

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE POODLE**

Produced by
National Poodle Council (Australia)
in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council

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HISTORY OF THE BREED

It has been stated, over and over again, that the Poodle's origins date back even before the birth of Christ. However, these statements are invariably based on paintings, wood-cuts, and the like, depicting a small, long coated dog clipped in a clip similar to the lion clip worn by Poodles in later times. Many breed fanciers are of the opinion that these are, possibly, not Poodles at all because, in most cases, the clipping is the only obvious similarity to our modern Poodle. It can be accepted that the lion clip is very ancient – the Poodle may or may not be.

From numerous writings from the late fifteenth century the breed became identified by name, and it is fairly safe to assume that it has existed in its present form with a few changes since then. Many countries claim it has originated within their boundaries, but probably Germany, Russia and France have the greatest claim to be recognised as the breed's origin. Spain might be entitled to an equal share of this recognition. The breed is fairly obviously descended from the spaniel family that has its roots in Spain. At least the derivative of the name "spaniel" indicates this.

It is generally accepted by breed historians that the Poodle has developed from what was originally known as "The Water Dog" or "Rough Water Dog". The word "Poodle" originated from the German "Pudel" or the Russian "Pod-Laika" meaning roughly "Water Splasher". The old scientific name was *Canis Familiaris Aquaticus* or roughly "Water Dog". The French called the Poodle originally "Canne Chein" or "Duck Dog" contracted eventually to "Caniche".

The breed was, therefore, a close relative of the spaniels, with a particular affinity for the water – lakes, rivers, marshes etc. These locations were the habitat of a great variety of bird life and, it follows that sporting men of the day were interested in that bird life and a dog, which would be a companion and assist them in this sport. It was natural for the water dog to be developed as a water retriever and this was, in fact, the development, which took place through the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Small Poodles were also used as truffle dogs in England and on the continent hunting out truffles. This was done by the Poodle with a strongly developed scenting ability. The Truffle is a rootless tuberous fungus considered a delicacy by gourmets.

The Standard Poodle is 38 cm (15 inches) or more in height. It is the oldest of the three varieties and was traditionally used as a water retriever. The Poodle has also been a performer for centuries, a trickster, a comedian and a clown. His intelligence has made him the most versatile of dogs.

The Poodle's conformation lends itself to speed and agility in moving through the marshes and waterways and for diving in and swimming through the water. His fine head, with strength of jaw and long neck allowed a game bird to be carried high out of the water whilst swimming with ease. His somewhat light and narrow; yet strong body and strong quarters allow for swimming and running without excessive effort for long periods. The Poodle is a purpose dog developed for a specific job – retrieving from the water.

It is generally accepted that the lion clip was developed so that a hunting, retrieving water dog could:

- (a) withstand the rigours of a European winter in snow, ice and extremes of cold by maintaining a long, dense and strong coat over the forequarters, chest and joints of the legs,
- (b) swim without the impediment of a long coat on his hindquarters (the part of the body lowest in the water while swimming) by clipping the hair on the body from the ribcage back, and
- (c) be identified by the hunter whilst retrieving, by means of the topknot secured by a coloured ribbon, to be seen above the water or marshes etc.

Of course these hallmarks of the breed have been embellished in the name of fashion in the last twenty years or more, but the reason for the traditional lion clip remains and it is perpetuated by the Standard of the Breed.

Poodles have an innate intelligence. His ability to learn is considered exceptional. Poodles are faster than any other breed at discovering that spoken words mean something and they are thought to understand more spoken words. Poodles are an elegant looking breed with a sense of humour. They are loyal, gentle, obedient and good with children.

Please note. There is only one breed Standard covering all three varieties. The varieties are governed by size. When discussing any part of the poodle it must be remembered that “**form follows function**” and the poodle irrespective of size was and is a water-retrieving dog.

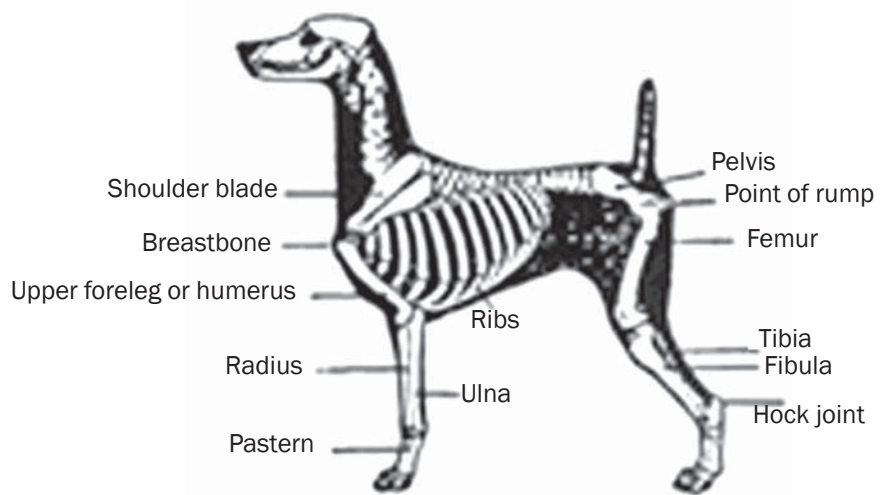


Fig. 1. Anatomy

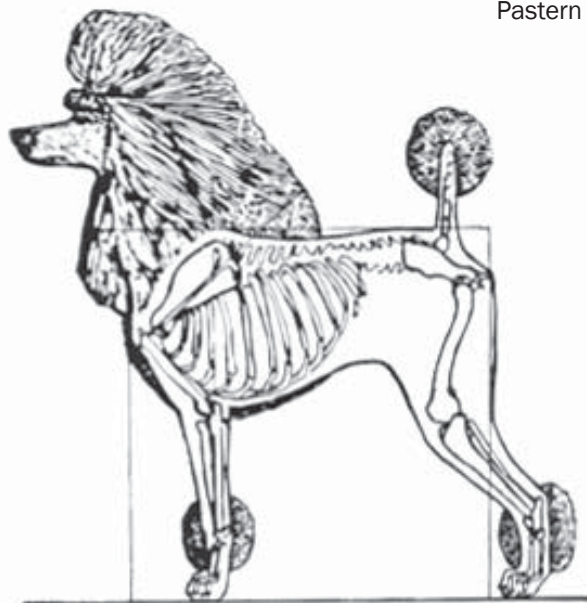
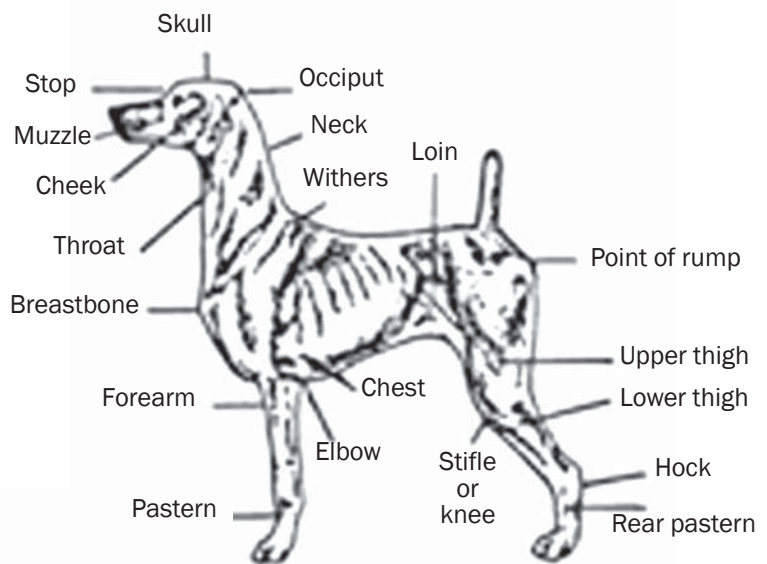


Fig. 2. Skeleton

● GENERAL APPEARANCE

That of a very active, intelligent, well balanced and elegant looking dog with good temperament, carrying himself very proudly.

A poodle is a normally constructed basic dog without exaggeration.

Balance is the pleasing, harmonious and well- proportioned blend of a poodle's parts and features. Head carried high with a slight arch of neck, combined with the tail carried up, contributes to the required correct proud carriage.

Keeping in mind the purpose and development of this breed, it is essential for him to be lively and active. As a superb waterfowl retriever, he should possess the substance to carry out his assignments; and the agility to succeed.

● CHARACTERISTICS

Refer to General Appearance

The desired temperament of a Poodle is shown by its friendly, confident and outgoing attitude. As judges in the show ring only have a short time to assess temperament, the correct head and tail carriage are usually indicators of sound temperament.

Shyness, nervousness or viciousness are unacceptable in the poodle temperament. These traits should not be confused with the dignified and reserved attitude of some poodles. Puppies are often quite boisterous and should not be heavily penalised for this outgoing display of exuberance.

● TEMPERAMENT

Good temperament (Also refer to General Appearance).

● HEAD & SKULL

Long and fine with slight peak at the back. The skull not broad and with a moderate stop. Foreface strong and well chiselled, not falling away under the eyes; bones and muscle flat. Lips tight fitting. Chin well defined, but not protruding. The whole head must be in proportion to the size of the dog.

Everything about the poodle head is clean with no exaggeration. The slight peak refers to the "occiput". Falling away under the eyes is often associated with protruding, bulging eyes. The chin should be definite enough to preclude snipeyness. The stop should be a gentle and gradual drop from the top plane of the skull to the top of the muzzle. Too much or too little stop will give an expression, which is foreign to poodles.

Long and fine does not mean the longest and finest is the best.

Head and expression

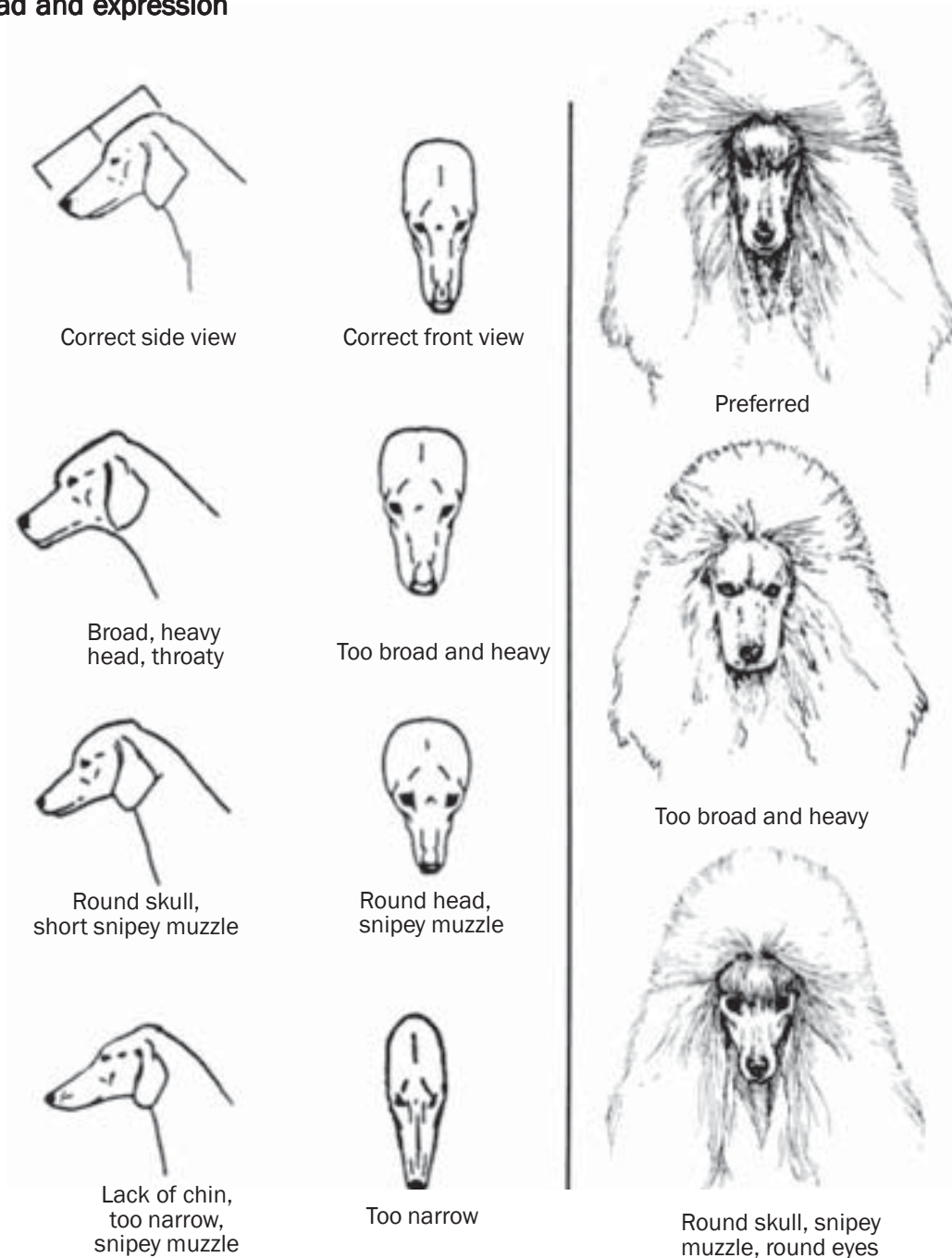


Fig. 3. Head shapes

• EYES

Almond shaped, dark, not set too close together, full of fire and intelligence.

The eyes are set fairly wide apart, but not so much as to allow the orbits to protrude beyond the line of the cheeks. This set gives a wide range of vision.

Round or button eyes are not acceptable as they ruin the expression. Round eyes generally come with wide skulls and/or an incorrectly proportioned skull to muzzle length.

For correct eye colour refer to “colour”. A light eye will greatly detract from the desired expression.



Fig. 4 - Eyes, correct and otherwise

• EARS

The leather long and wide, low set on, hanging close to the face.

The exact ear leather length is not specified; however, when drawn forward the ear leather should reach at least to the corner of the mouth in an adult dog.

The set of the ears should be about eye level, definitely no higher and never much lower and not too far back on the skull.

The presence of typical ears, pendant and hanging close to the head, is essential for the typical expression of the breed.

Ears too high set,
too short



Too narrow



Preferred



Flying ears



Too high set



Preferred

Fig. 5 - Ears, settings and size

● MOUTH

Teeth – white, strong, even, with scissor bite. A full set of 42 teeth is desirable.

There is only one correct bite and that is a scissor bite.

The word “even” relates to the placement of teeth, evenly spaced and not crowded.

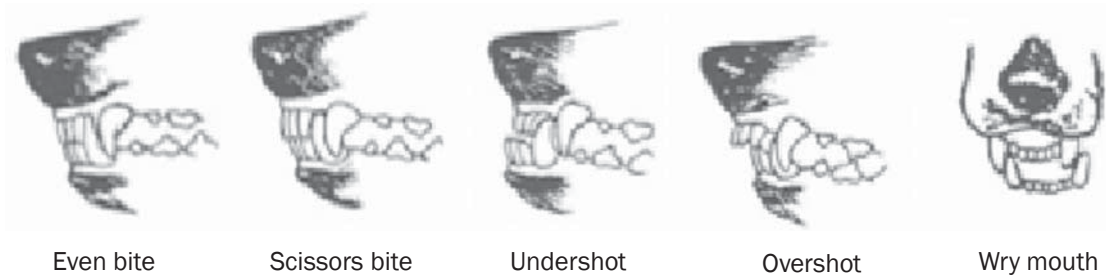


Fig. 6 - Bite, scissor correct, all others incorrect.

● NECK

Well proportioned, of good length and strong to admit of the head being carried high and with dignity. Skin fitting tightly at the throat.

The length of the neck has to be in balance with the size of the dog. The neck in cross section is oval not round. There should be some arch to the neck between the occiput and the shoulders indicating strength and adding to elegance.

The carriage of the neck is reasonably upright, in order to allow the Poodle to carry it's head high and with dignity. Correct head and neck carriage is a characteristic of the breed. This carriage is achieved through sound construction, proud attitude and athletic condition. It is not achieved by a ewe-neck, which is a major fault.

At the start of movement the dog tends to thrust it's head and neck forward until balance is achieved, when the neck and head will return to the desired position.

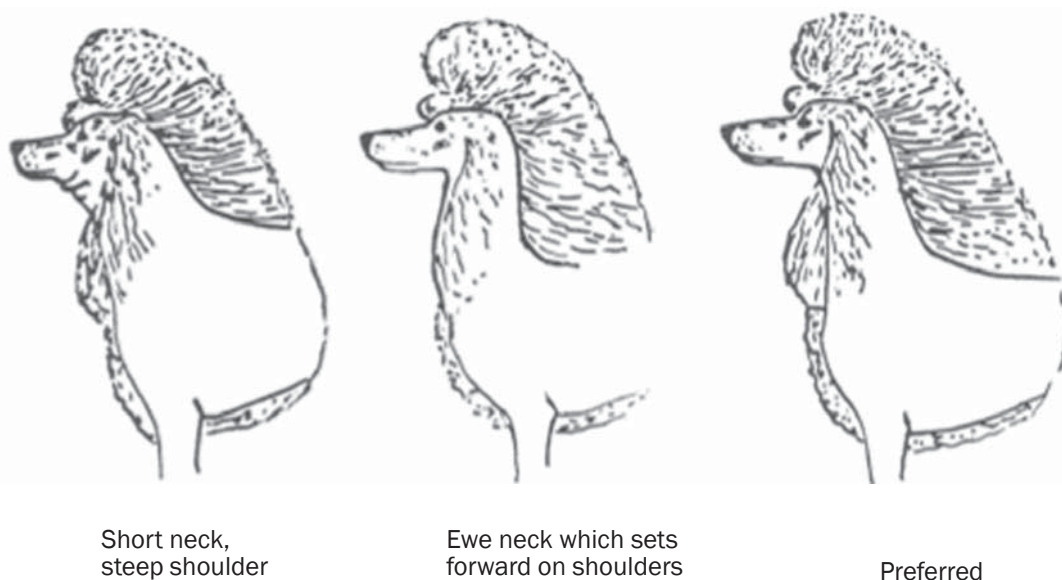


Fig. 7 – Necks, correct and otherwise

● FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders – strong and muscular, sloping well to the back, legs set straight from the shoulders, well muscled.

The shoulder blade (scapula) and the upper arm (humerus) should be almost equal in length with an angle of approximately 90 – 100 degrees where they join at the point of the shoulder - not to be confused with the point of the withers.

A well-laid shoulder blade (scapula) should have an angle of approximately 45 to 50 degrees from the horizontal. The top of the shoulder blade should be fairly close at the withers.

With this construction the forelegs will be set directly below the point of withers (top of scapula) on a line perpendicular to the ground – and NOT set in line with the neck. This allows for a moderate prosternum and places the front legs well under the dog.

When viewed from the front, the forelegs should be straight, separated by a moderately deep and wide chest.

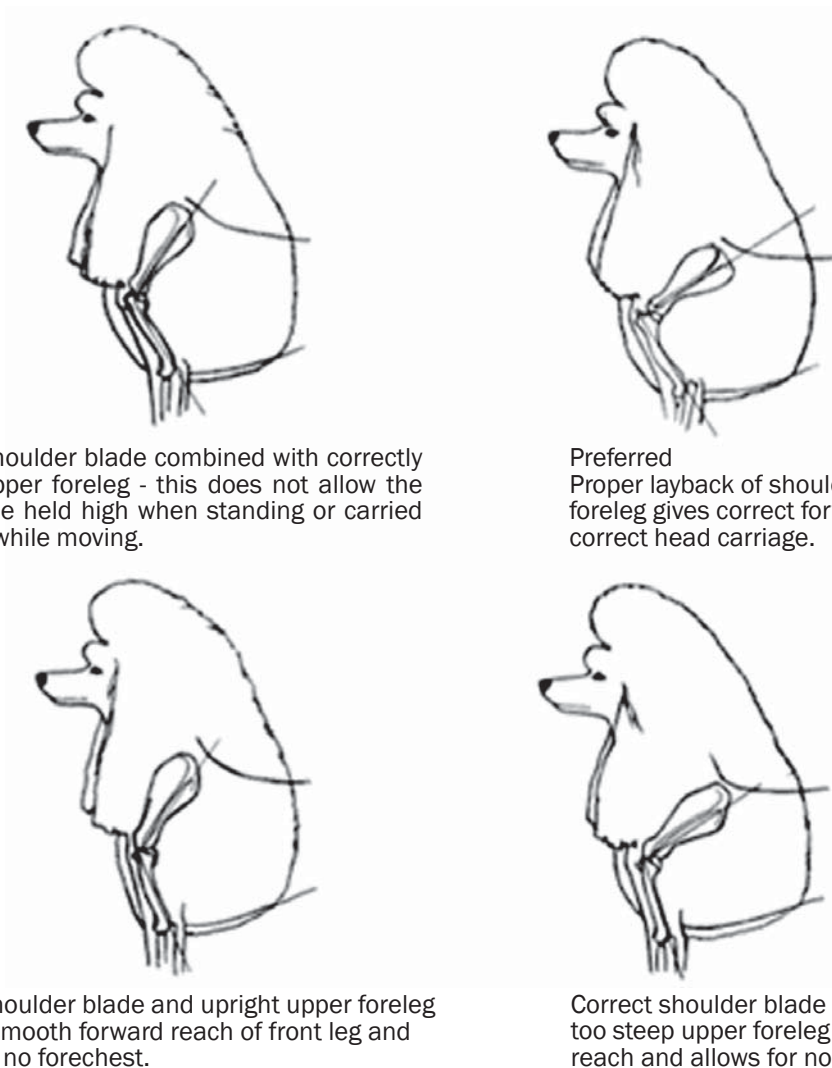


Fig. 8 – Shoulder placement.

● BODY

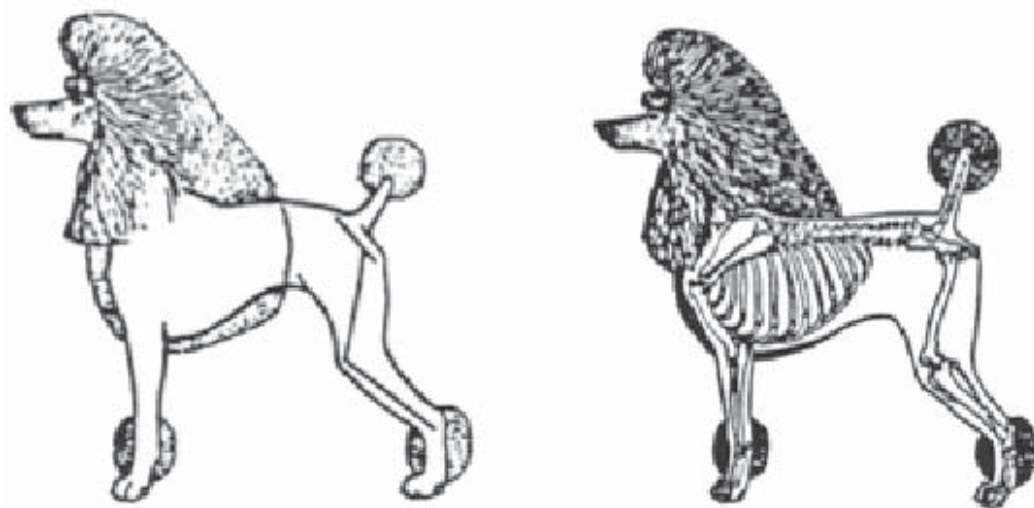
Chest – deep and moderately wide. Ribs – well sprung and rounded. Back – short, strong, slightly hollowed; loins broad and muscular.

The chest, to permit the correct placement of the forelegs, should extend down to the elbows and be moderately wide.

If the rib cage is slab-sided or barrelled shaped, rather than the almost oval with a gradual inclination towards the base, the elbows will be thrown out and loose.

The very slight hollow, which appears directly behind the point of the shoulders, is due to musculature rather than bone construction. It should not be confused with a sway back. The straight and level back is combined with a short, broad, level loin and there should be no falling away over the croup.

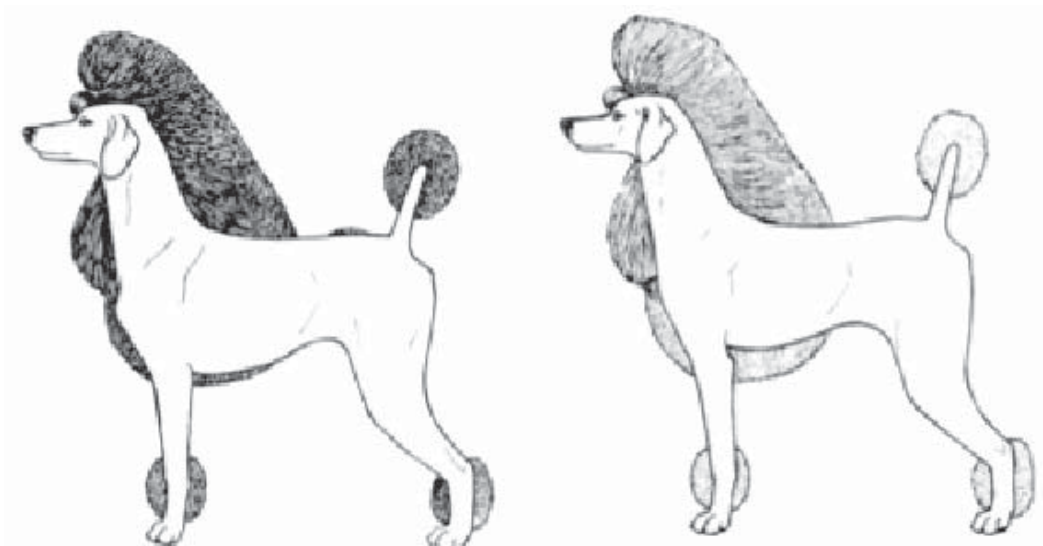
The overall balance of the dog should be remembered when looking at the individual parts of the body.



Roached back, low tailset

Preferred

Fig. 9 – Showing back and tail-set correct.



Preferred

The chest is deep, its lowest point no higher than the elbows.

Lacking rib depth. Too shallow in chest

Fig. 10 – Showing correct depth of chest.

Body



The loin is short, broad and muscular.



Incorrect
Round or barrel-shaped



Correct
Heart-shaped



Incorrect
Poor rib spring, slab sided



Fig. 11 – Showing correct loin and ribcage.

● **HINDQUARTERS**

Thighs well developed and muscular, well bent stifles, well let down hocks, hind legs turning neither in nor out.

There should be balance between the angulation of the forequarters and the hindquarters. The hind legs should be straight and parallel when viewed from the rear. The well-developed muscles of the upper and lower thigh should be apparent. The femur should not be longer than the tibia/fibula.

The rear pastern should be short and perpendicular to the ground. Remember the Poodle is a moderately constructed dog and this includes angulation. With correct angulation, the back feet should be in line with the point of the buttocks or extended slightly behind it. Back feet under the body suggest straight angulation and those, which extend very far behind the buttocks, suggest extreme angulation.

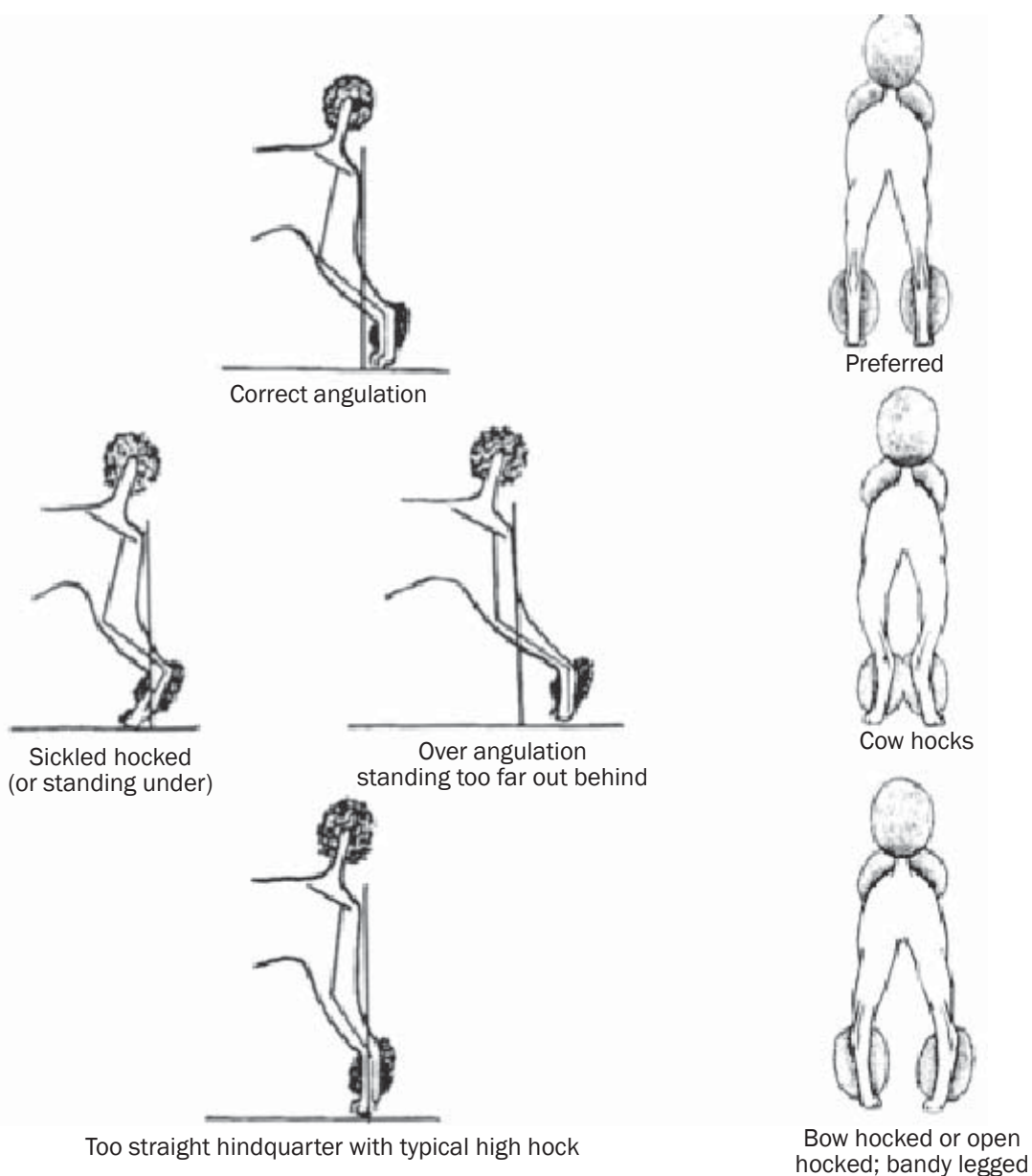


Fig. 12 – Showing hindquarters side and rear view.

● FEET

Pasterns strong, tight feet proportionally small, oval in shape, turning neither in nor out, toes arched, pads thick and hard, well cushioned.

Strong pasterns and correct feet are essential to the poodle's gait and purpose. When viewed from the side, the front pasterns should have no more than a slight slope, and the back ones should be upright. When viewed from the front or rear, the pasterns should be straight, bending neither in nor out.

The slight webbing found between the toes is a reminder of their water-retrieving heritage. Contrary to common belief a poodle does not have a "cats foot", rather a small, firm foot with short oval shape.

Toes are well arched and tight fitting.

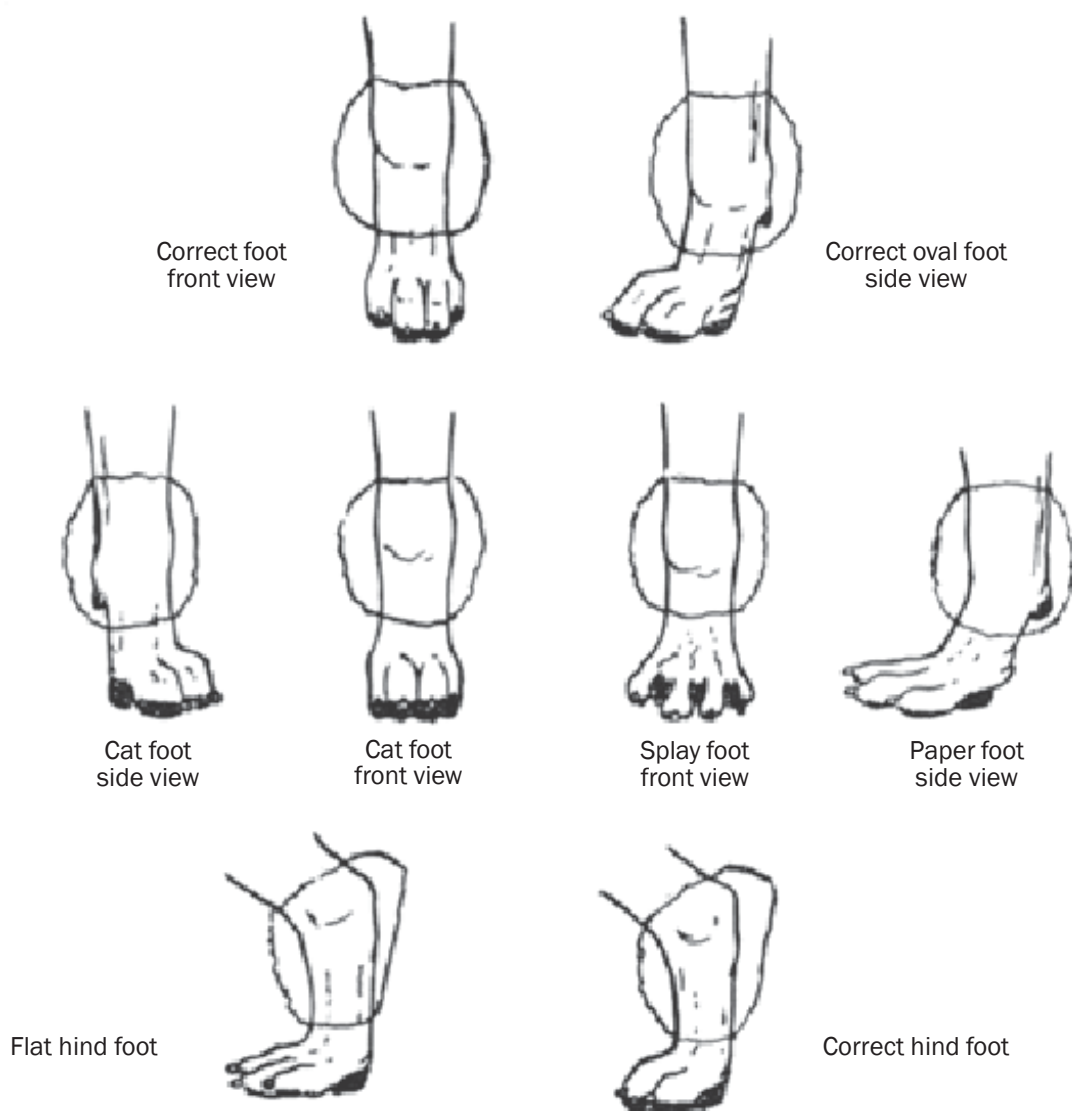


Fig. 13 – Showing correct and incorrect foot shape.

● **TAIL**

Docked: Set on rather high, carried at slight angle away from the body, never curled or carried over back, thick at root.

Undocked: Thick at root, set on rather high, carried away from the body and as straight as possible.

There is a difference between tail set and tail carriage. A correct tail is set on rather high at the level of the loin. A low tail set often indicates an incorrect loin and croup.

The tail should be well carried, just off the vertical away from the body between 12 and 1 o'clock. Any other tail carriage when moving is a fault.

The Standard was written when tails could be docked. With longer undocked tails, it is acceptable for the end of the tail to tilt. Corkscrew or strongly curled tails, particularly when the curl starts from the base of the tail, are faulty.

The statement "thick at the root" is an indicator of bone substance.



Preferred



Preferred

Tail carried up. Both equally correct



Set low



Curled



Carried over the back

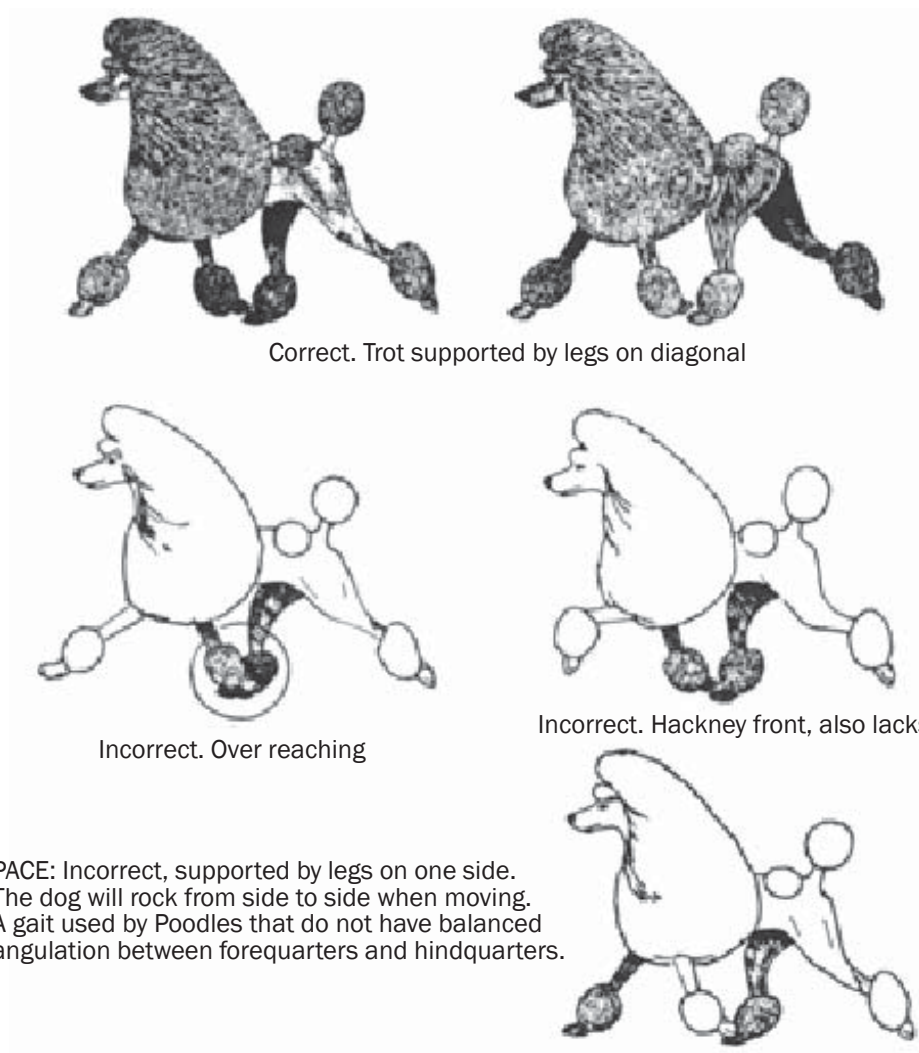


Fig. 14 – Correct and incorrect tail set and carriage.

● GAIT/MOVEMENT

Sound, free movement and light gait are essential.

Sound, effortless movement is essential. The typical light springy action partly results from the correct proportions, proper foot timing, balanced angulation, good condition and correct carriage. Springy does not mean bouncy, as the Poodle should retain a steady topline when moving, rather it means athletic, lithe and “light on it’s feet”.

Balanced side movement is a characteristic of the breed. The Poodle should display good reach in front and strong drive behind, gained from the flexing of the knee and extension of the hock. The Poodle does not have excessive extension.

The correctly constructed Poodle should move in a straight line with (when viewed from the front) the forelegs parallel and the elbows close to the body. From the rear the hind legs should be parallel.

The Poodle does not single track, however, at speed the track will converge. A high hackney gait, paddling and overreaching are incorrect.

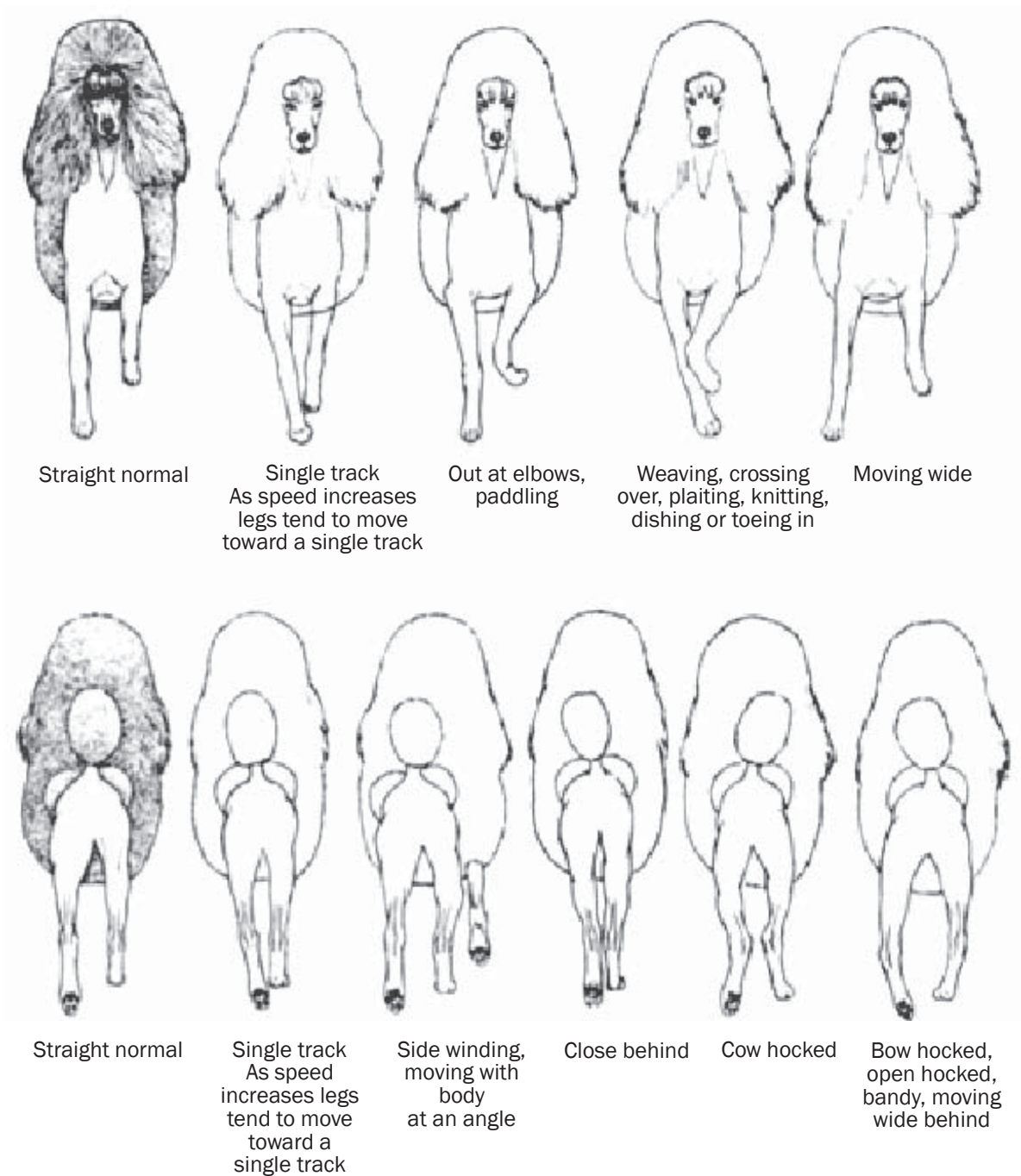


Fig. 15- Showing correct movement – side view.
 Fig.16 – Showing correct movement- fore and aft.

● **COAT**

Very profuse and dense of good harsh texture without knots or tangles. All short hair close, thick and curly. It is strongly recommended that the traditional lion clip be adhered to.

The intermingling of harsh guard hairs with a thick softer coat forms the harsh texture of the Poodle coat. The coat should be elastic and resistant to the pressure of the hand.

The coat should be abundant and thick with the truly harsh coat usually only appearing at maturity and generally on the main body of the dog.

Due to the nature of poodle hair it is possible for the coat to cord, and a corded poodle in traditional lion trim is equally eligible to be shown.

Modern grooming techniques allow for thorough drying and precise scissoring, therefore, the short hair is usually seen straight rather than with the natural curl.

Clips:

There are two forms of traditional lion clip, firstly the Continental Lion Clip (usually referred to as Continental) with shaved hindquarters and a rosette on each hip. Secondly the English Saddle Trim (often referred to as the Lion Trim) where the hair on the hindquarters is left longer. A kidney shaped area is often shaved on each flank.

Puppy Trim – traditionally young dogs are exhibited in puppy trim as this allows the exhibitor to move the dog into the adult trim when it has sufficient hair. It has commonly been the practice to cut puppies into adult trim at around 12 months of age.

Other acceptable trims: As the breed Standard does not disqualify other trims, it is possible to exhibit the Poodle in any trim that allows the coat quality to be evaluated. This may include the Junior Lion Trim, which is a combination of a Lion Trim and Puppy Trim. This trim is widely used in the UK and Europe and is often seen in Australia.

It is quite normal for exhibits in Veterans and non-competitive classes (such as Progeny) to be shown in stylised trims not normally seen in the normal classes.

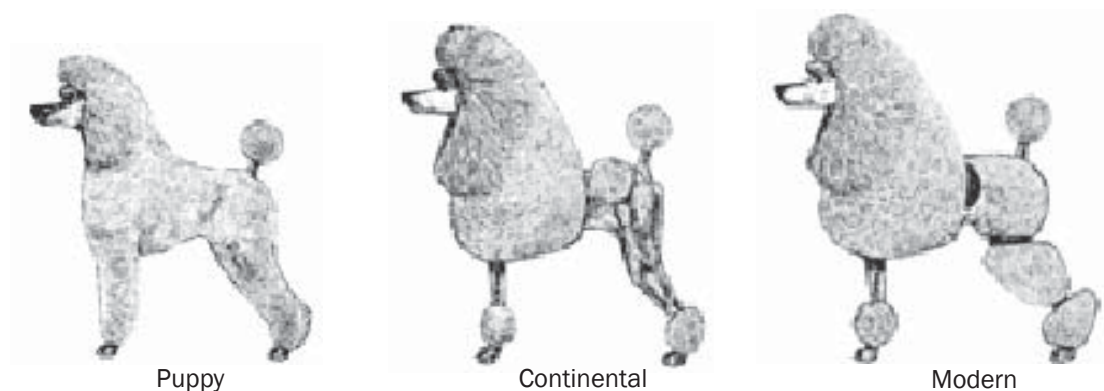


Fig. 17 – Illustration of various clips.

• COLOURS

All solid colours. White and cream poodles to have black nose, lips and eye rims, black toenails are desirable, brown poodles to have dark amber eyes, dark liver nose, lips, eye rims and toenails. Apricot poodles to have dark eyes with black points or deep amber eyes with liver points. Black, silver and blue poodles to have black nose, lips, eye rims and toenails. Cream, apricot, brown, silver and blue poodles may show varying shades of the same colour up to 18 months. Clear colours preferred.

Solid colour means one colour only and while clear colours are definitely preferred, natural variation is not to be considered incorrect. Within colours there are shade variations, e.g. Brown maybe pale or dark. Colour can also be influenced by the colour of the guard hairs, e.g. Silvers can have black or white guard hairs.

Parti-coloured dogs are not permitted under our Standard. Please note that scarring on the skin can cause a change in colour (i.e. a black patch on a silver or a dark apricot patch on a cream or white). “Scar” hair is generally very coarse and wiry with limited undercoat and has clear definition from the remainder of the coat.

Some colours take longer to clear than others. The larger varieties can take up to 3 years to appear a consistent shade due to the additional length of adult hair required as height increases.

Within colours there are shade variations, e.g. brown maybe pale or dark. Colour can also be influenced by the colour of the guard hairs, e.g. silver can have black or white guard hairs.

All colours should be determined at skin.

● **SIZE**

<i>Poodle (Standard)</i>	<i>38 cm (15 inches) and over,</i>
<i>Poodle (Miniature)</i>	<i>Height at shoulder should be under 38cm (15 inches) but not under 28cm (11 inches),</i>
<i>Poodle (Toy)</i>	<i>Height at shoulder should be under 28 cm (11 inches).</i>

The measuring of the Miniature and Toy varieties in the show ring is at the discretion of the judge. However, measuring poodles should only be done with an officially ANKC approved measuring device.

The exhibitor should hold the dog in the normal show position on a firm table with a non-slip surface. The measure should be brought from the rear of the dog, over the back and gently lowered to rest on the top of the shoulder.

Because our Standard states that we “should be under” – type, balance, soundness of temperament and action should always be considered before height, yet only a slight variation of height is acceptable.

● **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 and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

<i>Heavy build, clumsiness</i>	<i>Long back, coarse legs and feet, long flat toes</i>
<i>Vicious temperament</i>	<i>Bad carriage, heavy gait</i>
<i>Coarse head, lippiness, snipey in foreface</i>	<i>Open soft coats with no curl</i>
<i>Flesh coloured nose</i>	<i>Particolours</i>

Light or round or prominent eyes

Over or undershot or pincer mouth

White markings on black or coloured poodles

Lemon or other markings on white poodles

Each fault should be assessed in proportion to the level of deviation from the ideal, impact upon the functionality of the dog and relationship to the overall quality of the dog.

● **NOTE**

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

Value of Points

As a guide, the following 'value of points' as stated in the old American Kennel Club Standard, has been included. This gives an indication of the importance attached to the components of a Poodle;

General appearance, temperament, carriage & condition	30
Head, expression, ears, eyes and teeth	20
Body, neck, legs, feet & tail	20
Gait	20
Coat, colour & texture	10

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Australian National Kennel Council and the National Poodle Council (Australia) sincerely thank the Poodle Club of America Inc for the permission to use the illustrations presented in this Breed Standard Extension.

This Breed Standard Extension has been compiled by members of the Affiliates of the National Poodle Council (Australia).

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