

Australian Shepherd Association Breed Standard



-General Appearance-

Whether the dog is a Standard, Mini, or Toy, the Australian Shepherd is a well-balanced dog. Attentiveness, animation, strength, and stamina, as well as agility, are parts that make this dog well-balanced. Trait characteristic of an Aussie is a coarse coat in moderate length with varying in color, natural or docked tail, and a clean bone structure. Depending on the sex, masculinity or femininity must be well defined as well.

-Character-

Australian Shepherds are a working/herding breed. They are highly intelligent, agile, and versatile. This makes them well within herding and guarding instincts, but he can be an exceptional companion. They are easy to train and perform, show great enthusiasm and style. Aussies can be reserved with strangers but should not show shyness as this is a fault.

-Head-

Head must be clean-cut, strong, and in proportion to the body. Males should look masculine while the female should look feminine.

Top skull is flat but slightly rounded. The length and width should be equal to the length of the muzzle. The muzzle should taper to a rounded tip, and the stop is moderate but well defined. Sever fault: domed skull.

Teeth are strong and white, full with a scissor bite. Teeth that are broken or missing by accident are not penalized as this is a working breed. However, underbites, overbites, and uneven bites are a disqualification.

Eyes are clear, almond shaped, and expressive. They are moderate in size that are neither prominent or sunken in and are portioned within the rest of the face. Coloring varies from brown, blue, green, and amber. Marbling and flecking are also acceptable.

Ears are to be set high on the side of the head. They are to be triangular in shape and slightly rounded at the tip. Moderate size and length can be measured when bringing the tip of the ear to the inside corner of the eye. The tips should not exceed past the eye, nor should it be too short to meet the inside corner of the eye. At full attention, the ears should break forward $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ above the head. Severe faults for ears are prick and hound style ears.

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-Neck and body-

The neck and body are sturdy, clean and within proportion to the body. It is slightly arched at the crest and sets well with the shoulders. When stacked, the shoulders should be parallel to each other. Two fingers should rest between the blades comfortably. The body is firm and muscular, and the top line (spine) should be level and flat like a table top. Croup is moderate in sloping and tail is straight which does not exceed three inches. It is natural bobbed or docked.

-Forequarters-

Shoulder blades are long and flat and set close within the withers, giving space for two fingers to rest comfortably between the two. At a natural stance, the angle should be approximately 45 degrees from the ground. The upper arm is attached at approximately a right angle from the shoulder line with forelegs dropping straight and perpendicular towards the ground. Elbow joints are equidistant to the withers and ground, while legs are powerful, pasterns are short and thick but still flexible. Aussie feet are oval shaped, compact and with close-knit, arched toes. Their pads are thick, nails short and dewclaws may be removed.

-Hindquarters-

The width of the hindquarters are approximately equal to the width of the forequarters at the shoulders. They are strong and muscular, and angulation of the pelvis and upper thigh corresponds to the angulation of the shoulder blade and upper arm, all together forming a right angle. Stifles are defined, hock joints mildly bent. The metatarsi are short, perpendicular to the ground and are in parallel to each other when view from the rear. The feet are the same as the front, oval-shaped, compact, and close-knit arched toes. Pads thick, nails short, and dewclaws **ARE** removed. Faults include straight in the stifle, long toes or open feet. Cow hocks, straight hocks, sickle hocks or lack of muscling and standing wide are also faults.

-Coat and Coloring-

The Aussie coat is of a medium texture and length. Coats can vary to straight to slightly wavy. It is weather resistant with a moderated undercoat. Around the head, ears, front forelegs, and below hocks, the hair is short and smooth. Feathering is moderate on the back of the forelegs, while the breeches are full. Moderate mane and frill are more pronounced in dogs than bitches but may be presented in both. All colors of the Aussies are rich and clear. Colors are blue merle, red (liver) merle, solid black or red (liver) with or without trim coloring: white markings, tan (copper) points. Blues and blacks have black pigmented on noses, lips, and eye rims while reds (liver) have a red pigmentation. Butterfly noses should not be faulted till after one year of age. All colors of the Aussie should have dominance of color other than white, and the white collar (if applicable) does not exceed past the withers. Disqualifications would be other coat colors that are not apart of the breed standard, (pattern whites, yellow, or sables). White body

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splashes; white spots on back, side above elbows and behind withers. Eyes should be rimmed with color, not white.

-Gait-

Aussies move smooth and easy, that exhibits agility of well-balanced movement with ground covering stride. Fore and hind legs move straight and parallel within the center line of the body, and when speed increases, the feet converge toward the center line of gravity while topline remains level and firm. Joints do not twist or bend when in motion. Faults include: Side movement faults--over reaching, back kick out, hackney, pacing, moving downhill (high in rear), flying trot; coming and going faults--crabbing or sidewinding, crossing over the centerline, front body swivel and shoulder roll, rear end swivel and body rolling.

-Size-

ASA recognizes all three sizes of the Australian Shepherd, toy, mini, and standard. While each size has their own specialty in looks, they should all be within the guidelines of the breed standard. Measurements of sizes are with natural stacked stance and measured from the top of the withers straight to the ground.

Toys for both male and female are 10 to 14 inches at the top of the withers.

Mini for both male and female are 14-18 inches at the top of the withers.

Standards for both male and female are 18 inches and up. We have no top limit for standards as sometimes they would just like to keep growing.