me are:

A general appearance that complies with the standard i.e. it looks like a GSD. Fertility, the ability to reproduce, 2 fully developed testicles in males. Good health. Sound hips and elbows. Firm nerves, self-assured, intelligent, good natured, outgoing, attentive, good watchfulness, willing to please, good protective instincts, good combative instincts, good drive instincts, strong constitution, not overly friendly but not overly aloof and definitely not aggressive or nervous.



Complete dentition - A full and sound mouth. Good colour - no whites including non-albino black point dark eyed whites, which are now a separate breed called White Swiss Shepherd Dog. Size within the standard range give or take 1cm. Effective undercoat. The demonstrated ability to be a fit, strong and effective trotting and endurance dog.

Some people may put all these things in a different order and if they do my only comment is that they should consider the contents of the written standard for stock coats and long stock coats in so far as its determination of disqualifying faults, for example placing correct size ahead of effective trotting ability.



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General Appearance

Quoting the Current SV Breed Standard #
No. 166 – 23.12.2010/EN



VA dog late 1960s



VA dog 2016

In a macro sense the most significant changes in terms of increased genetic frequency took place around the late 80's early 90's and this relates to oversize, the downward bend to the lumbar spine that lowered the hip and knee position and created a slope to the topline and finally, far less defined withers that were created by a rise in the back at the anticlinal region of the spine. In early 2000 came excessive hind angulation, specifically an overlong tibia.

This increased [inclined] the angle of the pelvis [the rule of 27 degrees off a horizontal plane no longer applies even though it is always quoted] exacerbated the slope to the topline, created loose close stepping 'hocks'. This also coincided with overlong tails that on the whole contravene the standard but rarely if ever rate a mention by judges.

The standard calls for a medium size, 55cm to 60cm and 60cm to 65cm 'some latitude being plus or minus 1cm'. Slightly elongated, powerful and well-muscled dog with dry bone and firm overall structure. Dry bone is dense and oval not round and spongy.

Sex differentiation comes not just from a masculine or feminine head but also from robustness, from mass particularly from muscle mass and muscle development. A male should possess greater muscle mass and greater muscle development than a female.

Proportions - slightly elongated; 10% to 17% longer than high used to be 8.5 or 9 to 10. It's the same although for some odd reason 17% seems longer than 8.5 to 10!

Coat

In layman's terms there are 2 types of coat – normal coat and long coat. In breed specific terms normal coat hair is called 'Stock Coat' and long coat hair is called 'Long Stock Coat'.



Stock Coat



Long Stock Coat

Normal coat is dense, straight, harsh and has close lying hair whereas long coats have long, soft, not close fitting hair with feathering on the ears and legs, bushy breeches and a bushy tail. 'Soft hair' is the key word.

Colour

The 'in colour' thanks to Walter and Herman Martin is rich black and gold red with a black mask. In effect and to Walters credit and his marketing genius, in conjunction with a couple of other features Walter created a 'Wienerau brand' and that brand now seen in a far more exaggerated form remains in a prominent place to this very day and in many ways this has seen the demise of moderation and colour variety and particularly the colour wolf grey.

Colours nominated in the standard are black and reddish brown; brown and yellow to light grey markings, black, and grey with darker shadings. White, non-albino, dark eye or not is a disqualifying fault. The signs of paling pigmentation are; lack of mask, pale nails, usually light coloured eyes, orange hair encroaching on or replacing the black and brown hair, light almost white colour on the inside of the rear legs, and the one that's a no brainer is a red tip to the end of the tail as opposed to a black tip.

Weight

Dogs: 30kg to 40kg

Bitches: 22kg to 32kg

Size

Dogs: 60cm to 65cm + or – 1cm

Bitches: 55cm to 60cm + or – 1cm



Head



A beautiful male head, not the broadest skull but a lovely head nonetheless



A beautiful female head with the desired expression

Expressive, alert, noble, a look of keen innate intelligence, dry – meaning not lippy and jowly, well coloured and well pigmented with dark almond shaped eyes. The head must be in proportion to the dog, the bigger the dog the bigger the head should be. The head should be wedge shaped looking down on it. Proportions are 50/50/50 – skull width/skull length/muzzle length. Dry – as in not lippy/jowly – Lower jaw should be strong.



Correct male and female head ratio

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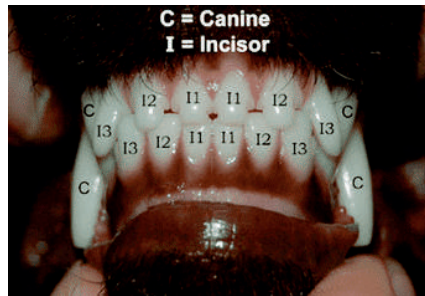
Teeth

42 teeth - upper 20 lower 22.

Teeth must be healthy and strong and clean. Scissor bite - 2mm + gap over or under is an 'eliminating fault', this means no grading. The scissor bite applies to the side of the mouth not just the incisors. All adult teeth should be erupted by age 7 months. Large spaces between the teeth are a fault. Sometimes I have seen a gap, a misalignment where a double P1 has been removed!

A straight dental ridge of the incisors is a fault. Missing teeth are a fault - 1 PM + one other tooth / 1 canine / 1 PM or Molar 2 or 3 teeth Level bite is an eliminating fault - no grading. There are degrees of this though. A test is to flick your nail against the face of the teeth and if there is a defined click of the nail it is noted but acceptable.

A 'small degree' of level bite will allow class II classification only.



Correct bite, teeth size and positioning - Scissor Bite

Overshot bite and undershot bite is an eliminating fault. Undershot bite - when the lower jaw is longer than upper jaw - is rarely seen. It is very rare to get missing canines or incisors.

Wry bite is an eliminating fault - this can be seen with the mouth closed by looking down on the dog's muzzle that will show a slight bend.

Eyes

Medium size. Almond shaped. Slightly slanting. Not protruding. As dark as possible - past references to 'matching the surrounding coat' no longer applies. Light eyes are not desirable - this is an aesthetic issue, as with round eyes they spoil the expression, light eyes are noted in the standard as being an indicator of paling pigment.

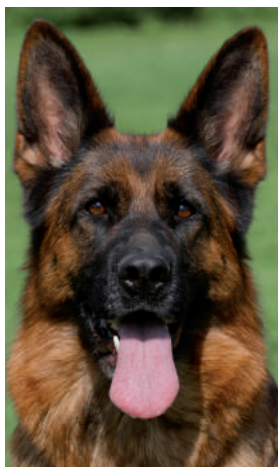
Ears

Medium size. Carried erect. Pointed. Facing forward. Semi-erect ears, low set ears, inward tipped ears and infirm ears are a 'serious fault' such dogs are dropped a grading. Ears should be in proportion to the size of the dog, a growing trend is for ears getting too large, a little thin in their leather and they move around during gaiting and sometimes we see ears that have a roll backed tip.

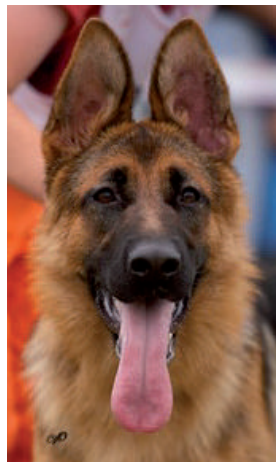
Ear Types:



Correct ears



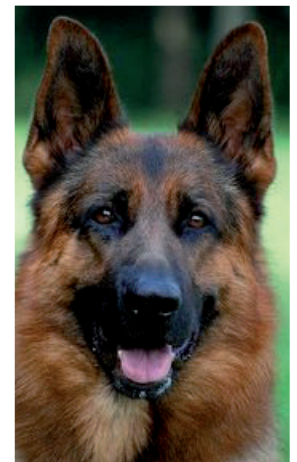
Low set ears



Large open inward tilted ears



Large ears



Soft ears roll back tip



Neck

Strong and well muscled. Carried at about 45 degrees in stance and lower – about 15 degrees in gaiting. Good length - about the same length as the radius - elbow to wrist. Not short.

Withers

The withers are the section that goes from the base of neck, from the last cervical vertebrae, to the start of the back, this incorporates the first 5 or 6 of the 13 thoracic vertebrae spines. As a general rule the majority of pedigree dogs have the tops of the thoracic spines located level with or just below the top of the shoulder blades. German Shepherd Dogs with a high anticlinal back relative to the tops of the shoulder blades generally have the tops of the thoracic spines T2 > T3 level with or just above the top of the shoulder blades [10mm > 15mm] and German Shepherd Dogs with a lower anticlinal spine position will have the tops of the thoracic spines level with or just below the tops of the shoulder blades.

The developmental changes that have taken place within the withers of the German Shepherd Show Dog are seen below and as can be seen, the impact on the withers shape and definition from both the side and cross section is quite profound. The most efficient position for the thoracic spines relative to the tops of the shoulder blades is open to argument. An argument that can never be resolved in scientific terms due the complexities involved in movement during the trot.



Long withers, well laid shoulder blade and correct length and strength of neck



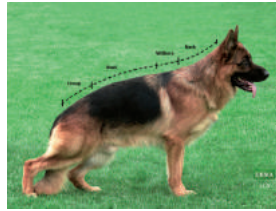
Short withers; slightly steep shoulder blade and short neck



High long sloping withers



Level withers, downward bend to the lumbar spine - curved backline



The back as defined in the FCI/SV standard



Straight back and straight lumbar spine



Straight back and bend to a straight lumbar spine



Curved back created by a downward lumbar spine bend



Curved back and bend to the lumbar spine. As with the bitch seen above, the lumbar spine is straight and this creates the 'peak' at the thoracic lumbar transition point.



Straight level back, high hip position, level withers and straight level lumbar spine



High long sloping withers with a straight slightly sloping back and straight lumbar spine



Croup

The croup is primarily formed by the pelvis starting at the iliac crest, the pin bones, includes the tail vertebrae, dermis, skin, muscle etc. It should be long and slightly sloping at about 23 degrees [equates to approximately 27 degrees to the horizontal plain through the pelvis]



Very good length of croup = wide thigh

Tail

The standard requires the tail to reach at least to the hock 'but not beyond the middle of the hock' and hang in a gentle curve. The tail is a measure of the dog's soul, he communicates with it and perhaps it is useful for balancing in movement especially turning at speed but this is a point of conjecture and debate.

‘The tail is a measure of the dog's soul, he communicates with it and perhaps it is useful for balancing in movement especially turning at speed but this is a point of conjecture and debate.’

Forehand



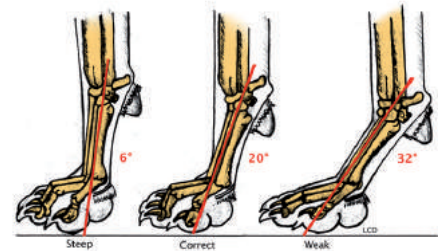
Scapula/shoulder blades contribute to forward propulsion, assist the front legs to lift and swing and help absorb shock. Tradition has it that they should be set at approximately 45 degrees to the horizontal as seen in my diagram however there is argument for 55 degrees, which I support. The ridge that runs longitudinally through the scapula gives it reinforcement.

The scapula is only attached to the trunk by muscles and tendons and it oscillates back and forth as it directs energy to the upper arm and on to the forelegs. The angle of the shoulder blade determines the angle of the foreleg at its [natural] fully extended forward reach.

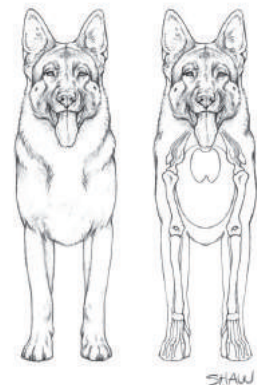
Ideal Shoulder and Upperarm Length and Angle

The upper arm effectively transfers the energy, the forward shift in the dogs centre of gravity to the foreleg in its back and forth pendulum swing phases and is pulled forward by a long muscle attached to the base of the skull and rearward by two muscles attached to the rib cage. It does not extend past the vertical in its forward swing phase. Ideally it should be set at about 53 degrees off horizontal and be 10% longer than the scapula.

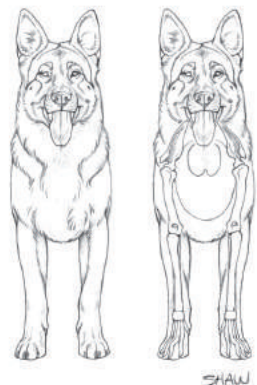
Pasterns are a collection of seven bones and the pasterns should be 1/3 the length of the forearm - the radius - and set at 20 to 22 degrees and effectively act as shock absorbers when the dog is walking, trotting etc. and have a significant flexion and extension range.



Through their ligaments during gaiting as the stretch they store energy and via this contribute to the forward drive. Feet should be rounded and tight, nails black. The feet should be pointing straight ahead when viewed from the front.



Standing correct in front



Standing wide in front



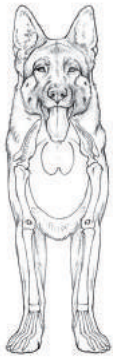
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Standing east west



Standing narrow in front



Stepping correct in front



Forechest

This is created by the prosternum and should be about 50mm forward of the point of the shoulder. Overdeveloped forechests, i.e. a prosternum projecting too far forward can give the illusion that a dog with a steep upperarm has a very good angle of the upperarm.



Correct forechest (and correct length and angle of the shoulder and upperarm)

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Underchest

The sternum forms the base of the underchest and anchors the rib cage and gives support to the elbows. In terms of genetic frequency, chests are getting deeper. Ideally the chest should be about 45% of the dog's height, this was the norm many years ago but most are now at around 50%.

The chest's primary function is to provide protection to the heart and lungs. The ribs not going back far enough create a short underchest and this reduces vital organ space. This 'tuck up' is beneficial to galloping as it allows greater back flexing, increases speed and increases stride, this is seen in Greyhounds for example but it is not desirable for a trotting endurance dog.



Well developed under chest



Short under chest [straight back]

Hindquarters

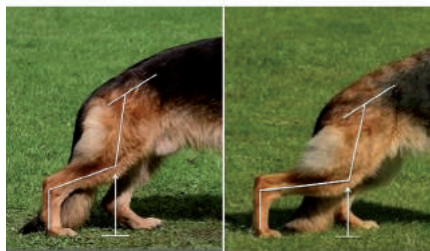
The hindquarters specifically their muscles provide the bulk of the drive that gives forward propulsion.

For reasons of balance and equitable transfer of energy the upper thigh (femur) and lower thigh (tibia) are about the same length and are very roughly speaking the same length as the shoulder blade and upper arm.

What is overangulation?

A misnomer, really. The word 'overangulation' is generally used to describe a dog where the hock, when vertical, extends too far back past a vertical line dropped from the dog's buttocks because the tibia is too long. The lengths of the femur 'primarily' determine hindquarter angulation and tibia and it is generally the tibia.

In quantifiable terms the general definition for 'very good hind angulation' is when the femur and tibia bones are the correct length and angle.



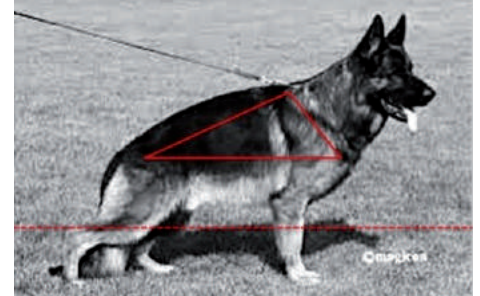
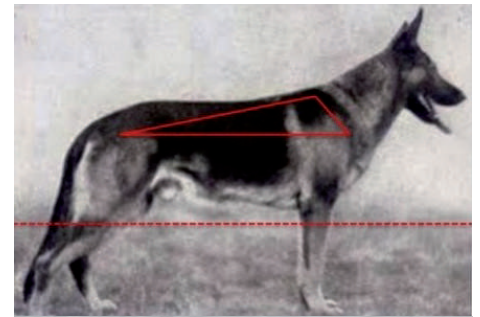
Correct hind angulation

Overangulation

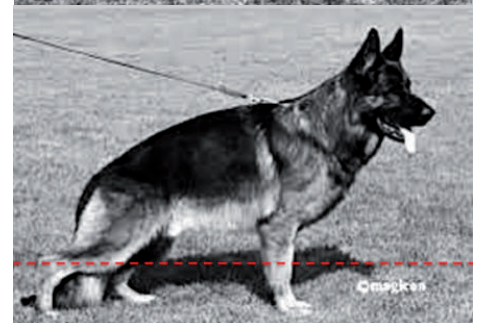
Hip Joint

In a moderate trotting phase the load on the hip joint is six times the dog's bodyweight and that is an enormous load - 170/180 kilos! Hip joints relative to the withers pivot point are lower than they once were because of the downward bend/curve to the lumbar spine.

This has an impact on a number of issues pertaining to movement such as maneuverability, energy consumption, endurance, and increasing the hip joint angle to cover the same stride length.



Shift in pivot points - Alongside an increased trunk/ribcage and associated increase in mass and substance, the most significant change in the structure of the German Shepherd Dog since its inception in 1900



The impact of a downward curve to the lumbar spine and a longer lower thigh - increased topline slope, hip and knee closer to the ground, flatter angle to the tibia and lower relationship of the knee to the elbow.



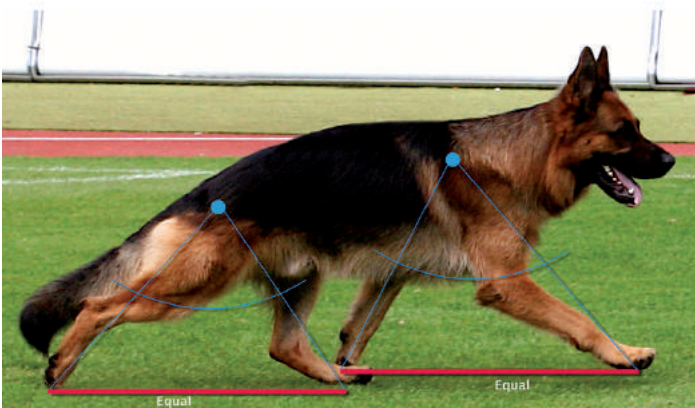
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The Queensland Dog World

Movement

This is correct movement - no exaggeration, balanced, harmonious, the withers have good height and the backline is at a slight not excessive slope, the feet are travelling at about [standing] wrist height from the ground, the forward extended foreleg is at the right angle to the ground being a parallel angle to the well laid shoulder blade and it is not being lifted at the elbow, the pasterns are firm, the front foot seen here at full extension is in a vertical line midway between the eyes and nose.

There is moderate not excessive crossover between the rear and front feet, the metatarsus [hock] at the fully extended forward position is well angled to the ground and consequently not in contact with the ground, the tibia and femur are fully extended with the tibia at the correct angle to the ground and there is the desired angle of the metatarsus at its full rearward extension.



Blue dots are the rear and fore pivot points. Ideally the rear extension distance should equal the forward extension distance. When this balance does not exist there will be a footfall-timing problem and this is manifested in the dog having to adjust its footfall. This footfall adjustment is often seen in over-angulated dogs as a high abrupt lifting of the forelegs from the elbow.

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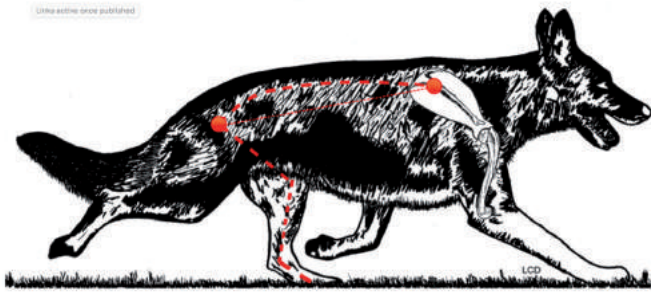
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Continued from page 27



The two drawings above show the optimum transmission line that is generated from the rear to fore pivot points [red dots] on a dog with a straight spine and high hip position [black and white diagram] and impeded transmission line that is generated from the rear to fore pivot points on a dog with a curved spine and low hip position [coloured photograph].

The GSD is a trotter and the fore and hind limbs must be co-ordinated in other words balanced [not equal] in their length and angle so that the dog can transfer energy from the hindquarters to the forehand without any essential change of the topline so that the forehand limbs can fully maximise that energy. Key elements to an effective gait are the dog being of correct size, having correct proportions of the body, having good length and angles of the bones and those lengths and angles being balanced against each other.

At its optimum this will give a gait that is far reaching, a gait that gives the impression of being effortless and travelling 'relatively level' over the ground. The head in movement is pushed forward to shift the centre of gravity forward and with a slightly raised tail the result is a consistent smooth trot showing a gently curved uninterrupted upper line from the ear tips over the neck and back to the end of the tail.

Harmonious, balanced, effortless, flowing, ground covering and enduring movement as described in the opening preamble only comes about if everything is in balance. If the croup is short and steep causing reduced thrust and reduced ground cover even if the dog has a perfect forehand the dog can only correspond or perhaps a better word is match the rear hand. The fore reach will be shortened even though it may be able to reach twice as far as it does.

The reverse applies with having an ideal hindquarter but short steep upperarm, the dog will react in several ways; it will reduce its hind drive to match the forehands capacity thereby not overloading the forehand or it will deliver the drive unencumbered but lift the forelegs at the elbow as in high hackney stepping to disperse the unwanted thrust. Maximizing energy and ensuring endurance is the best outcome therefore the former action is preferred. There are endless combinations to this but you have got the idea of compensatory drive and reach and the fact that sometimes two faults are better than one!



Finally, all of the above means 'absolutely nothing' if the dog is not trustworthy, if it does not have the right attitude, protective instincts, character, abundant energy, instinctive drive, firm nerves, sound outgoing self assured temperament and inherent eager willingness to run, work and please.

The above information is an extract from a full article written by Mr Louis Donald, a licensed ANKC Group 5 Judge and Specialist German Shepherd Dog Judge with over 50 years of experience in the breed. The full article can be viewed on his website:



www.louisdonald.com



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THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG GALLERY INSIGHT

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