

Judges Education Seminar

the Italian Greyhound



Seminar Presenter:

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Breed History

- ◆ Smallest of the family of sighthounds.
- ◆ Believed to have originated more than 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean basin.
- ◆ By the Middle Ages the IG was distributed throughout Southern Europe, mostly owned by Nobility.
- ◆ Due to its popularity in Italy it became known as the “Italian Greyhound”.
- ◆ Spread throughout Europe arriving in England in the 17th Century.
- ◆ During the Victorian era in England, smaller dogs were fashionable. The IG was bred to be a small companion dog and was no longer used for hunting.
- ◆ The Italian Greyhound Club of America was founded in 1954.



Foundation Stock

- ◆ A true sighthound in miniature.
 - ◆ His small size is the result of selective breeding.
 - ◆ The Italian Greyhound is not a bred down (toy) version of the Greyhound, rather they share similar ancestors.
 - ◆ No evidence that other breeds were used in the creation of the Italian Greyhound.
- ◆ The Italian Greyhound was used in the creation and refinement of:
 - ◆ Whippet
 - ◆ Miniature Pinscher
 - ◆ These crosses occurred during the 1800's and early 1900's.
 - ◆ This is the reason for the tan markings and brindle disqualifications.

Breed Characteristics (Purpose or Function)

- ◆ Difference of Opinion (likely he filled both roles)
 - ◆ Bred for hunting small game
 - ◆ Pet and companion
- ◆ A Talented Multi-Purpose Dog
 - ◆ Conformation, Obedience, Agility, Lure Coursing, FastCat, Fly Ball, Therapy Dogs



*An Air of Fragility Hides the
Breed's Hardiness*



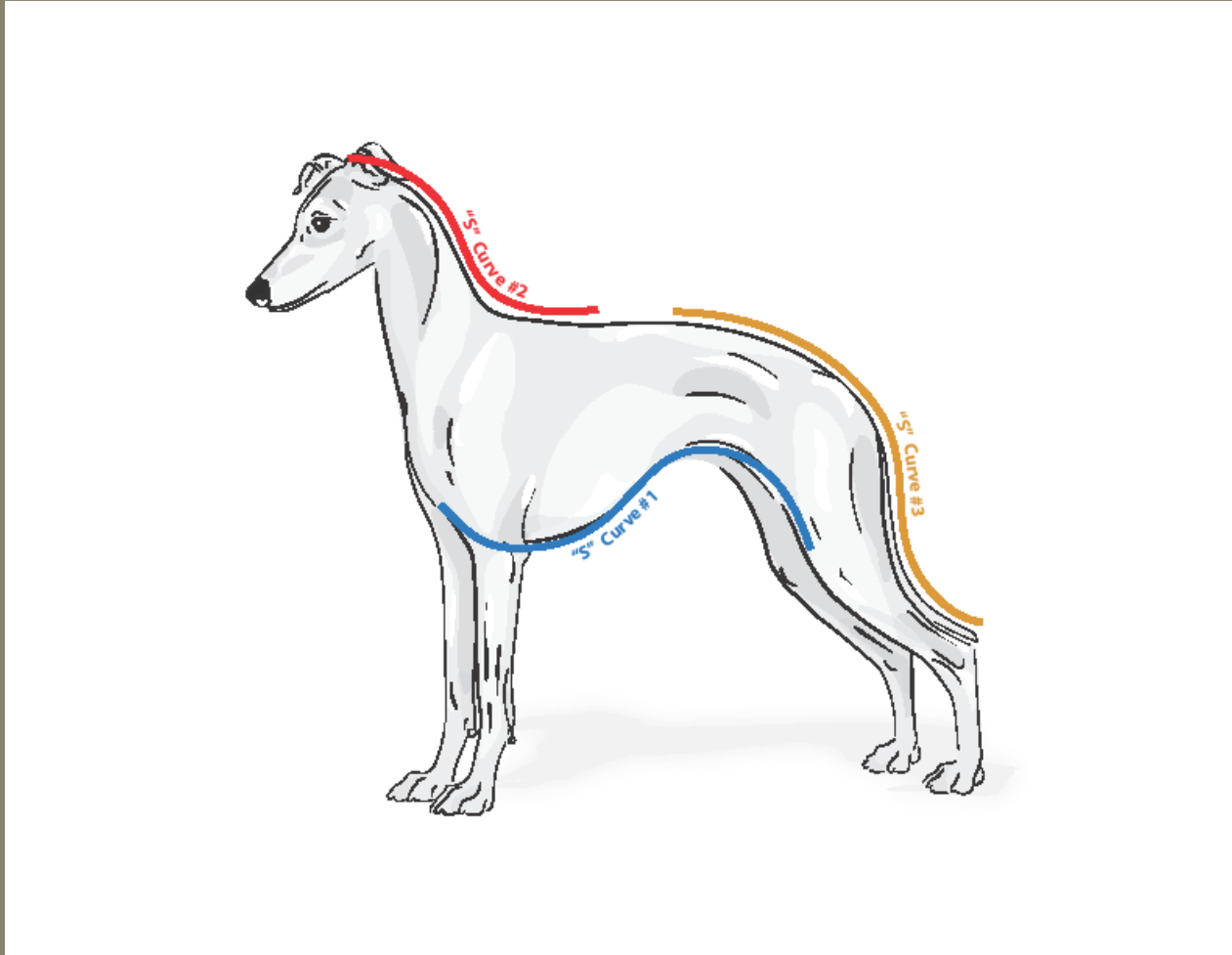
Temperament

- ◆ Prized for their sweet dispositions.
 - ◆ As adults they reserve their most affectionate and playful behavior for family and friends.
 - ◆ They are bright, intelligent and active.
 - ◆ Should never be snappy or aggressive.
 - ◆ Will tolerate touch from a stranger, but not welcome it.
 - ◆ Cold hands are strongly disliked and may cause a dog to pull away.
 - ◆ Can occasionally be moody and reluctant to alert ears.

Description

- ◆ The Italian Greyhound is very similar to the Greyhound but much smaller and more slender in all proportions and of ideal elegance and grace.
 - ✦ While similar in general appearance to the Greyhound, there are very distinct differences.
 - ✦ Well balanced, medium length, short coupled with long legs.
 - ✦ High stepping and free front movement.
 - ✦ The silhouette is a series of smooth S curves.
 - ✦ Underline of chest and tuck-up most pronounced S curve.
 - ✦ Line from the croup down the rear leg to the hock is another S curve.
 - ✦ Topline curves gradually from the start of the loin drooping gradually at the hindquarters.

Description – S Curves



Series of smooth S curves.

Think Symmetrical

Correct Breed Type



Incorrect Breed Type



Head

- ◆ Narrow and long, tapering to nose, with a slight suggestion of stop.
- ◆ Slight suggestion does not mean NO stop or downfaced.
- ◆ Length of head should compliment the size of the IG.
- ◆ Ideally muzzle length should be equal to the length of skull.



Heads



Incorrect Head
Toyish



Skull

- ◆ Rather long, almost flat.
 - ✦ Should not appear chiseled.
 - ✦ Coarse, wide back skulls are not correct.



Correct Skull Shape



Muzzle

◆ Long and fine.

- ◆ Sculptured under the eye.
- ◆ Fits smoothly onto the head.
- ◆ No coarseness or cheekiness.
- ◆ Should not appear as if stuck on as an afterthought.
- ◆ Lips fit smoothly over the teeth.
- ◆ Lack of underjaw is a problem in the breed.

Muzzles



Correct



Incorrect
(Coarse)



Incorrect
(Small)

Nose

- ◆ Dark. It may be black or brown or in keeping with the color of the dog. A light or partly pigmented nose is a fault.
 - ◆ Nose color should be as dark as possible.
 - ◆ A dilute dog's nose will have pigment that is in keeping with the coat color of the dog (i.e. blue or brown).
 - ◆ A light or partly pigmented nose is a fault.

Noses



Correct. Nose is dark.



Correct.
Dilute dogs will have
dilute colored noses.



Incorrect. A Fault.
Nose is not completely
filled in.

Teeth

- ◆ Scissors bite. A badly undershot or overshot mouth is a fault.
 - ✦ Overshot, small crowded, crooked teeth, often with poor or rough enamel are breed problems.

Correct bite



Eyes

- ◆ Dark, bright, intelligent, medium in size. Very light eyes are a fault.
 - ◆ A pleasing expression is important. Good expression appears loving and intelligent.
 - ◆ Eyes should be as dark as possible, bright and alert but soft.
 - ◆ “Deer in the headlights” look is incorrect.
 - ◆ Small eyes give a hard mean expression.
 - ◆ Light eyes of pale brown or gray tones cause a staring, hollow-eyed look, detracting from breed type due to a harsh expression. Blue and yellow eyes are not correct.
 - ◆ Dilutes will often have lighter eye color.
 - ◆ This is acceptable as long as the eye color is not lighter than the coat color.

Eyes



Correct. Dark eyes.



Correct. Coat color eyes.



Incorrect. Light eyes.
A Fault.



Incorrect. Small eyes.



Incorrect. Blue eyes.

Ears

- ◆ Small, fine in texture; thrown back and folded except when alerted, then carried folded at right angles to the head. Erect or button ears severely penalized.
 - ✦ Also known as a “Rose” ear.
 - ✦ Examine the ear leather by running the ears through your thumb and fingers to feel the texture.
 - ✦ Feel for glue or scarring on the ears.
 - ✦ Heavy ear leather may not fold properly into a correct rose ear.
 - ✦ Erect and button ears still are a problem in the breed and are considered a **Severe Fault**.
 - ✦ Alert the ears by using a soft sound.
 - ✦ DO NOT drop keys or other objects that will cause the dog to lower its head and the ears to open up. It is preferable to allow the handler to alert the IG.

Ears



Incorrect.
Large, low set ears.



Correct ears



Erect ears.
Severe Fault.



Button ears.
Severe Fault.

Neck

- ◆ Long, slender and gracefully arched.
 - ✦ Should fit smoothly into the shoulder.
 - ✦ Short, thick necks or ewe-necks lack elegance and are undesirable.
 - ✦ When the IG is moving the neck is carried more upright than a Whippet or Greyhound.

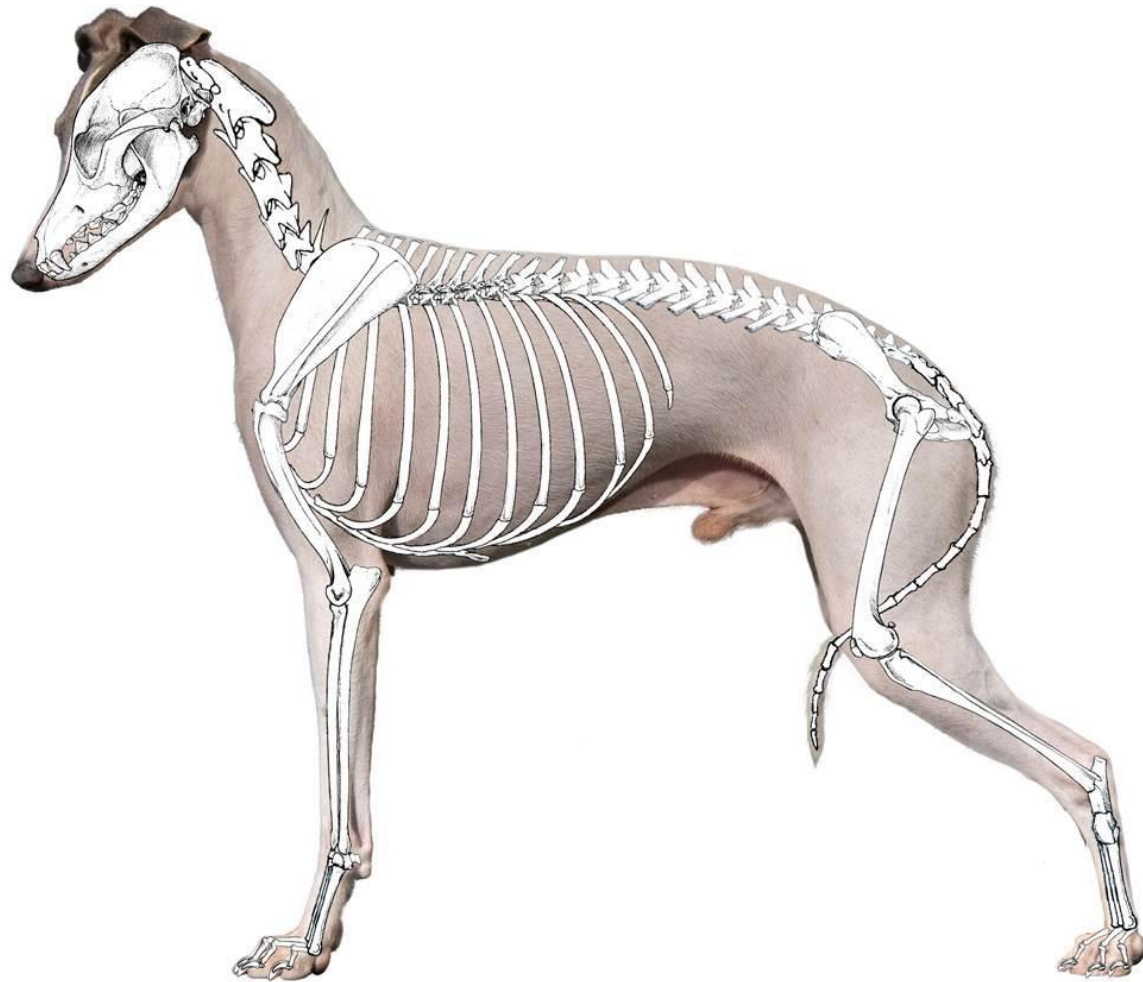


Short, ewe neck.

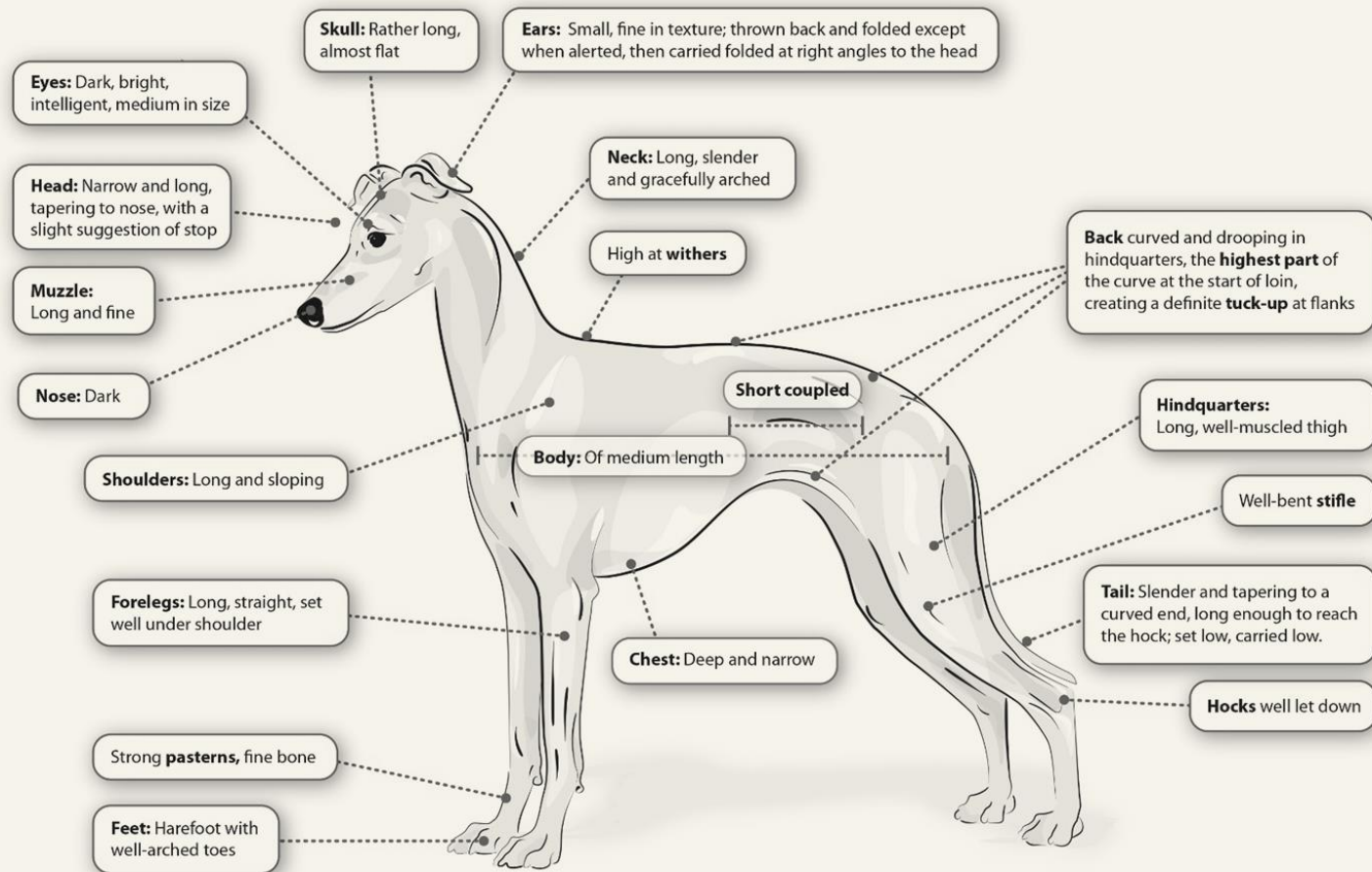


Correct neck.

Body - IG Skeleton



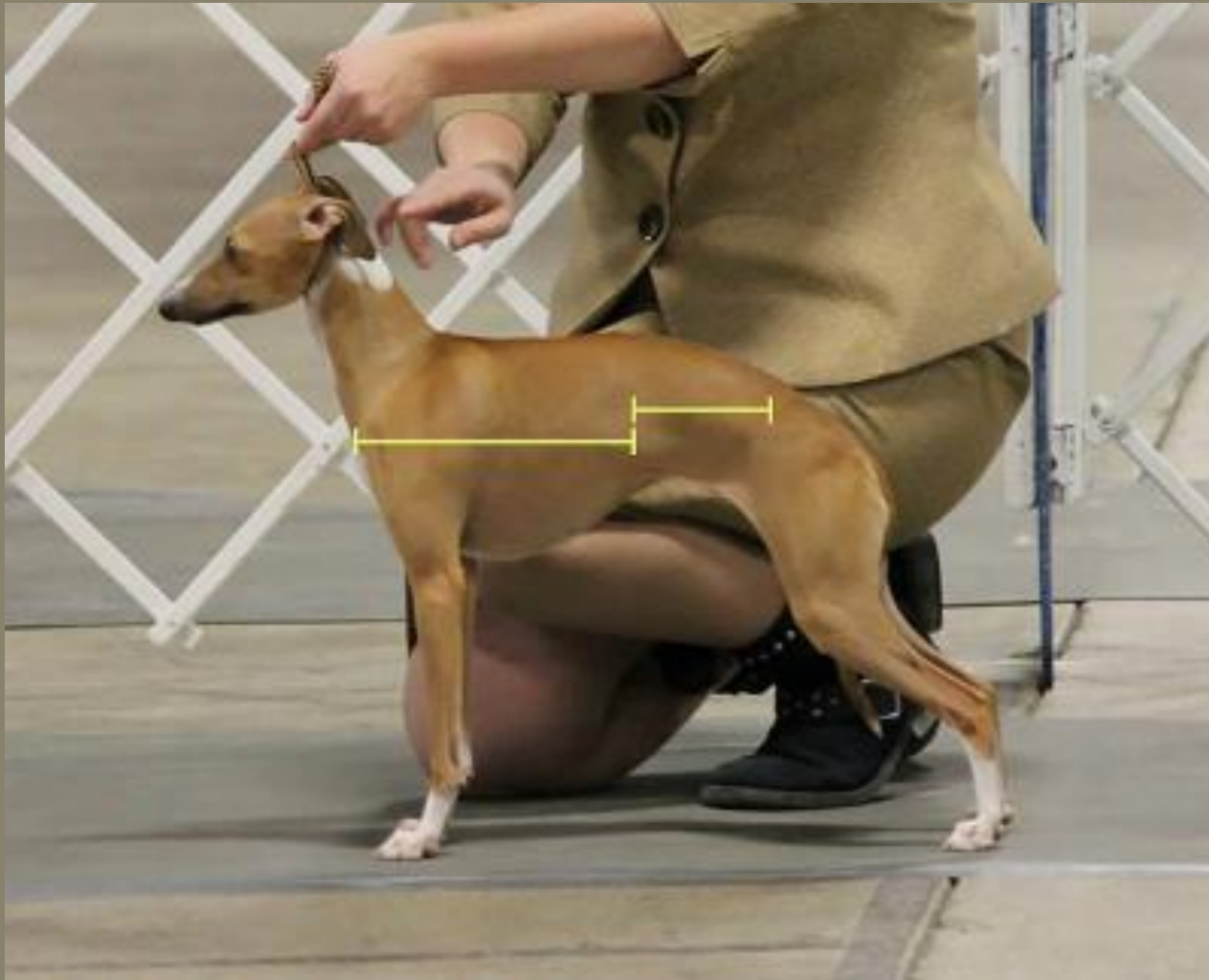
Body – Bullet Points



Body

- ◆ Of medium length, short coupled; high at withers, back curved and drooping at hindquarters, the highest point of curve at start of loin, creating a definite tuck-up at flanks.
 - ◆ The eye should be drawn to the withers as a measuring point for height and as a measuring point for proper topline.
 - ◆ Highest point of the topline curve (at start of the loin) should be level to or only slightly lower than the withers.
 - ◆ Hip bones should be significantly lower than the withers.
 - ◆ Think curves, not straight lines, flat surfaces or sharp angles.
 - ◆ Camel humps, wheel backs or extreme drop-offs are exaggerations and are not proper toplines.
 - ◆ Never make final judgment of the topline while the dog is on the table.
 - ◆ Topline should ALWAYS be judged when the dog is moving and free stacking on the ground.

Body - Medium Length, Short Coupled



Body & Topline

Correct



Incorrect

Double Suspension Gallop

- ◆ The IG is a small sighthound. The entire skeletal and muscle structure must be correct to allow the breed to run at extreme speed, while flexible enough to maneuver while chasing.
- ◆ A correct shoulder and rear assembly provides for reach and drive to propel the IG forward.
- ◆ The correct topline will allow the back to flex from a straight position to an arched position.



Shoulders

◆ Long and sloping.

- ◆ Shoulder layback should be moderate.
- ◆ Angle of shoulder and upper-arm match rear angulation.
- ◆ Italian Greyhound shoulder layback and placement is responsible for a correct unique high stepping gait.

Shoulders



Good moderate
shoulder angulation



Straight shoulders

Chest

◆ Deep and narrow.

- ◆ Narrow, but not so narrow that it appears both legs are coming out of the same socket (aka Cathedral Front).
- ◆ Chest should be well muscled.
 - ◆ Not wide or barrel-chested.
- ◆ From the side, point of forechest should be seen and felt between the shoulder points.
- ◆ The rib cage is oval shape, long and carried well back in the body.
- ◆ Lowest point of brisket should be as close as possible to the elbow.

Chest



Correct.



Incorrect.
Too narrow.



Incorrect.
Too wide.

Forelegs

- ◆ Long, straight, set well under shoulder; strong pasterns, fine bone.
 - ✦ Long legs contribute to the elegance of the IG silhouette.
 - ✦ Think “Fine Bone”. Bone should be correct for size of the dog.
 - ✦ Round heavy bone is a problem in the breed.
 - ✦ Legs should exhibit oval bone.
 - ✦ Strong slightly bent pasterns that must be flexible.
 - ✦ Does not mean rigid and completely upright or knuckling over.

Forelegs



Correct front
and forelegs.



Incorrect.
East-West Front



Short legs, thickset
front lacks elegance.

Hindquarters

- ◆ Long, well-muscled thigh; hind legs parallel when viewed from behind, hocks well let down, well-bent stifle.
 - ◆ Rear angulation must match front.
 - ◆ Thigh muscles should be “well-defined”, but not bulging.
 - ◆ Coursing and racing IG’s may have very developed muscles.
 - ◆ A weak rear can be easily hidden on the table.
 - ◆ Check for weak rear when the handler is baiting the dog free stacked on the ground.

Hindquarters

Correct.

Good rear angulation
with well let down hocks.



Incorrect. Lacks angulation.



Incorrect. Too much
angulation.

Feet

◆ Harefoot with well-arched toes. Removal of dewclaws optional.

- ◆ The two middle toes are longer than the outside toes.
- ◆ Cat feet and flat feet are incorrect.



Correct.
Hare feet.



Incorrect.
Flat feet.



Incorrect.
Cat feet.

Tail

- ◆ Slender and tapering to a curved end, long enough to reach the hock; set low, carried low. Ring tail a serious fault, gay tail a fault.
 - ✦ Examine by gently holding the tail down along the backside of the rear leg to see if it reaches the hock.
 - ✦ Do not fault a bump or bend due to a break, this is very common.
 - ✦ A tail carried in any position above the topline is considered a “gay” tail. Gay tails are a fault.
 - ✦ Tails set too high and/or carried too high detract from the smooth S-curve of the topline.
 - ✦ Many puppies under a year old, will move with a high or happy tail.
 - ✦ A ring tail curls back onto itself and is a serious fault carried in any position.

Tails



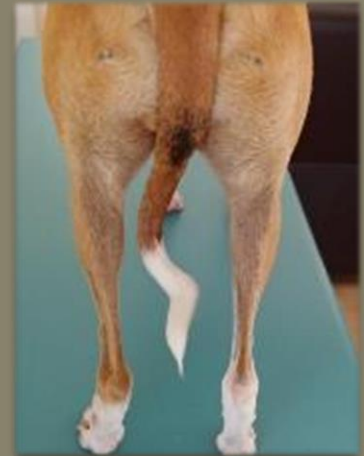
Correct
tail carriage
and placement.



Ring tail, a serious fault.



Gay tail, a fault.



Broken tail. Not a fault.

Coat and Color

- ◆ Coat – Skin fine and supple, hair short, glossy like satin and soft to the touch.
 - ◆ Color Dilute Alopecia (CDA) may be seen in older dilute colored dogs.
- ◆ Color – Any color and markings are acceptable except that a dog with brindle markings and a dog with tan markings normally found on black and tan dogs of other breeds must be disqualified.
 - ◆ There is NO preferred color and no undesirable color other than the disqualifying ones.

Coat and Color



Coat and Color Disqualifying Colors



Tan Markings



This is NOT tan markings. It is a blue fawn with a blue mask.



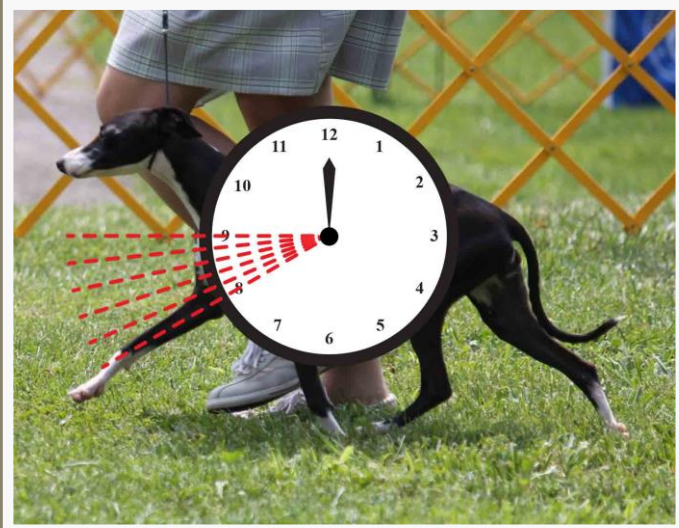
Brindle

Action (Movement)

◆ Action – High stepping and free, front and hind legs to move forward in a straight line.

- ◆ High stepping and free gait is an important characteristic of correct breed type.
- ◆ The preferred high stepping front lift should fall between 15 and 20 minutes (or 40 to 45 minutes) past the hour. Deviations from this range are less desirable.
- ◆ Hackney, goose stepping and daisy clipping are not correct high stepping and free movement.
- ◆ Correct movement has good reach in front and rear drive.
- ◆ Hind legs follow the front legs on a straight track, converging **very** slightly towards a center line as speed increases but not to the point of single tracking.
- ◆ Legs and feet should never cross or interfere with each other.
- ◆ Proper ring gait is a moderate speed trot. Do not confuse fast movement with good movement. Moving an IG too fast is often used to cover up faulty movement – ask the handler to slow down.

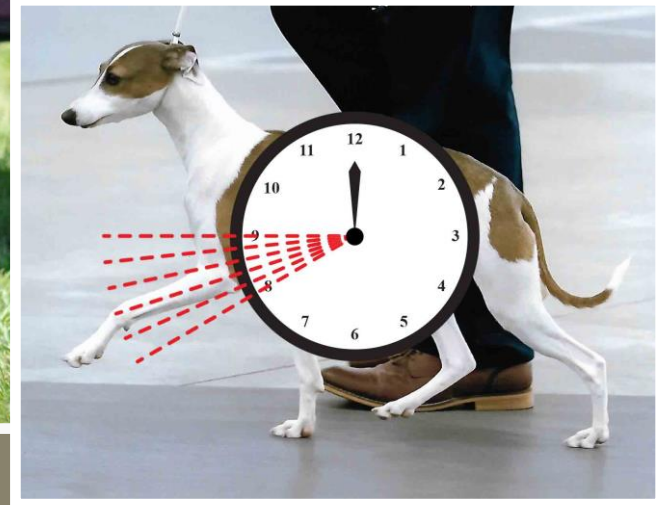
Action – High Stepping



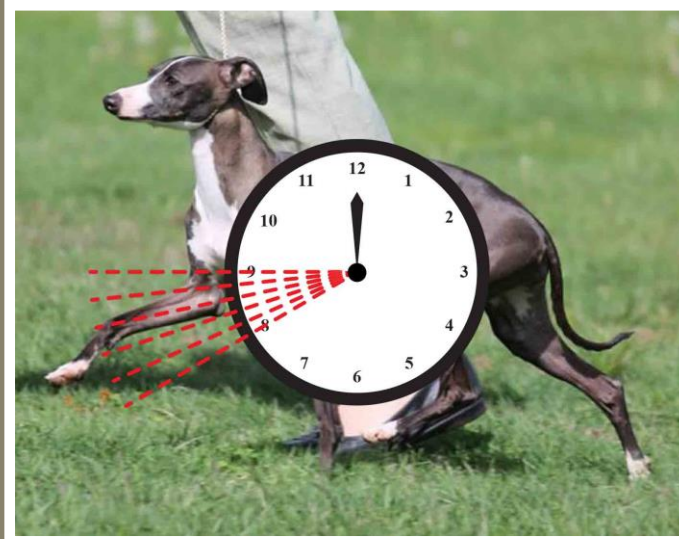
40 minutes



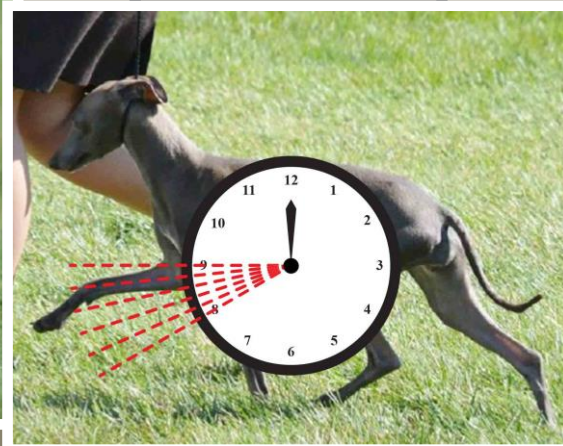
41 minutes



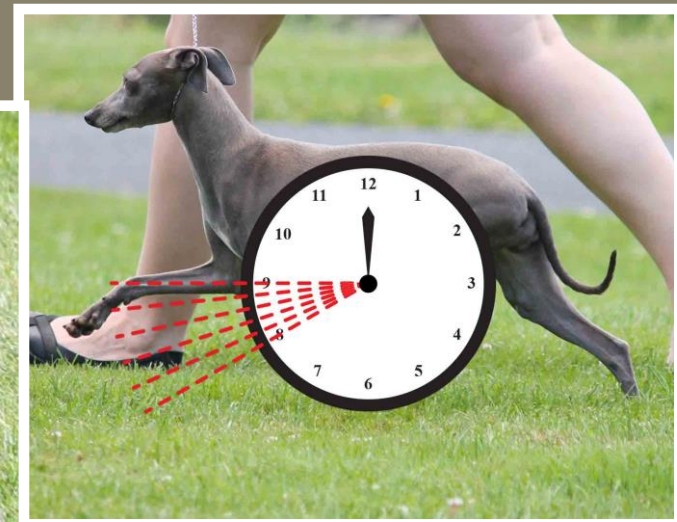
42 minutes



43 minutes



44 minutes



45 minutes

Action – Correct Movement



Action – Incorrect Movement

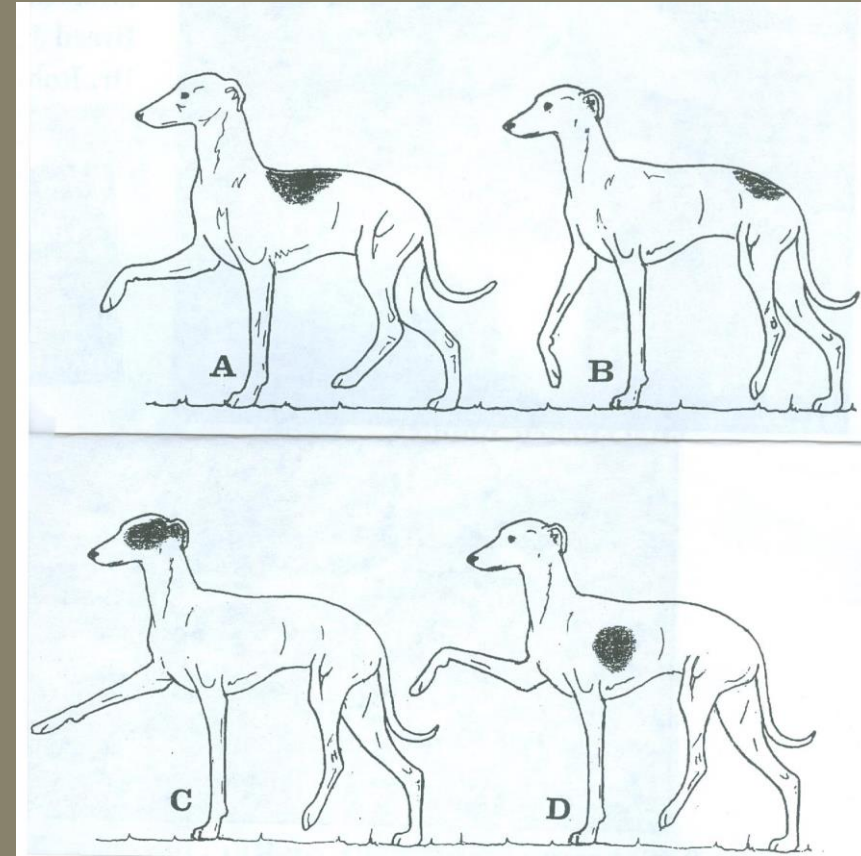
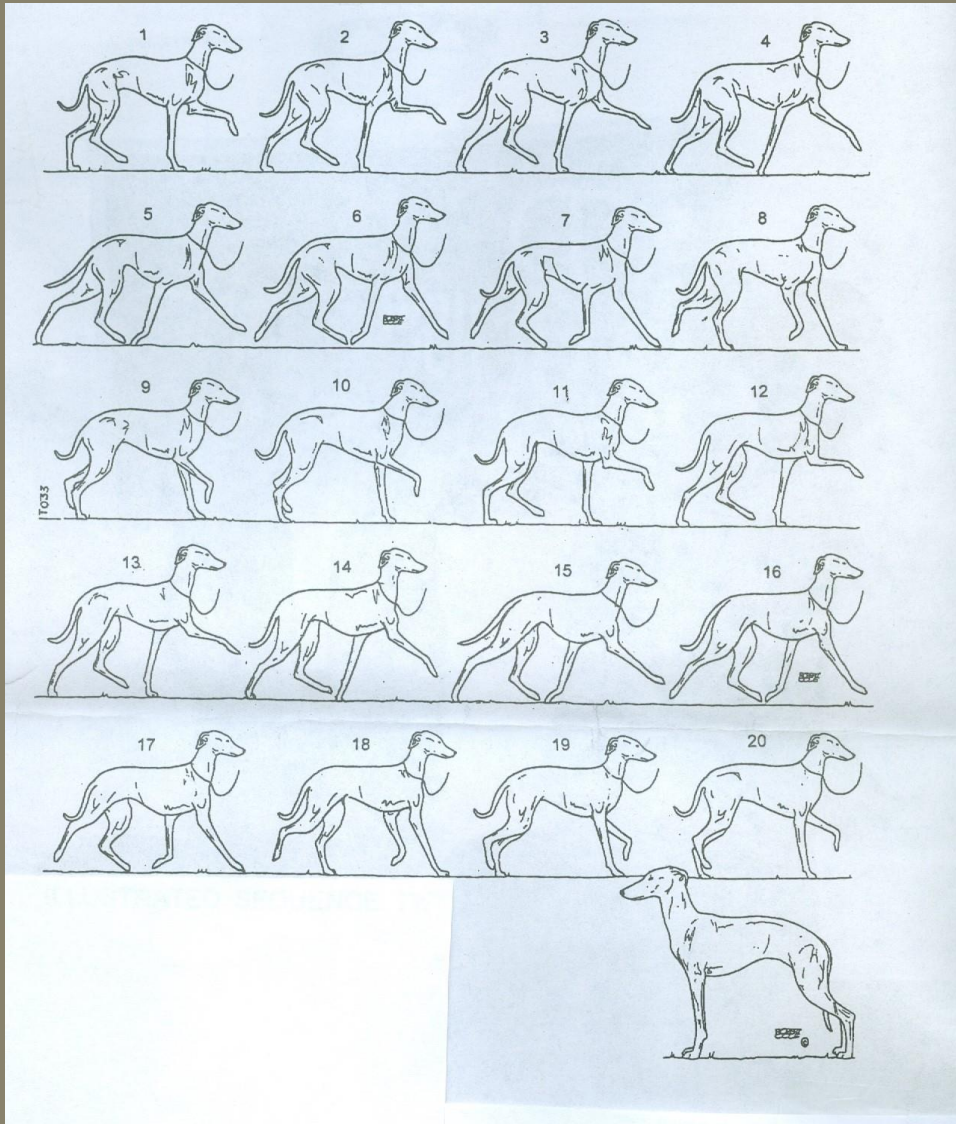
Both dogs lack front lift with a downhill appearance while moving.



Movement Illustration

Complete movement sequence of the Italian Greyhound.

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- A – Correct
- B – Daisy clipping
- C – Goose-stepping
- D – Hackney like

Size

◆ Height at withers ideally 13 to 15 inches.

- ✦ It is not uncommon to see dogs and bitches that are 15” to 17” tall.
- ✦ It is important to note that sizes under 13” or over 15” are NOT a fault or disqualification. However, size other than the ideal 13” to 15” should be considered when judging the overall quality of a dog. Do not discount a taller dog that is the better overall specimen.
- ✦ **A good small dog is preferable to an equally good tall one but a good tall dog is preferable to a poor smaller one.**
- ✦ The IG is a toy breed not a small Whippet.

Size



IG & Whippet



IG, Whippet & Greyhound



IG's
13" vs 16"

Essential Characteristics to be considered when judging an IG:

(Not in any order)

- ◆ Correct Topline standing and on the move – a structurally correct IG will maintain a correct topline on the move.
ALWAYS judge the topline on the move.
 - ◆ The IG silhouette can be deceiving in a hand stack as most IG's will appear to have a correct topline.
 - ◆ All too often that topline changes dramatically on the move.
- ◆ Moderation vs. extremes – the IG silhouette is comprised of a series of S curves. All curves are smooth with no extreme angles.
- ◆ The IG should exhibit effortless, smooth high stepping and free front movement with noticeable front reach and rear drive.
- ◆ Exude grace and elegance.

Judging the Italian Greyhound

Areas of Concern – not in any order

- ◆ Topline – low at withers (standing & moving), flat topline while moving, extreme topline curve.
- ◆ Body – long loin, incorrect proportional body and leg length.
- ◆ Size – 13” to 15” is ideal.
- ◆ Tail – tails set too high/carried too high.
- ◆ Ears – ears that do not fold into a correct rose ear (button and erect ears).
- ◆ Eyes – small eyes, very light eyes
- ◆ Movement – loss of characteristic high stepping gait. Front may have lift, but many lack reach. Goose stepping and hackney gaits are wrong.
- ◆ Feet – flat or cat feet, should be a harefoot with well arched toes.
- ◆ Head – short muzzles, lack of underjaw, no stop.

Judging the Italian Greyhound

How to Examine

- ◆ With the dog on the table, stand a few feet away to check the outline. Then approach the IG from the front. Use hands gently but decisively, not tentatively, to feel the structure.
- ◆ The IG does not need or like to be manhandled on the table.
- ◆ Do not hover over the IG while walking down the line to take a closer look.
- ◆ Allow the handler to alert the IG to show the ears.

This is an IG

