

German Shepherd Dog

Country of Origin - Germany

A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW - According to the official records of the Breed Club for the German Shepherd Dog (Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde Inc., Augsburg.) - (SV)), in the Association for German Dog Matters (VDH). The SV, as the founding association of the breed, is responsible for the Standard of the German Shepherd Dog, which was drawn up at the first meeting of members in Frankfurt am Main on 20th September 1899, on the proposals of A. Meyer and Von Stephanitz. There were supplementary clauses added at the 6th meeting of members on 28th July 1901, the 23rd Meeting in Cologne in September 1909, the Executive and advisory commission Wiesbaden on 5th September, 1930, and the Breed Commission and Executive meeting on 25th March 1961, within the framework of the World Union of German Shepherd Dog Clubs (WUSV). It was revised and confirmed at the WUSV conference on 30th August 1976, revised and catalogued by authorisation and resolution of the Executive and Advisory Committee on 23rd March 1991.

The German Shepherd Dog, whose planned breeding commenced in the year 1899, after the founding of the GSD Verein, was bred from the central German and South German strains of the existing herding dogs of those times, with the final goal of creating a working dog, predisposed to high working aptitude. In order to reach this goal, the Breed Standard was laid down, which relates to the physical attributes, as well as to those of temperament and character.

GENERAL APPEARANCE - The German Shepherd Dog is medium sized, slightly elongated, powerful and well muscled, the bones dry and the overall structure firm.

Important Proportions: The height of withers:
for dogs is 60-65 cm (23½ - 25½ ins), and
for bitches 55-60 cm (21½ - 23½ ins).

The length of the body is greater than the height at the withers by about 10 to 17%.

CHARACTERISTICS - Usage: All round working, herding and service dog.
(See also under General Appearance and Temperament.)

TEMPERAMENT - The German Shepherd Dog must be of well balanced temperament, steady of nerve, self assured, absolutely free and easy, and (unless provoked) completely good natured, as well as alert and tractable. He must have courage, combative instinct and hardiness, in order to be suitable as companion, watch, protection, service and herding dog.

HEAD AND SKULL - The head is wedge shaped, proportionate in size to the body, (length of head about 40% of the height at withers) without being coarse or over long; in overall appearance dry, and moderately broad between the ears. The forehead is only slightly domed viewed from the front and from the side, and without any, or only slightly indicated, central furrow. The ratio of skull to muzzle is 50:50. The breadth of the skull corresponds approximately to its length. The skull, viewed from above, tapers evenly from the ears to the nose, with a sloping, not sharply defined, stop, into the wedge-shaped foreface (muzzle). Upper and lower jaws are strongly developed. The bridge of the nose is straight, a dishfaced or convex curve is not desired. The lips are tight, well fitting and of a dark colour. The Nose: Must be black.

EYES - Are medium sized, almond shaped, slightly oblique and not protruding. The colour of the eyes should be as dark as possible. Light, piercing eyes are not desirable as they detract from the expression of the dog.

EARS - The German Shepherd Dog has erect ears of medium size, that are carried upright and almost parallel (not pulled inwards). They run to a point and are set with the orifice to the front. Tipped ears and drop ears are faulty. Ears carried laid back during gaiting or when at rest are not faulty.

MOUTH - The dentition must be strong, healthy and complete (42 teeth, in accordance with the dentition formula). The German Shepherd Dog has a scissor bite, that is, the incisors must connect like scissors, so that the incisors of the upper jaw cut scissor-like over those of the lower jaw. Level, over- or undershot bites are faulty, as well as large gaps between the teeth. It is also a fault when the incisors are placed in a straight line in the gums. The jawbones must be strongly developed, so that the teeth are embedded deeply in the gumline.

NECK - The neck should be strong, well muscled and free from throatiness (dewlap). The angle to the body (horizontal) is about 45 degrees (during stance).

FOREQUARTERS - The forelegs are straight viewed from all sides, absolutely parallel viewed from the front. Shoulder blade and upper arm are of equal length and firmly attached to the body with strong musculature. The angulation of shoulder blade and upper arm is, in the ideal case, 90 degrees, but as a rule 110 degrees. The elbows should be neither turned out nor pinched in, either in stance or during movement. The forearm should be straight viewed from all sides, and stand absolutely parallel, dry and firmly muscled. The pastern is approximately 1/3 of the length of the forearm, and has an angle of approximately 20 to 22 degrees to the forearm. Too sloping pasterns (more than 22 degrees) and too steep pasterns (less than 20 degrees) diminish the dog's working ability, and especially its endurance.

BODY - The topline flows from the set on of neck over the well defined withers and over the back, sloping very slightly from the horizontal to the slightly sloping croup without a noticeable break. The back is firm, strong and well muscled. The loin is broad, strongly developed and well muscled. The croup should be long and gently sloping (approximately 23 degrees to the horizontal) into the set on of tail, without disrupting the topline.

The Chest: Should be moderately broad, the underchest as long as possible and well developed. The depth of chest should be about 45% to 48% of the height at the withers.

The Ribs: Should be moderately sprung. Barrel chested is as equally faulty as is slab sided.

HINDQUARTERS - The position of the hindlegs is slightly set back, whereby the hindlimbs, viewed from the back, stand parallel to each other. Upper and lower thighs are of almost equal length and form an angle of about 120 degrees; the thighs are strong and well muscled. The hocks are well developed and firm; the rear pastern stands perpendicular under the hock.

FEET - The front feet are rounded, well closed and arched. The hind feet are closed, and slightly arched. The pads are hard but not rough, and of dark colour. The nails are strong, arched and of dark colour.

TAIL - Reaches at least to the hock, however, not below the middle of the rear pastern. It is slightly longer haired on the underside, and is carried curving down gently, higher in excitement and during movement, but not above the horizontal. Corrective operations are forbidden.

GAIT/MOVEMENT - The German Shepherd Dog is a trotter. The limbs must be of such length and angulation that the hindquarters may be thrust well forward under the body, and the forequarters reach equally far forward, without noticeable change in the topline. Any tendency towards overangulation of the hindquarters lessens their firmness and endurance, and thus the dog's utmost working ability. With correct structural proportions and angulations, a roomy, smooth, ground covering gait results, that gives the impression of effortless forward propulsion. With the head pushed forward, and a slightly raised tail, an even and calm trot results in a softly curving and unbroken topline, running from tips of the ears, over the neck and back, to the tip of the tail.

COAT - The skin fits loosely, but without forming folds. The correct coat of the German Shepherd Dog is a double coat (Stockhaar) with undercoat. The top coat should be as dense as possible, straight, harsh and close lying. It should be short on the head, including inside the ears, the front of the legs and on the feet and toes; it is a little longer and heavier coated on the neck. The hair lengthens on the back of the legs to the pastern or hock; on the back of the thighs it forms moderate breeching.

COLOUR - Black with reddish tan, tan, gold to light grey markings. All black, and all grey; in greys with dark shadings, black saddle and mask. Unobtrusive, small white markings on chest as well as very light colour on insides of legs permissible but not desirable. The nose must be black in all colour types. Lacking mask, light to piercing eyes, as well as whitish markings on chest and inner sides of legs, light nails and red tip of tail are to be rated as lacking in pigment. The undercoat is of a light grey toning.
The colour white is not permitted.

SIZE

Dogs: Height at withers 60-65 cm (23½ - 25½ ins)
Weight 30-40 kg (66-88 lbs)
Bitches: Height at withers 55-60 cm (21½ - 23½ ins)
Weight 22-32 kg (48-71 lbs).

FAULTS - Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

Major Faults: Deviations from the above described Breed Standard that impair the working ability.

Ear Faults: Too low set at the sides, tipped ears, inward tilted ears, ears not firm. Considerable pigment deficiencies.
Strongly impaired overall firmness.

Dentition Faults: All deviations from a scissor bite and the dentition formula, as far as it does not concern disqualifying faults. (See below)

Disqualifying Faults:

Weak character, savageness or nervousness.

Proven "severe H.D".

Monorchids and cryptorchids, as well as dogs with clearly uneven or atrophied (stunted) testicles.

Disfiguring ear or tail defects.

Deformities.

Dentition faults; any missing teeth

Jaw defects: Overshot 2mm or more. Undershot. Level bite in the whole region of the incisors.

More than 1cm over or under size.

Albinism.

White coat colour (even with dark eyes and nails).

Long double coat (Long Stockhaar): Long, wavy, topcoat not lying closely, with undercoat, feathering on ears and legs, bushy breeches and bushy tail forming flags below.

Longcoat: Long, soft top coat without undercoat, usually with a parting down the back, flags on ears and legs and tail.

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