



# **Breed Standard of the German Shepherd Dog**

## **General Appearance**

The German Shepherd Dog is of medium size, slightly stretched, strong and well muscled, with dry bone and firm in the overall construction.

## **Important measurements**

Height at withers for males 60 cm – 65 cm, for bitches 55 cm – 60 cm. The body length exceeds the height at the withers by 10 – 17%.

## **Character**

The German Shepherd must be well balanced (with strong nerves), self-assured, totally at ease, (except when provoked), good-natured as well as attentive and willing to work. In order to serve as companion, watchdog, protection dog, service dog and herding dog he needs to possess drive, nerve steadiness and self-assurance.

## **Head**

The head is wedge-shaped and in proportion to body size (length approx. 40% of height at withers) without being coarse or too elongated. Clean and dry in general appearance, moderately

broad between the ears .The forehead seen from the front and side is only slightly rounded and without any or with only a slightly indicated middle furrow.

The proportion of the cranial region to the facial region is 50 : 50. The width of the cranial region corresponds approximately to the length. Seen from above, the skull is tapering evenly from the ears to the nasal bridge and gradually sloping into the wedge-shaped foreface, with a slanting not too abrupt stop.

Upper and lower jaw is strongly developed.

The bridge of the nose is straight, any indentation or arch is undesirable. Lips are tight, firm and of dark color.

**The nose** must be black.

**The teeth** must be strong, healthy and have complete dentition (42 teeth according to the teeth formula). The German Shepherd has a scissor bite, i.e. the incisors must fit scissor-like to each other so that the incisors of the upper jaw overlap those of the lower jaw in scissor fashion. Level bite, over- and undershot teeth are faulty as well as wide gaps between the teeth (spaciously positioned). Equally faulty is straight alignment of the incisors. The jawbones must be strongly developed to permit teeth being deeply embedded in the dental arch.

**The eyes** are of medium size, almond shaped, slightly oblique and not protruding. The eye color should be dark.

Light, piercing eyes are undesirable since it affects the dog's expression.

## **Ears**

The German Shepherd has erect ears of medium size, which are carried upright, pointing in the same parallel direction (not inwardly constricted) and open to the front. Tipped ears and hanging ears are faulty. Laid-back ears are not faulty when in motion or resting.

## **Neck**

The neck should be strong, well muscled and without loose skin at the throat (dewlap). Its angulations towards the torso (horizontally) are approximately 45 degrees.

## **Body**

**The top line** proceeds from the neck over a high long wither and over a straight back to the slightly sloping croup without any abrupt change. The back is moderately long, firm, strong and well muscled. The loin is broad, short, well developed and well muscled. The croup should be long, sloping slightly at an angle of about 23 degrees to the horizontal and, without any break in the top line, continues over the tail set.

**The chest** should be moderately broad, the under chest long and well developed. The depth of chest should be approx. 45% to 48% of the height at withers.

**The ribs** should be moderately rounded. Barrel-shaped ribs are as faulty as too flat ribs.

**The tail** must reach at least the hock joint, but not further than the middle of the metatarsus. It has slightly longer hair on its

underside and is carried hanging in a gentle curve. When the dog is excited or in motion, the tail is raised and carried higher, but not above the horizontal line. Corrective surgery is not allowed.

## **Limbs**

### **Forehand**

**The front limbs** seen from all sides are straight and from the front absolutely parallel.

**The shoulder blade and upper arm** are of equal length, well muscled and firmly attached to the body. The angle between the shoulder blade and the upper arm is ideally 90 degrees, but generally up to 110 degrees.

**The elbows** must turn neither in nor out either in stance or in movement. Viewed from all sides, the forearms are straight and absolutely parallel to each other, dry and firmly muscled. The pastern has a length of approximately 1/3 of the forearm; the

angle between them is 20 to 22 degrees. A weak pastern (angle more than 22 degrees) or a steep pastern (angle less than 20 degrees) affects the dog's working ability, especially his endurance.

**The paws** are rounded, closed with toes well arched. The pads are hard, but not brittle; nails strong and dark in color.

### **Hindquarters**

The placement of the **hind legs** is slightly backwards. The hind limbs, seen from behind, are parallel to each other. Upper and lower thigh is approximately of equal length and forms an angle of about 120 degrees. The thighs are strong and well muscled.

**The hock joints** are strong and firm. The metatarsus stands vertically under the hock joint.

**The paws** are closed, slightly arched; the pads hard and dark in color, the nails strong, arched and also of dark color.

## **Movement**

The German Shepherd is a trotter. The limbs must be so harmonious with each other in length and angulations that, without noticeable change in the top line, the hindquarters can push the torso forward in such a manner that the stride matches that of the forequarters. Every tendency toward over angulations of the hindquarters reduces the firmness and stamina and consequently the working ability. Correct body proportions and angulations result in a flat over the ground, far reaching, and ground-covering gait giving the impression of effortless propulsion. The head pushed forward and the tail slightly raised result in an even, effortless trot showing a gently curved, uninterrupted top line from the tips of the ears, over neck and back to the tip of the tail.

## **Skin**

The skin is (loosely) contiguous without, however, forming folds.

## **Coat**

### **Texture of coat**

Coat:

The German shepherd is bred with two different types of coat - both with undercoat - short stock coat and long stock coat

Short stock coat:

The outer coat should be as dense as possible, straight, harsh and lying closely to the body. On the head, inside ears, on the front side of the legs and on feet and toes, the hair is short; on the neck slightly longer and thicker. On the rear side of the legs, the hair is longer, extending to the pasterns and the hocks. It forms moderate < trousers > at the rear of the thighs.

Long stock coat

The outer coat should be long, soft and not lying close to the body, with < feathers > on ears and legs, bushy trousers and bushy tail with feathers extending to the tip of the tail. On the head and inside of the ears, on the front side of the legs and on feet and toes, the hair is short; on the neck longer and thicker forming a mane-like look. On the rear side of the legs, the hair is longer extending to the pasterns and the hocks. It forms pronounced trousers at the rear of the thighs.

### **Color**

Black with reddish-brown, brown, yellow to light gray markings. Solid black, gray with darker shading, black saddle and mask. Unobtrusive, small white markings on chest as well

as very light color on insides permissible, but not desirable. Nose must be black in all colors. Dogs with lack of mask, light to piercing eye color, as well as with light to whitish markings on the chest and the insides, pale nails and red tip of tail are considered to be lacking in pigmentation. The undercoat shows a light grayish tone. The color white is not accepted.

### **Size/weight**

Males:                      Height at withers      60 cm – 65 cm

                                    Weight:                      30 kg – 40 kg

Bitches:                     Height at withers      55 cm – 60 cm

                                    Weight:                      22 kg – 32 kg

### **Testicles**

Males should have two normally developed testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

### **Faults**

All deviations from the afore-mentioned points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

### **Serious faults**

Any deviation from the above described breed characteristics, which affect the working capability of the dog.

Faulty ears: wide and too low set ears, tipped ears, inward



constricted ears. Ears not firm.

Severe lack of pigmentation.

Severe lack in overall firmness.

### **Dentition faults**

All deviations from a scissor bite and the teeth formula but not including disqualifying faults (refer below).

### **Disqualifying faults**

- a) weak temperament, aggressive and overly shy dogs.
- b) dogs with proven “serious HD”.
- c) monorchids and cryptorchids as well as dogs with clearly unevenly developed and shriveled testicles.
- d) dogs with deformed ears and/or tail faults.
- e) dogs with malformations.
- f) dogs with missing teeth:
  - 1 premolar 3 plus one additional tooth; or
  - 1 canine, or
  - 1 premolar 4, or
  - 1 molar 1 or 2, or
  - a total of 3 or more missing teeth.
- g) dogs with faulty jaws:
  - overshot by more than 2 mm,
  - undershot,
  - level bite formed by all 12 incisors.
- h) oversized or undersized dogs by more than 1 cm.
- i) Albinos

- j) White coat color (even with dark eyes and nails)
- k) Long coat without under coat.
- l) Long coat (long, soft outer coat without under coat, mainly parted on the middle of the back, feathers on ears, legs and on the tail).