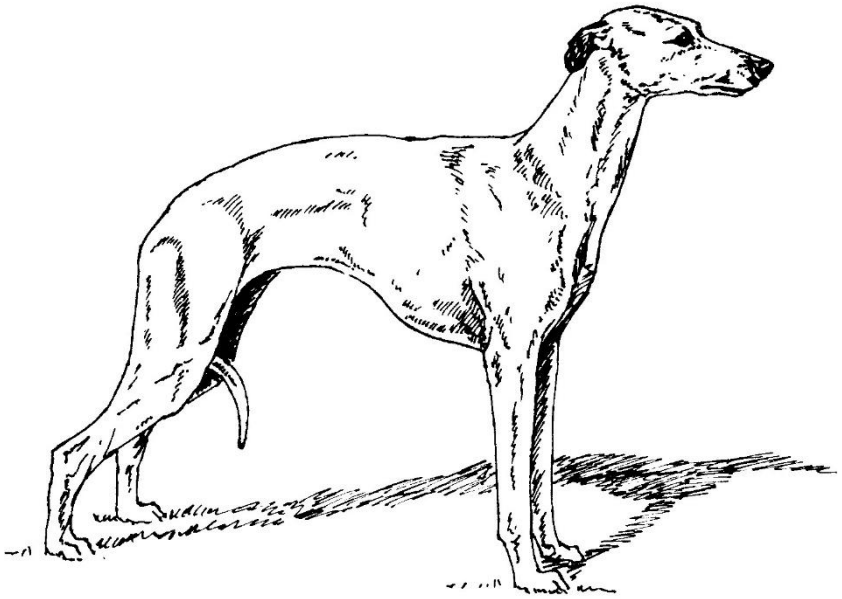
THE ILLUSTRATED STANDARD OF THE WHIPPET



THE WHIPPET BREED COUNCIL

With thanks to
Boz. Cracker, Henry, Lucy
Millie, Rosie and Stella

THE
ILLUSTRATED STANDARD
OF THE
WHIPPET

Published by the
Whippet Breed Council
with acknowledgements to the Kennel Club Ltd

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Revised edition 1995
Second revision 2006
Third revision 2011
Fourth revision 2014
Fifth revision 2020
Sixth revision 2025
Additional comments by Mrs Mary Lowe ©

Designed and illustrated by Viv Rainsbury ©

The Whippet Breed Council

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THE STANDARD OF THE WHIPPET

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A Breed Standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. From time to time certain conditions or exaggerations may be considered to have the potential to affect dogs in some breeds adversely, and judges and breeders are requested to refer to the Breed Watch section of the Kennel Club website here http://www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/services/public/breeds/watch for details of any such current issues. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure.

General Appearance

Balanced combination of muscular power and strength, with elegance and grace of outline.

Built for speed and work. All forms of exaggeration should be avoided.

Characteristics

An ideal companion. Highly adaptable in domestic and sporting surroundings.

Temperament

Gentle, affectionate and even disposition.

Head and Skull

Long and lean, flat on top, tapering to muzzle with slight stop, rather wide between the eyes. Jaws powerful and clean cut. Nose black or blue depending on coat colour. Nose liver in creams. In whites or parti-colours a butterfly nose is permissible.

Neck

Long, muscular, elegantly arched.

Eyes

Oval, bright, very alert.

Ears

Rose-shaped, small, fine in texture.

Mouth

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Forequarters

Shoulders well laid back with flat muscles. Moderate space between the shoulder blades at the withers. The upper arm is approximately of equal length to the shoulder, placed so that the elbow falls directly under the withers when viewed in profile. Forearms straight and upright with moderate bladed bone. Front not too wide. Pasterns strong with slight spring.

Body

Chest very deep with plenty of heart room. Well filled in front. Brisket deep. Broad, well muscled, back, firm, somewhat long, showing graceful arch over the loin but not humped. Ribs well sprung. Loin giving impression of strength and power. Definite tuck up.

Hindquarters

Strong, broad across the thighs, with well developed second thighs. Stifles well bent without exaggeration with hocks well let down. Able to stand naturally over a lot of ground.

Tail

No feathering. Long, tapering, reaching at least to the hock. When in action carried in a delicate curve not higher than the back.

Feet

Oval, well split up between toes, knuckles well arched, pads thick, nails strong.

Gait/Movement

Should possess great freedom of action. In profile should move with a long, easy stride whilst holding topline. The forelegs should be thrown forward and low over the ground. Hind legs should come well under the body giving great propelling power. General movement not to look stilted, high stepping, short or mincing. True coming and going.

Coat

Fine, short, close in texture.

Colour

Any colour or mixture of colours, except merle.

Size:

Desirable height: dogs 47-51 cms (18 ½-20 ins);
bitches 44-47 cms (17 ½-18 ½ ins)

Faults

Any departure from the foregoing should be considered a fault, and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in direct proportion to its degree.

Note

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

General Appearance

Balanced combination of muscular power and strength, with elegance and grace of outline.
Built for speed and work. All forms of exaggeration should be avoided.

ML *The 1945 Standard opened with the following passage " Should convey an impression of beautifully balanced muscular power and strength, combined with great elegance & grace of outline. Symmetry of outline, muscular development & powerful gait are the main considerations; the dog being built for speed & work, all forms of exaggeration should be avoided. The dog should possess great freedom of action, the forelegs should be thrown forward & low over the ground like a thoroughbred horse, not in a Hackney-like action. Hind legs should come well under the body giving great propelling power, general movement not to look stilted, high-stepping or in a short mincing manner " This important description remained in our Standard until the most recent revision when, to fit into a format, it was considerably condensed. The USA Standard wisely retained it & it is quoted here because it is such a vivid description of what is wanted that it can hardly be bettered.*

Characteristics

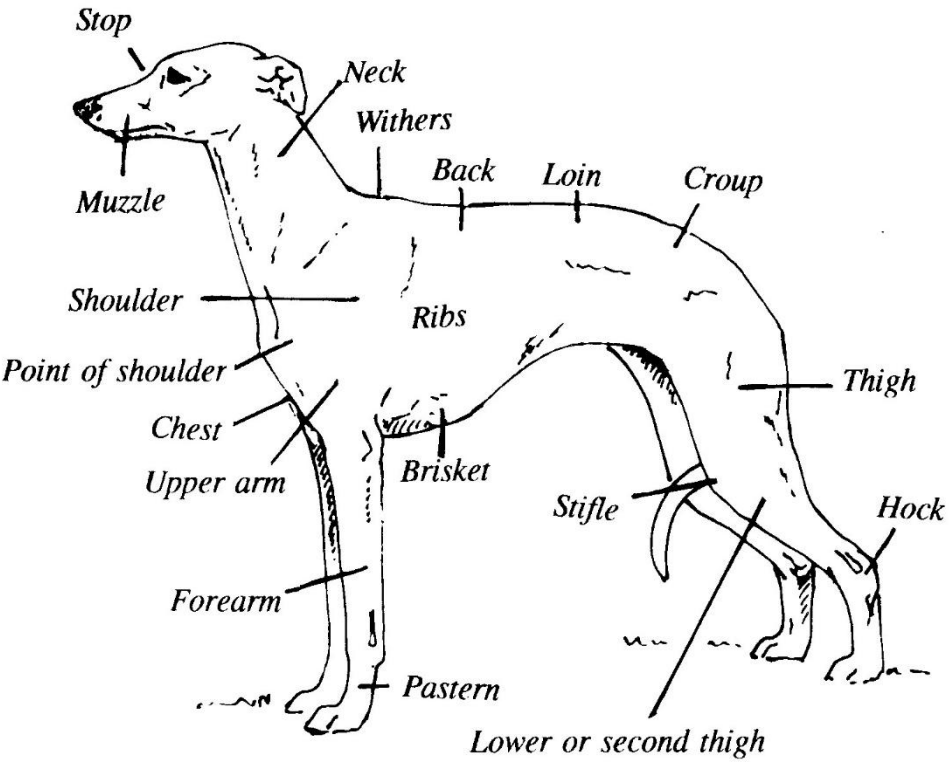
An ideal companion. Highly adaptable in domestic and sporting surroundings.

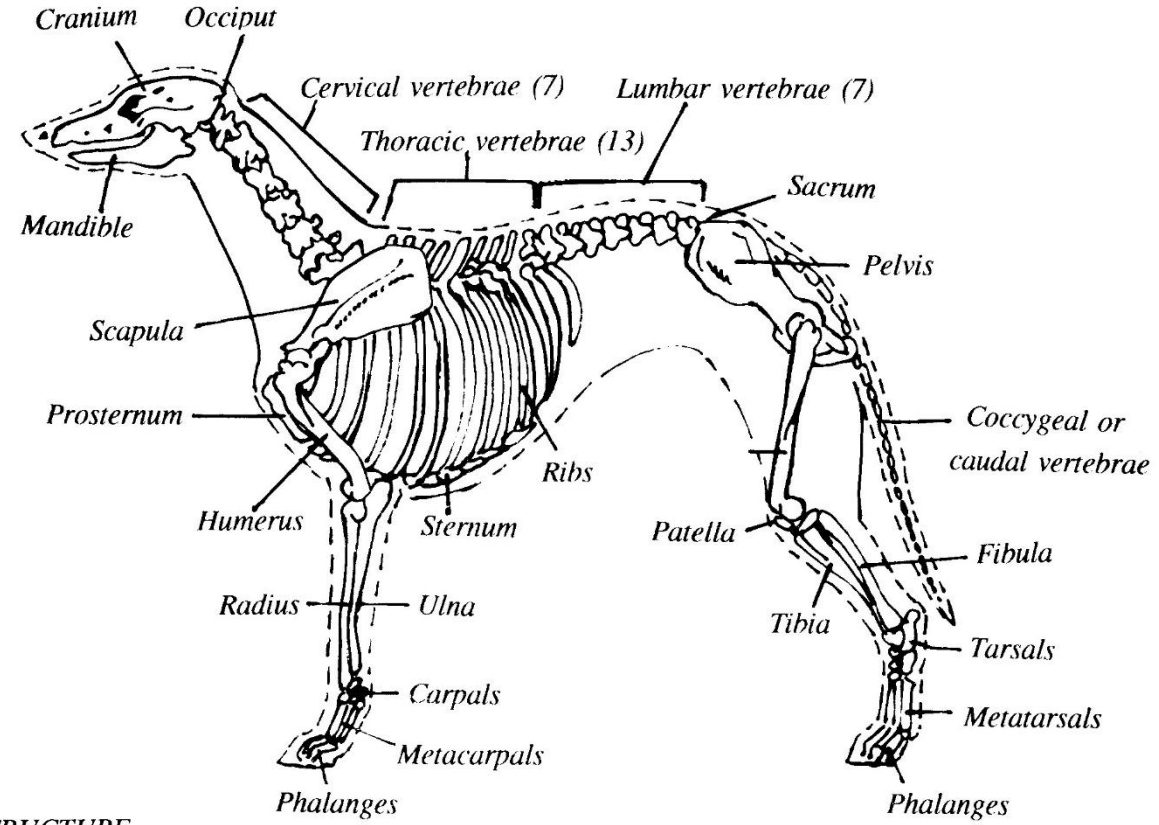
ML *It should be remembered however that the whippet is a Sighthound with all that entails. The instinct to chase is far stronger than the instinct to obey.*

Temperament

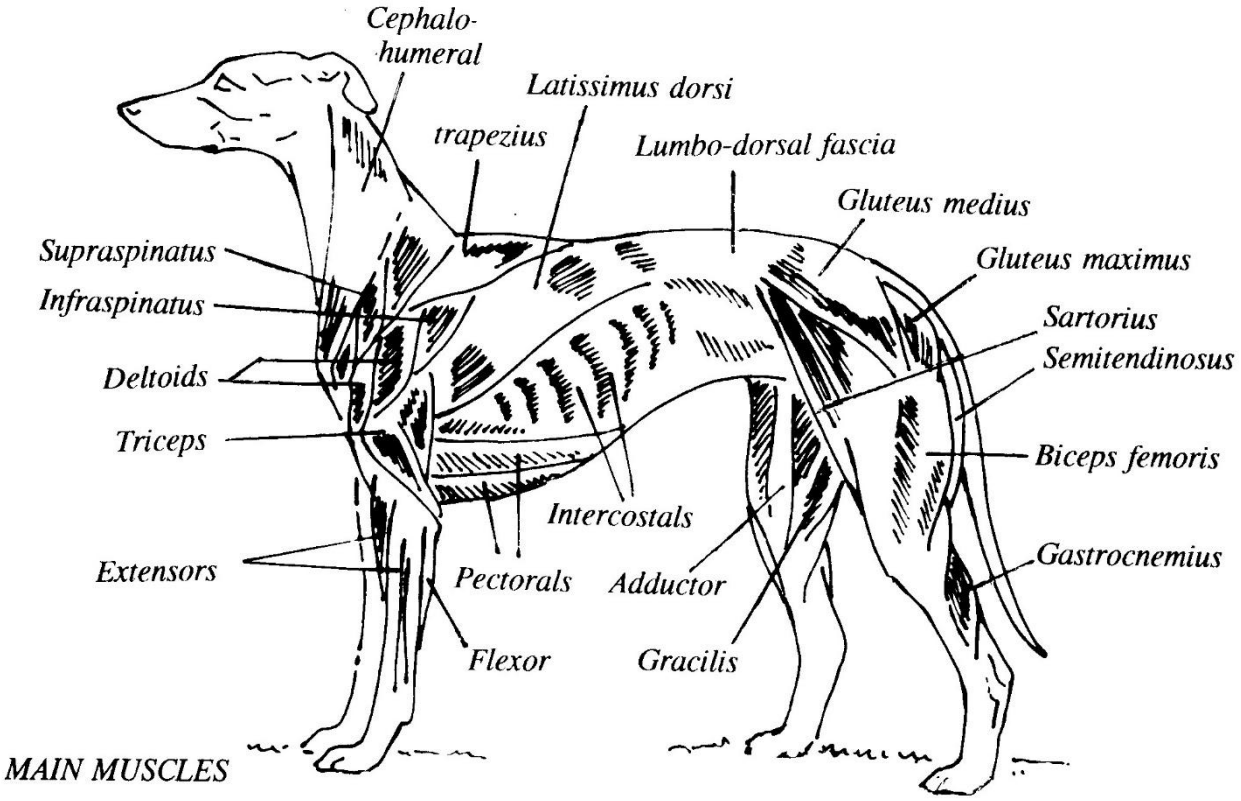
Gentle, affectionate and even disposition.

THE WHIPPET


Stop
Neck
Withers
Back
Loin
Croup
Muzzle
Shoulder
Ribs
Point of shoulder
Thigh
Chest
Upper arm
Brisket
Stifle
Hock
Forearm
Pastern
Lower or second thigh



SKELETAL STRUCTURE

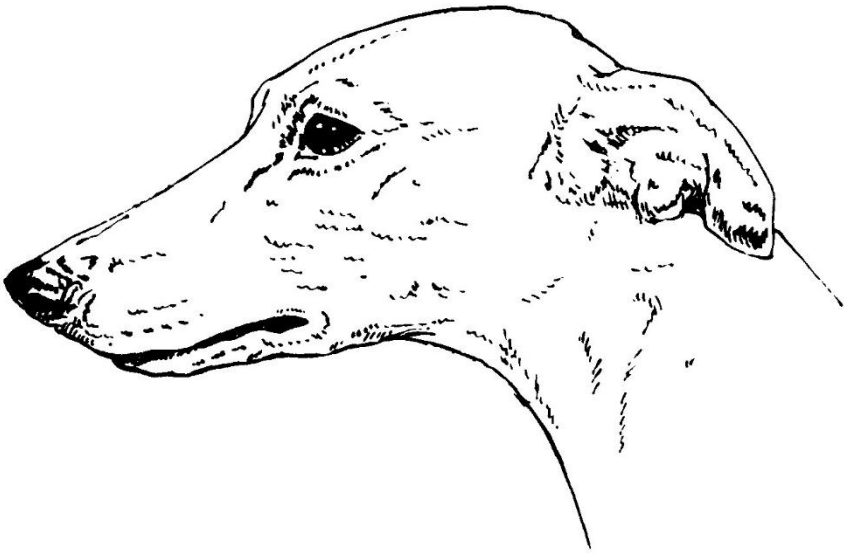


MAIN MUSCLES

Head and Skull

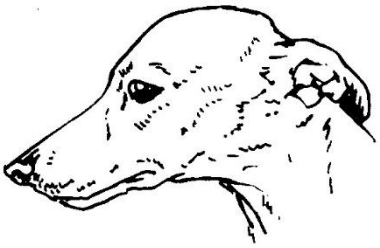
Long and lean, flat on top, tapering to muzzle with slight stop, rather wide between the eyes. Jaws powerful and clean cut. Nose black or blue depending on coat colour. Nose liver in creams. In whites or parti-colours a butterfly nose is permissible.

ML: *Many All-Rounders & even some Breed Specialist judges are inclined to penalise dilute pigment in the ring. However in a sporting breed where colour is immaterial it is illogical to penalise dilute pigment whilst permitting the colours that produce it. When there is great concern with genetic diversity it would be counter-productive to limit the gene-pool on the basis of excluding the dilute & the benefits which they bring to the over-all spectrum of the breed.*



Faults





Rounded, "apple" skull



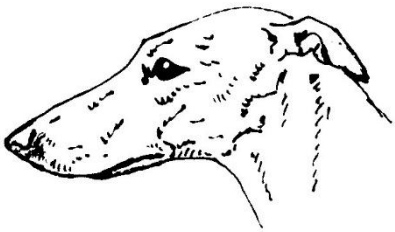
"Terrier" head



Insufficient stop



Weak muzzle

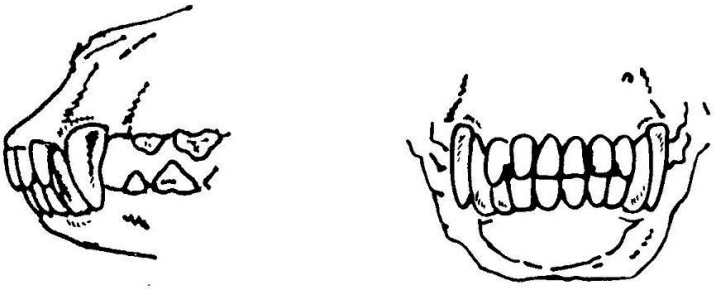


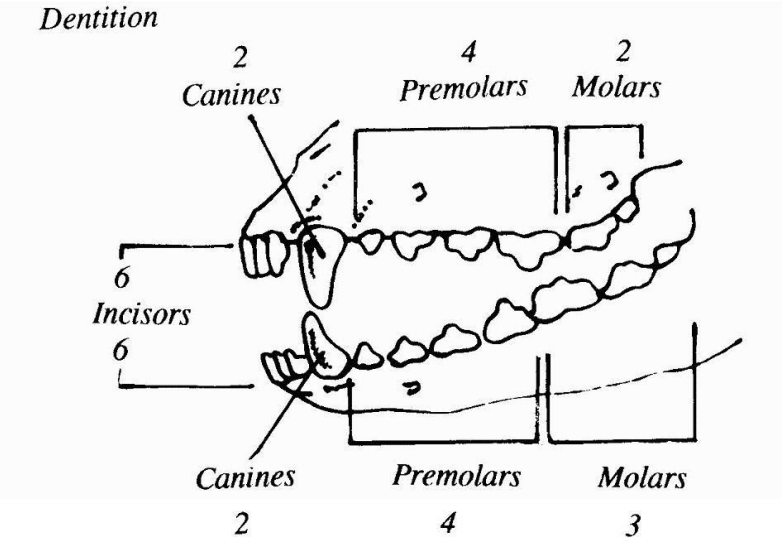
Weak underjaw

Mouth

Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

ML: *A strong jaw with a correct bite is really important since a whippet needs to be able to hold & kill whatever it may catch .A weak snipey muzzle lacking under-jaw with the lower teeth leaning towards the upper is not functional or typical of the breed. A level bite or undershot-mouth is a serious fault.*





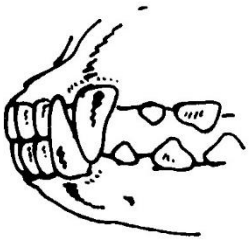
Faults



Overshot, "parrot" mouth



Undershot



Level or even bite

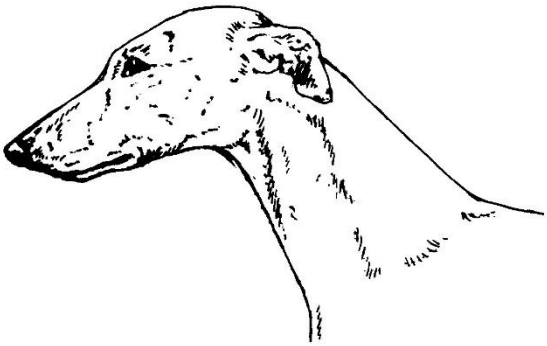


Teeth not set square to the jaw

Neck

Long, muscular, elegantly arched.

ML: *Length and strength are needed for picking up prey and, since the top of the neck forms the anchorage for the long muscles which pull the front legs forward, the top line of the neck will – or should – look longer than the bottom line. This is difficult to see if the dog's head is pulled up too high by the lead when being exhibited.*



Faults

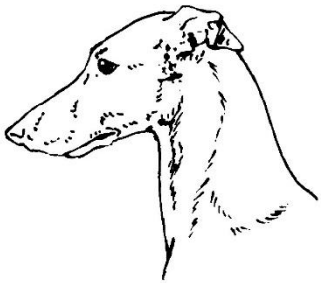


Too short, thick

Throaty



Ewe neck



Eyes

Oval, bright, very alert.

ML: *It is interesting that no colour has ever been given for the eyes in the UK standard although in other countries (USA & Canada)a dark eye is required. Like pigment eye-colour follows coat colour & creams, golds & reds often have a light eye. Whilst a dark eye may be preferred a light eye is not a fault.*



Faults

Round, prominent



Harsh, staring



Too small



"Almond" eyes



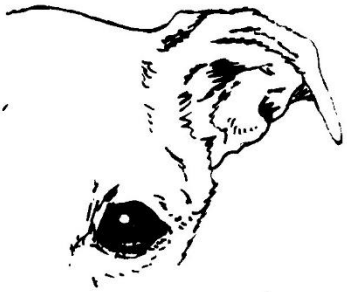
Ears

Rose-shaped, small, fine in texture.

ML: *Perfect ear carriage is the icing on the cake & really sets off an attractive whippet head. Many whippets however will fly their ears when really excited in a sporting context.*

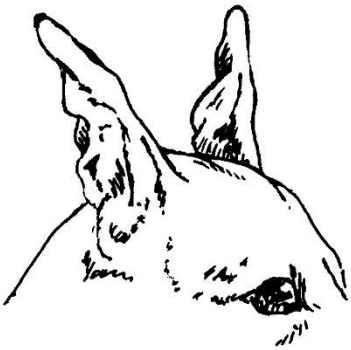


Ears may be carried semi-erect, when the dog is alerted



Faults

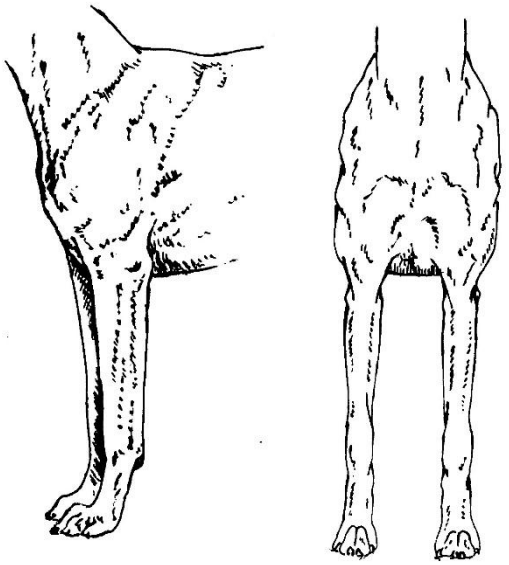
Flying, prick ears



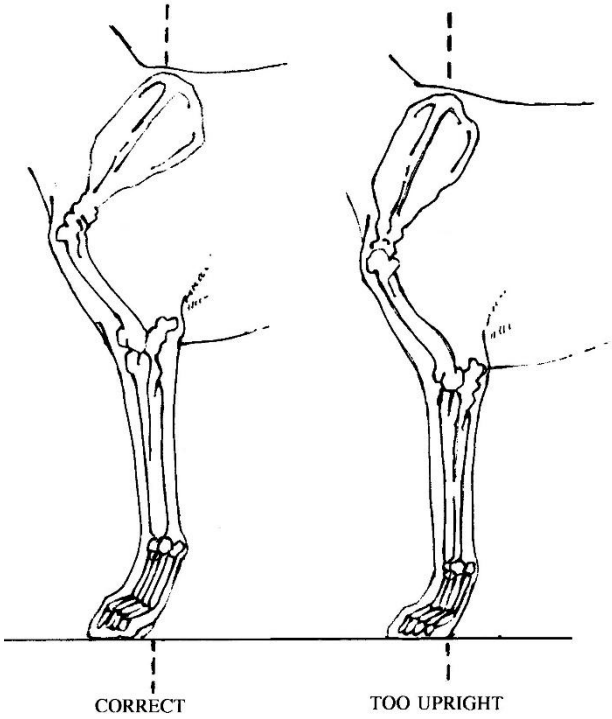
Forequarters

Shoulders well laid back with flat muscles. Moderate space between the shoulder blades at the withers. The upper arm is approximately of equal length to the shoulder, placed so that the elbow falls directly under the withers when viewed in profile. Forearms straight and upright with moderate bladed bone. Front not too wide. Pasterns strong with slight spring.

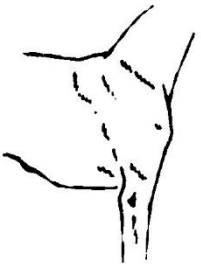
ML: *The angle of the shoulder blade will determine the length of stride at the gallop. The dog with the longer stride will cover more ground with less effort than the dog with the shorter stride which will make it more effective in the field. An upright shoulder will mean that at the trot the stride may be daisy-cutting but will be reaching from the elbow rather than the shoulder. The front should not be too wide or the elbows will be pushed out or too narrow so that both front legs appear to come out of one hole. The elbows should point neither in nor out and the feet should point straight to the front. A spring of pastern is important as a dog which is running at speed, twisting and turning, often over rough ground, needs this spring to act as a shock absorber. A straight pastern is often finished off with round cat feet, which again are a fault since they do not enable the dog to grip the ground and retain balance at speed. Tied elbows, set too closely into the body, with or without the front feet being turned outwards, are a serious fault as the dog cannot turn if the elbows are so placed.*



Front angulation showing skeletal structure



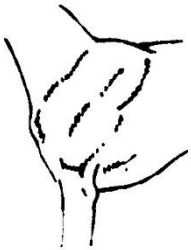
Faults



Upright or short upper arm



No depth of chest





Loaded, "bossy" shoulders



Front too narrow



Front too wide, out at elbow

Toeing in



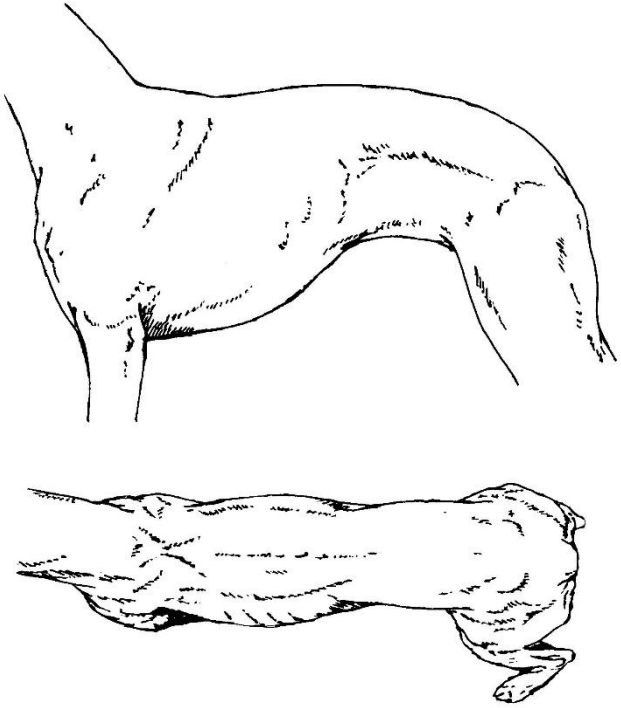


Toes at "10 to 2"

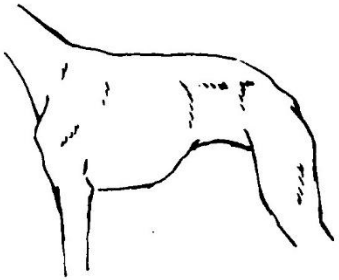
Body

Chest very deep with plenty of heart room. Well filled in front. Brisket deep. Broad, well muscled, back, firm, somewhat long, showing graceful arch over the loin but not humped. Ribs well sprung. Loin giving impression of strength and power. Definite tuck up.

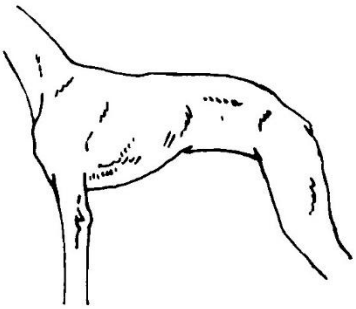
ML: *However good the forequarters and hindquarters, they are joined together by the back and if the back is weak the dog cannot gallop. The back of a galloping dog bends and stretches like a very pliable bow. Much of this movement is carried out by the great dorsal muscles on either side of the spine and it is these muscles that should give the back an arch. A roach back – a skeletal malformation where the hump starts behind the shoulder – or a flat back, are weaknesses.*



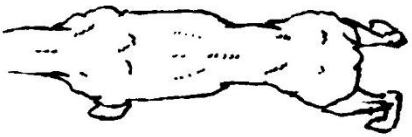
Faults



Loin too short



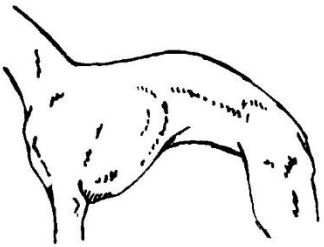
Shallow brisket



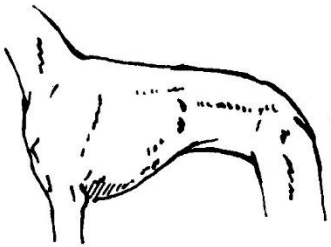
Flat ribs (slab sides)



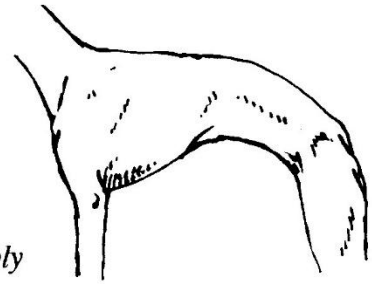
"Barrel" ribs



Roached or wheel back



Flat topline

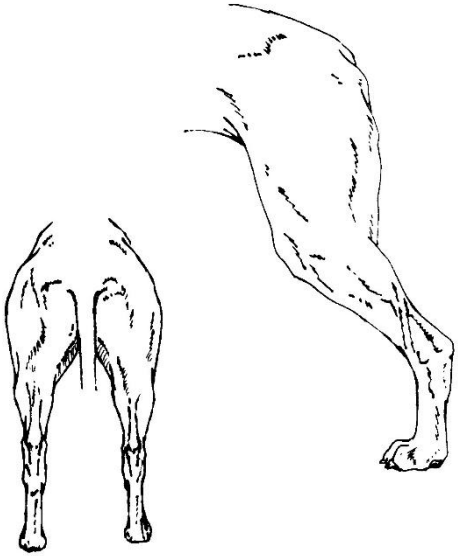


Falling away too steeply

Hindquarters

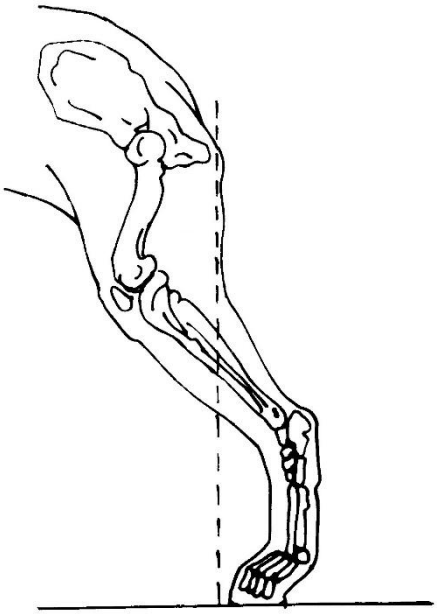
Strong, broad across the thighs, with well developed second thighs. Stifles well bent without exaggeration with hocks well let down. Able to stand naturally over a lot of ground.

ML: *The hindquarters are where the thrust comes from. Since they propel the dog forward at every stride, weak quarters with lack of muscular development mean that the dog cannot gallop Viewed from behind, the upper thigh muscles should be large, well formed and hard, and the second thighs – between stifle and hock – should be well developed. The stifle must not be straight; there must be sufficient angulation for the upper thigh to appear vertical and for the second thigh – the tibia – to slope at about 140 degrees from the vertical. When the dog is standing naturally the hock should be vertically above the heel From behind the hocks should be parallel to the centre line of the dog. Viewed in profile a line drawn down vertically from behind the tail to the ground should touch the front of the hind paws. Perhaps the most prevalent form of exaggeration creeping into the breed is the tendency to over angulation in the rear, too great a length of second thigh causing the hocks to be too far behind the dog so that the ground is covered by over angulation rather than by the length of loin. Almost invariably this form of over angulation leads to a falling off in top-line and could well if carried to extremes give rise to hip dysplasia such as is seen in breeds with this kind of conformation*

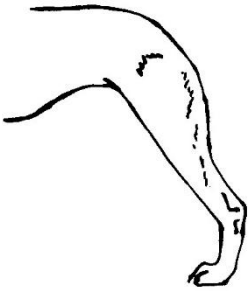


Ideal hind angulation

Showing skeletal structure



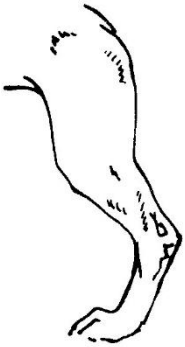
Faults



Straight stifle



Exaggerated angulation

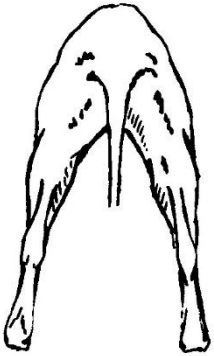


Sickle hocks



Cow hocks

Too wide



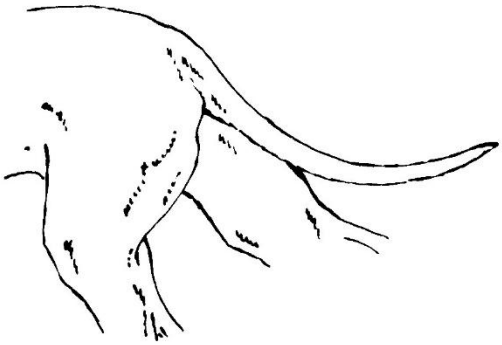


Too narrow

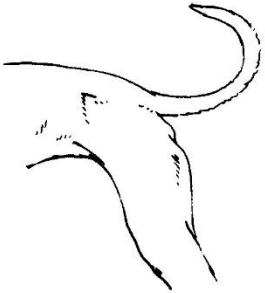
Tail

No feathering. Long, tapering, reaching at least to the hock. When in action carried in a delicate curve not higher than the back.

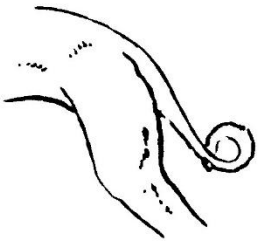
ML: *The ideal tail set follows the natural flow of the dog from head to hock – an ugly high tail set, short or high carried tail is often allied to poor conformation over the hind quarters.*



Faults



Gay tail



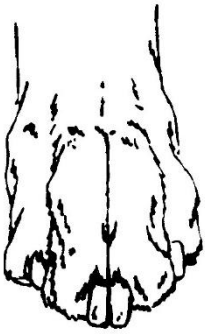
Ringed tail

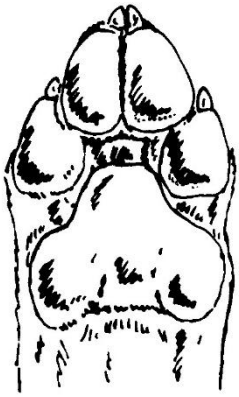
Feet

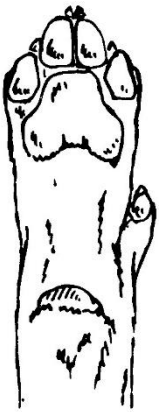
Oval, well split up between toes, knuckles well arched, pads thick, nails strong.

ML: *The ideal foot is the foot that is strongest and most resistant to injury. The bad, splayed, weak foot will never produce a sound dog. Bad feet are a serious hereditary fault but even good feet can deteriorate in adverse rearing conditions*



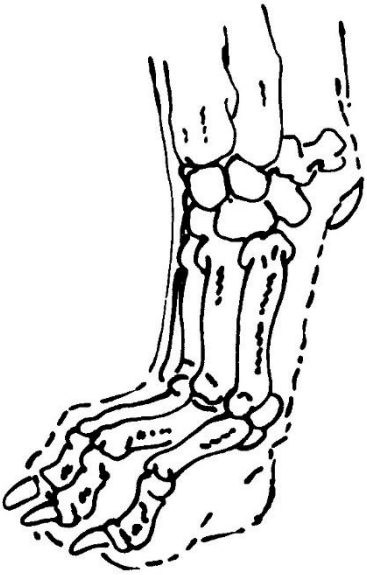






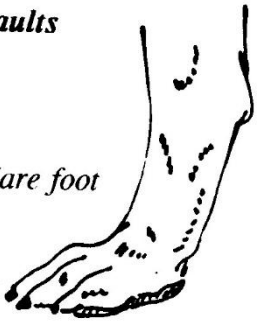
Underside of front foot showing dewclaw (usually removed)

Bone structure in pastern & foot



Faults

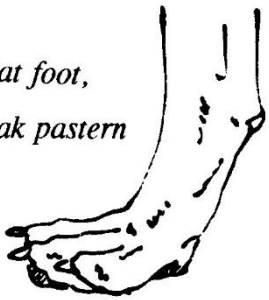
Hare foot



Cat foot



Flat foot, weak pastern



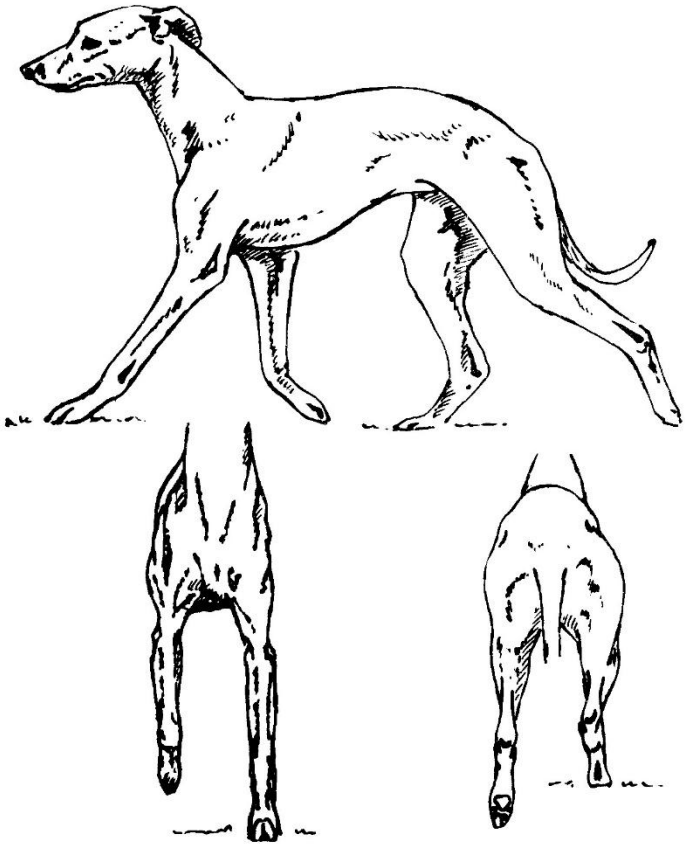
Splayed, open foot



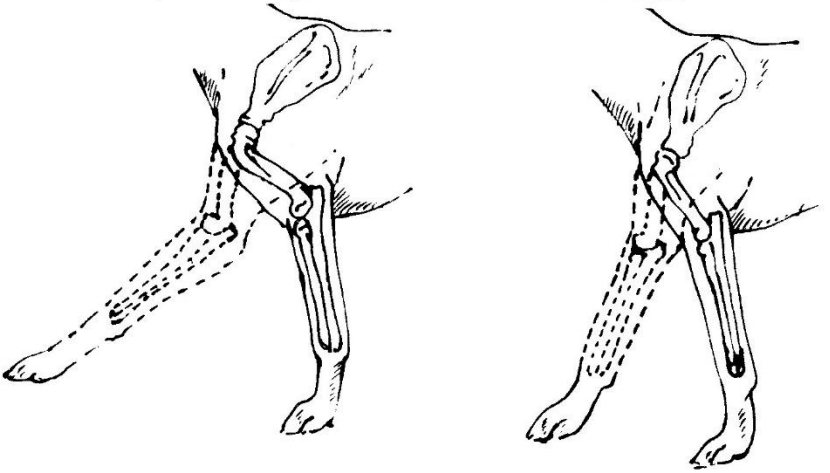
Gait/Movement

Should possess great freedom of action. In profile should move with a long, easy stride whilst holding topline. The forelegs should be thrown forward and low over the ground. Hind legs should come well under the body giving great propelling power. General movement not to look stilted, high stepping, short or mincing. True coming and going.

ML: *At an extended trot a whippet should appear to flow naturally over the ground, balance & economy of effort will produce a beautiful picture.*

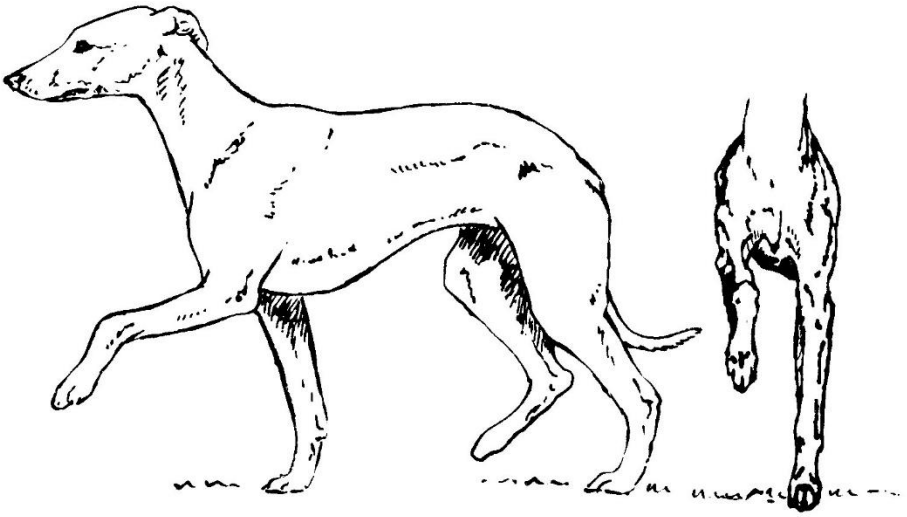


Skeletal placement governs extent of forward reach

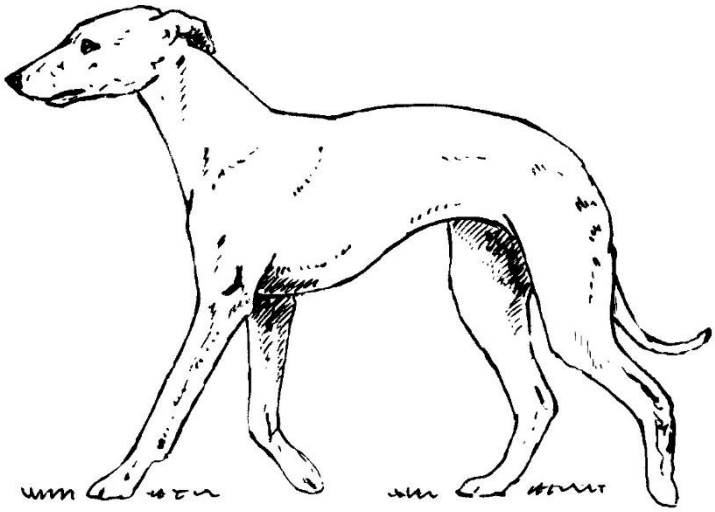


(see page 18)

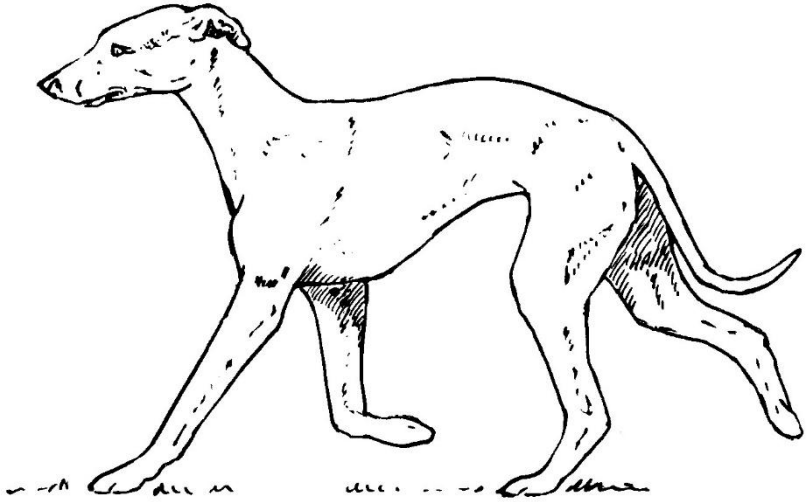
Faults



High stepping, "hackney" action



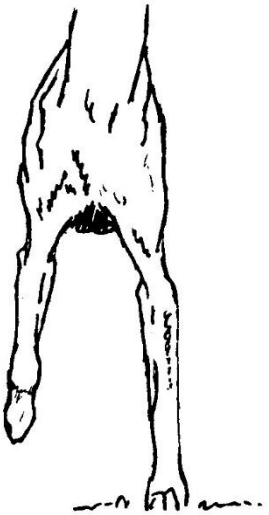
Lacking drive



Pacing



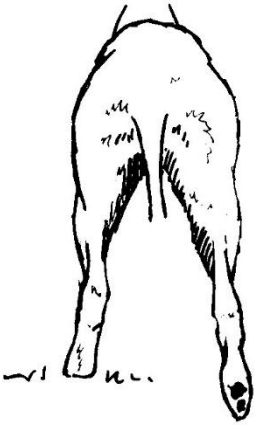
"Plaiting" in front



Going wide in front



Going close behind



Going wide behind

Coat

Fine, short, close in texture.

ML: *A coarse coat and skin, whilst it may not stop the dog from working well, does detract from the overall quality which the breed should present. The whippet is, pre-eminently, a thoroughbred and the quality of the coat and skin should bear witness to this.*

Colour

Any colour or mixture of colours, except merle.

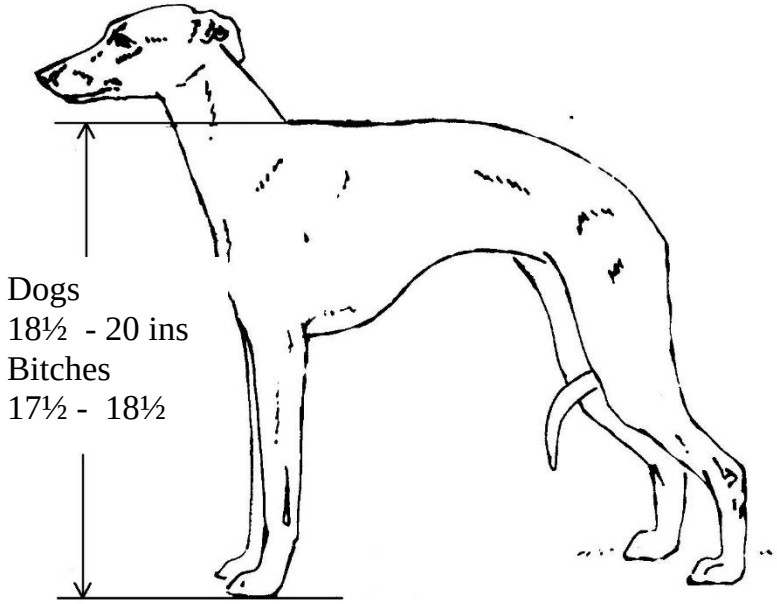
[The following additional comments can not be updated with regard to the colour merle because they are copyright to the writer; however they should be read in conjunction with the statement above on merle.]

ML: *Since the Standard permits any colour or combination of colours, including the recessive colours of blue and cream and the pigment and eye colour which is to be expected with the dilutes these are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Standard. In fact the wide variations and permutations of colours in the whippet are one of the greatest charms of the breed.*

Size:

Desirable height: dogs 47-51 cms (18 ½-20 ins);
bitches 44-47 cms (17 ½-18 ½ ins)

ML: *This is the part of the Standard that is most confusing to the novice owner or potential judge since a quick glance at any show ring reveals that whippets of these desirable sizes are rarely exhibited today. The ultimate criteria must be a balanced dog of moderate size. Over 21" whippets begin to lose their breed characteristics and resemble small Greyhounds and the essential type of the whippet is lost*



FAULTS

Any departure from the forgoing points should be considered a fault and the degree of seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in its exact proportion to its degree and its effect on the health and welfare of the dog

NOTE

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles descended in the scrotum