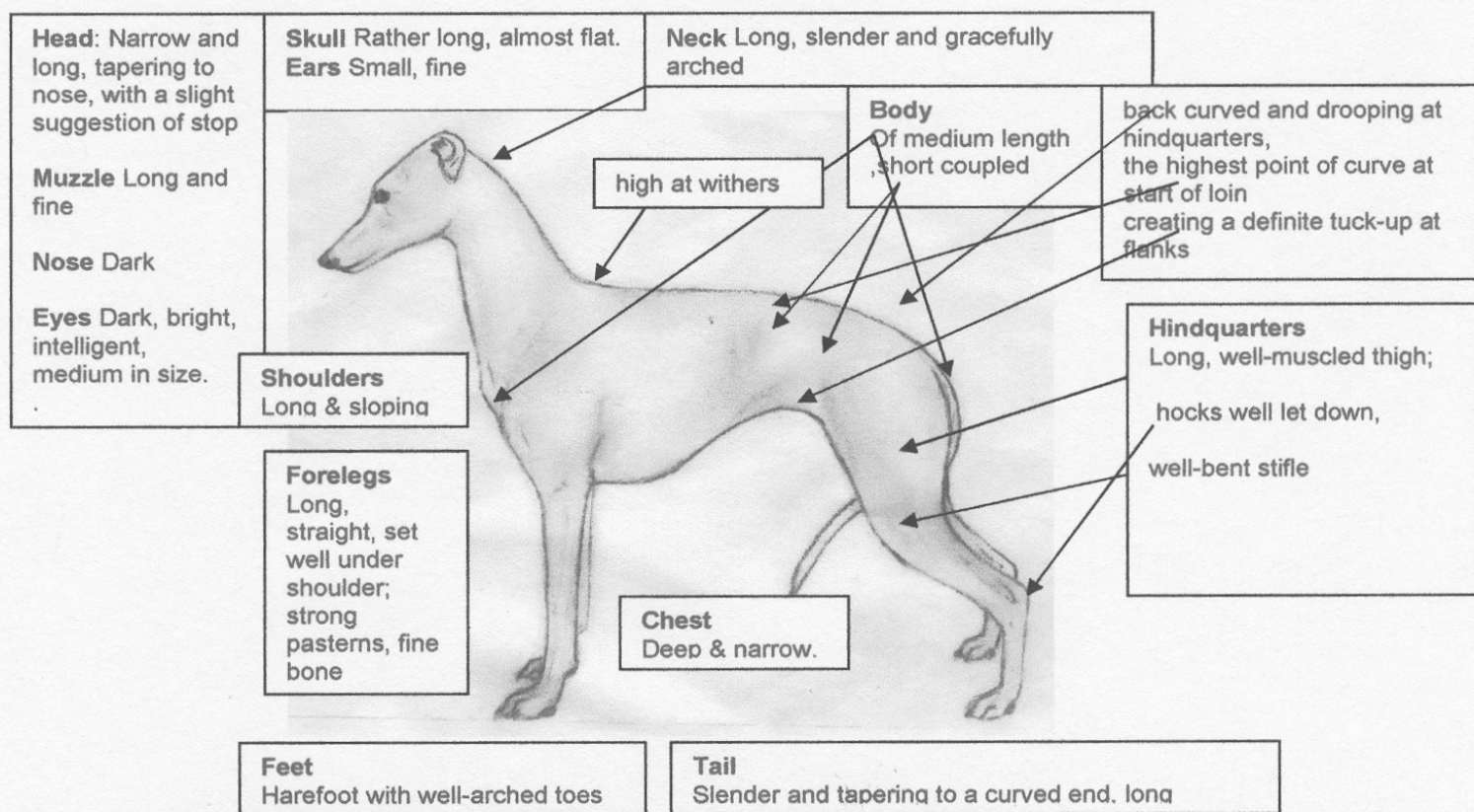


The Italian Greyhound

An Illustrated Standard



By Lilian Barber & Angela Leonard
Illustrations by Angela Leonard



The Official Standard of The Italian Greyhound

Description

The Italian Greyhound is very similar to the Greyhound, but much smaller and more slender in all proportions and of ideal elegance and grace.

Head: Narrow and long, tapering to nose, with a slight suggestion of stop.

Skull: Rather long, almost flat.

Muzzle: Long and fine.

Nose: Dark. It may be black or brown or in keeping with the color of the dog. A light or partly pigmented nose is a fault.

Teeth: Scissors bite. A badly undershot or overshot mouth is a fault.

Eyes: Dark, bright, intelligent, medium in size. Very light eyes are a fault.

Ears: Small, fine in texture; thrown back and folded except when alerted, then carried folded at right angles to the head. Erect or button ears severely penalized.

Neck: Long, slender and gracefully arched.

Body: Of medium length, short coupled; high at withers, back curved and drooping at hindquarters, the highest point of curve at start of loin, creating a definite tuck-up at flanks.

Shoulders: Long and sloping.

Chest: Deep and narrow.

Forelegs: Long, straight, set well under shoulder; strong pasterns, fine bone.

Hindquarters: Long, well-muscled thigh; hind legs parallel when viewed from behind, hocks well let down, well-bent stifle.

Feet: Harefoot with well-arched toes. Removal of dewclaws optional.

Tail: Slender and tapering to a curved end, long enough to reach the hock; set low, carried low. Ring tail a serious fault, gay tail a fault.

Coat: Skin fine and supple, hair short, glossy like satin and soft to the touch.

Color: Any color and markings are acceptable except that a dog with brindle markings and a dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds must be disqualified.

Action: High stepping and free, front and hind legs to move forward in a straight line

Size: Height at withers, ideally 13 inches to 15 inches.

Disqualifications: A dog with brindle markings. A dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds.

One of the first things you may notice when looking at a class of Italian Greyhounds is that there may be little consistency in size or type. As far back as we have been able to research, consistency has been a problem in the breed. This has made judging the Italian Greyhound a little more difficult.

Form follows function:

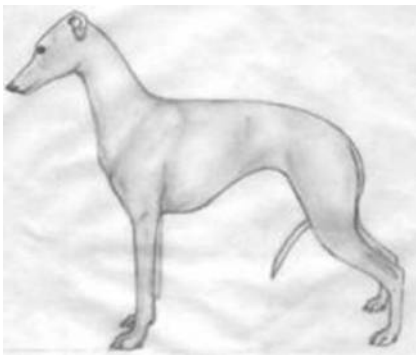
The ideal Italian Greyhound should be able to effortlessly accompany his owner on a long country stroll and physically able to chase small game. The same IG, while being carried through a crowd should not appear unreasonably fearful, attempt to attack anything that comes near, or bark excessively at everything in sight.

The Italian Greyhound is noted for his sweet, affectionate personality when he is with people he knows, but he is a true sighthound and can be aloof with strangers. Avoiding eye contact is a normal behavior for him and is not a sign of fear. Although he should respond to a sound or to bait by alerting his ears, he is not by nature a wildly outgoing dog and should not be expected to behave like a puppet on a string. Like many other small dogs, an IG may pull back slightly at the touch of a stranger, especially one with cold hands; but he should allow a normal examination on the table without panic.

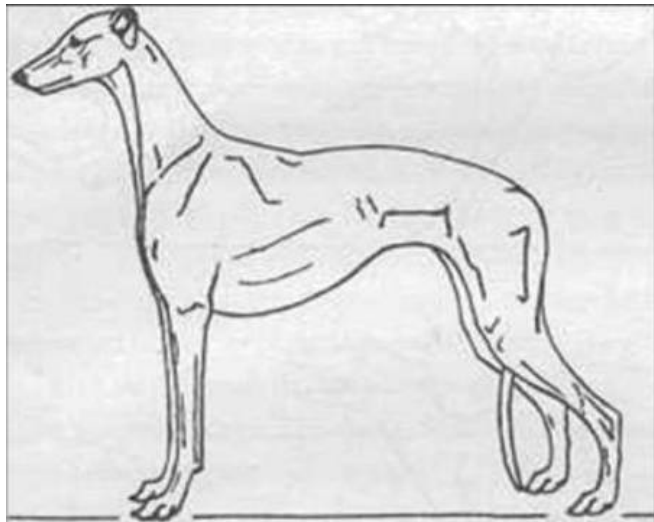
Description:

The Italian Greyhound is very similar to the Greyhound, but much smaller and more slender in all proportions and of ideal elegance and grace.

Because the Italian Greyhound standard begins with this comparison, it is important to understand the Greyhound standard in order to understand that of the Italian Greyhound. The Greyhound standard is included here as taken from “The Greyhound, Form Follows Function”, a publication of The Greyhound Club of America. (The words in italics underneath the IG standard are the Greyhound standard.)



The ideal Italian Greyhound



The ideal Greyhound

Head: Narrow and long, tapering to nose, with a slight suggestion of stop.

Greyhound: Long and narrow, fairly wide between the ears, scarcely perceptible stop, little or no development of nasal sinuses, good length of muzzle, which should be powerful without coarseness. Teeth very strong and even in front.

Skull: Rather long, almost flat.

Muzzle: Long and fine.

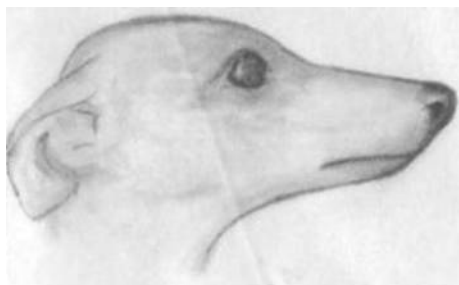
Nose: Dark. It may be black or brown or in keeping with the color of the dog. A light or partly pigmented nose is a fault.

Teeth: Scissors bite. A badly undershot or overshot mouth is a fault.

Eyes: Dark, bright, intelligent, medium in size. Very light eyes are a fault.

Greyhound: Eyes dark, bright, intelligent, indicating spirit.

Although a proper, elegant head adds to a more greyhound-like appearance, unlike many other Toy breeds the Italian Greyhound is not to be considered a “head breed”. Emphasis should be placed on the complete outline and the overall dog.



The skull is narrow and long, tapering to the nose. There is a SLIGHT suggestion of stop. While both of these heads are a different type they are both correct.



This does not mean NO stop, as shown in this example.



Nor EXCESSIVE stop as shown in this example.



This head shows a round, wide skull, a short snipey muzzle and bulging eyes, none of which are desirable in this breed. This was the most common head type in the past and is still seen occasionally.

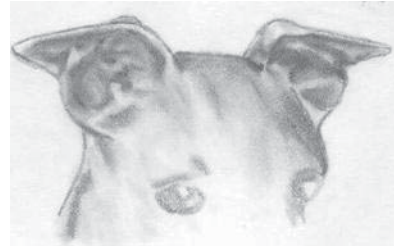
Ears: Small, fine in texture; thrown back and folded except when alerted, then carried folded at right angles to the head. Erect or button ears severely penalized.

Greyhound: Small and fine in texture, thrown back and folded, except when excited, when they are semi-pricked.

Small ears as in these examples are ideal:

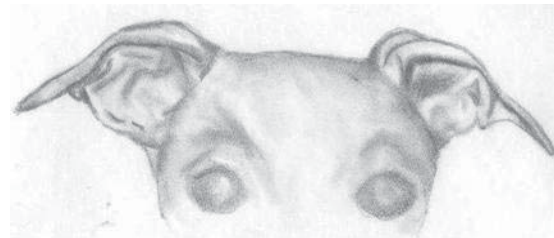
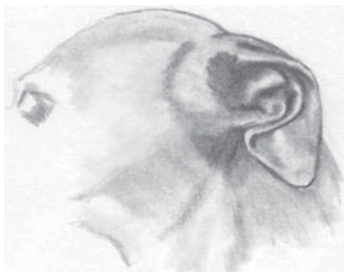


The correct ear carriage in repose, thrown back and folded.

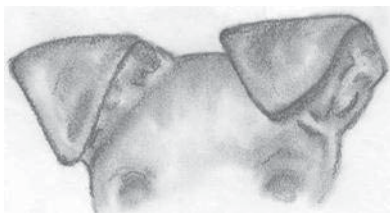


These rose ears are alert, still folded but held at right angles to the head.

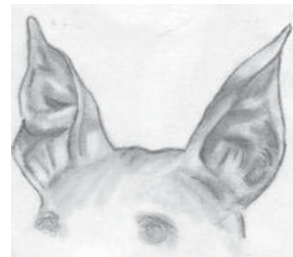
These are still correct ears but they are proportionately larger than the ideal:



Button ears and erect ears are both incorrect:



Button ears.



Erect ears.

Neck: Long, slender and gracefully arched.

Greyhound: Long, muscular, without throatiness, slightly arched, and widening gradually into the shoulder.



Long, slender,
gracefully arched.



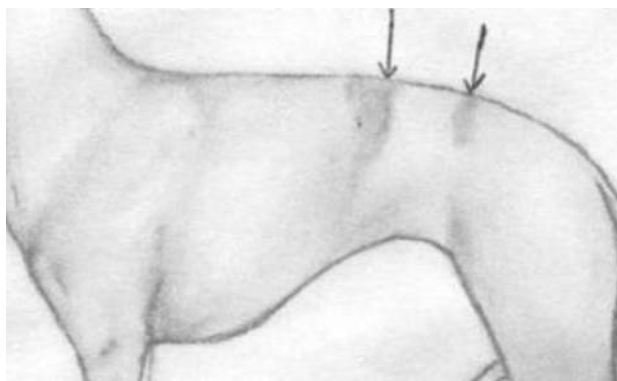
An incorrect, bulging
“ewe” neck is often
seen.

Body: Of medium length, short coupled; high at withers, back curved and drooping at hindquarters, the highest point of curve at start of loin, creating a definite tuck-up at flanks.

*Greyhound **Back:** Muscular and broad. **Loins:** Good depth of muscle, well arched, well cut up in the flanks.*

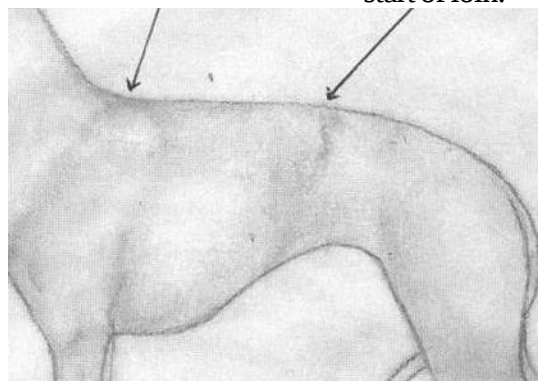
The statement “medium length, short coupled” indicates that the length in the Italian Greyhound’s body is in his ribcage.

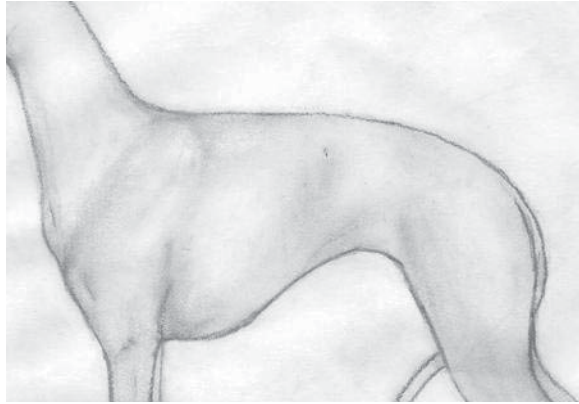
The loin area (between the last
rib and the start of the pelvic
girdle) is short.



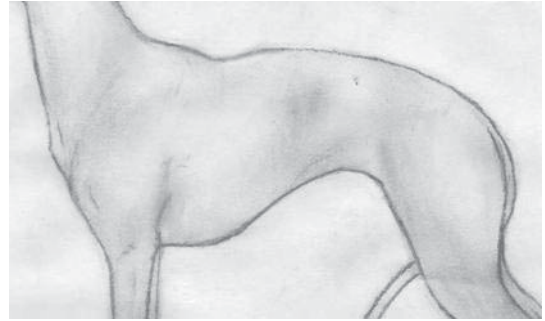
Withers:
highest point of
topline.

Highest point
of curve at
start of loin.

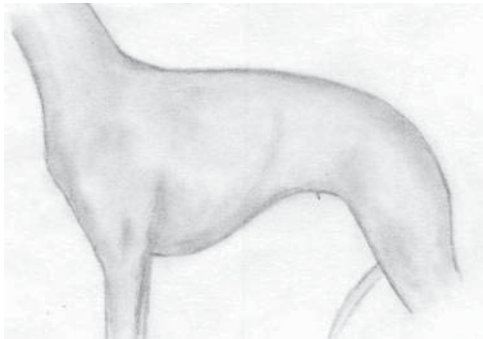




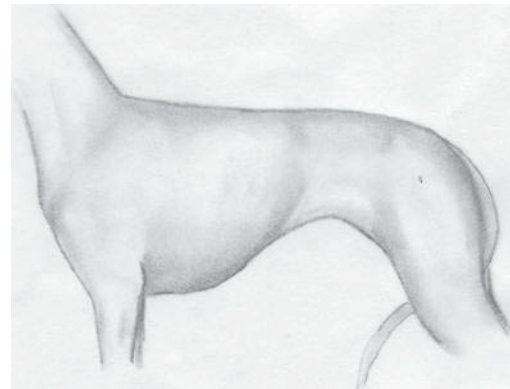
The ideal body and topline.



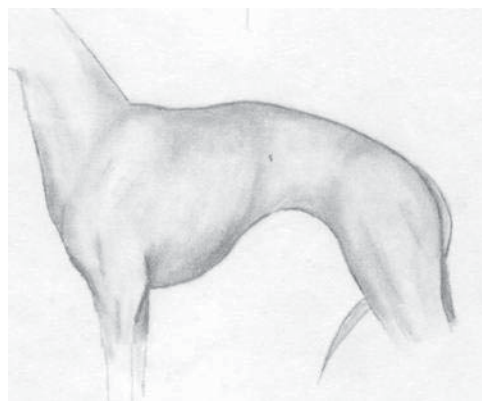
Although according to the standard this topline is correct, the dip behind the shoulders is undesirable, as it lacks the elegant smoothness of the ideal topline.



This somewhat curvier IG is still correct, with the highest point of the arch at the start of the loin. An overly exaggerated arch generally is accompanied by a rear lacking in strength and drive.

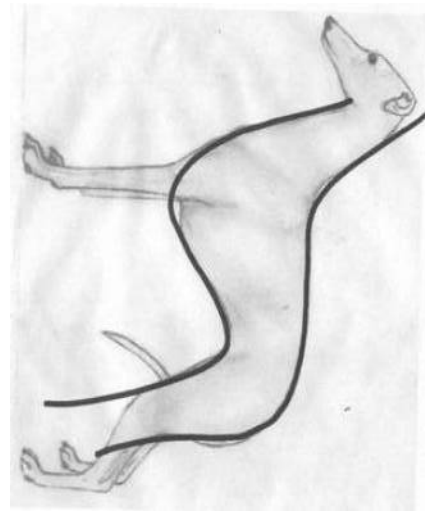
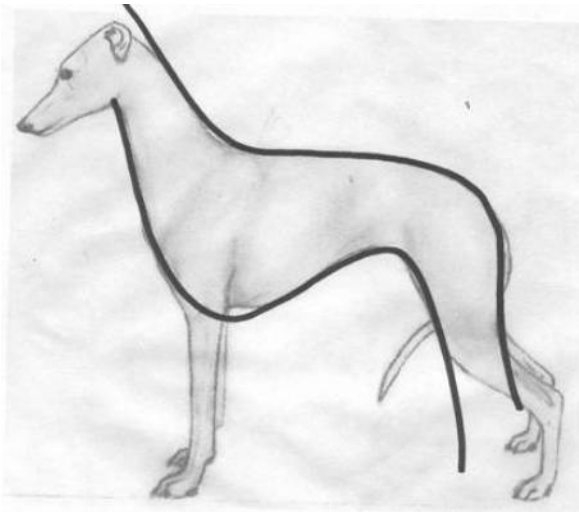


When the loin area is longer, as in this illustration, the topline tends to flatten out.



The ribcage is short and the loin is long, causing the high point of the curve, although it is at the start of the loin, to appear to be in the middle of the dog's back and higher than the withers.

Although the flowing s-curves of a properly built Italian Greyhound are easily visible, the superimposed lines here point out this elegant characteristic:

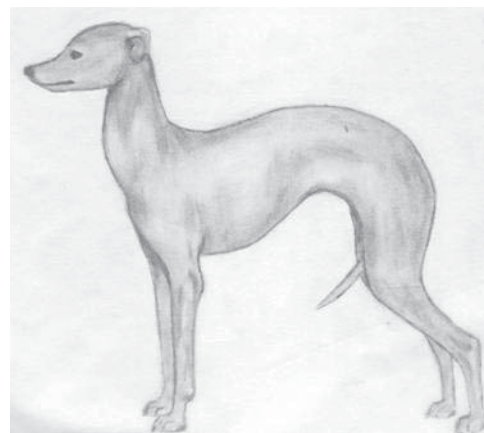


These examples are NOT what is meant by S curves:



This shoulder is low and the highest point of the arch is in the middle of the back rather than at the start of the loin.

This dog would be likely to move poorly.



This dog is low in the shoulder and high in the rear, both of which are incorrect. Note also the ewe neck and dish face.

Shoulders Long and sloping.

Greyhound: Placed as obliquely as possible, muscular without being loaded.

Chest: Deep and narrow.

Greyhound: Deep, and as wide as consistent with speed, fairly well-sprung ribs.

Forelegs: Long, straight, set well under shoulder; strong pasterns, fine bone.

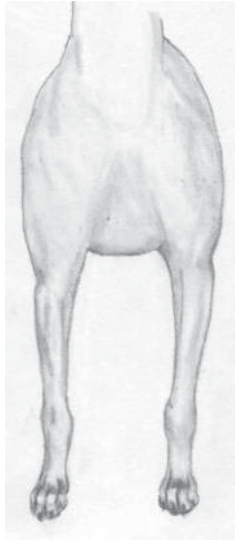
Greyhound: Perfectly straight, set well into the shoulders, neither turned in nor out, pasterns strong.

The ideal front assembly, shoulder long and sloping, legs set well under, chest deep and narrow:



This front is incorrect. The shoulders are straight (upright), the legs are set on too far forward, and the chest is shallow and hollow:





Chest is too wide, and there is too much rib spring, giving a barrel chested appearance.



This front is hollow and lacking in forechest. There is no fill between the legs.

Hindquarters: Long, well-muscled thigh; hind legs parallel when viewed from behind, hocks well let down, well-bent stifle.

Greyhound Hindquarters: Long, very muscular and powerful, wide and well let down, well bent stifles. Hocks well bent and rather close to ground, wide but straight fore and aft.

The ideal rear assembly:



Feet: Hare foot with well-arched toes. Removal of dewclaws optional.

Greyhound: *Hard and close, rather more hare than cat feet, well knuckled up with good strong claws.*



Hare foot is elongated, with the two center toes slightly longer than the other two.

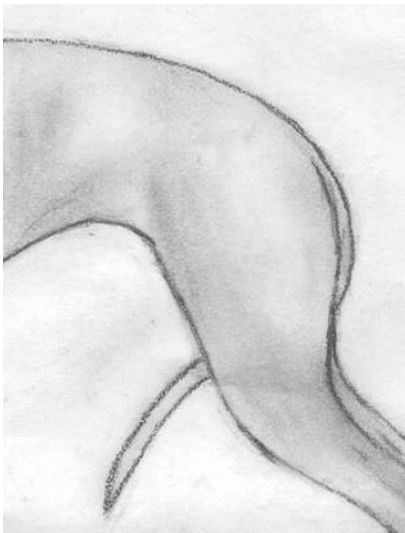


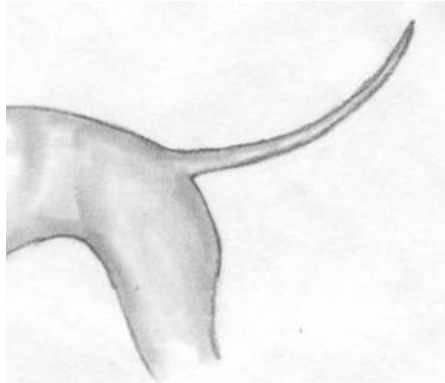
Cat foot is round.

Tail: Slender and tapering to a curved end, long enough to reach the hock; set low, carried low. Ring tail a serious fault, gay tail a fault.

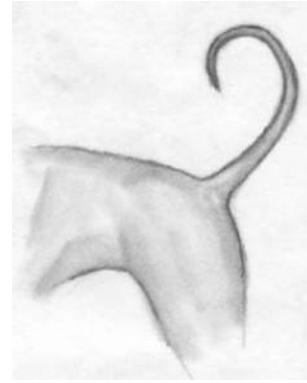
Greyhound: *Long, fine and tapering with a slight upward curve.*

Correct tail carriage while standing and in motion:





Gay tail.



Ring tail.

Coat: Skin fine and supple, hair short, glossy like satin and soft to the touch.

Greyhound: Short, smooth and firm in texture.

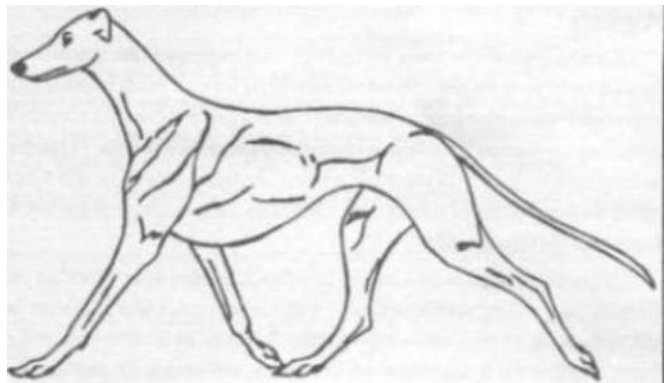
Color: Any color and markings are acceptable except that a dog with brindle markings and a dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds must be disqualified.

Greyhound: Color immaterial

Action: High stepping and free, front and hind legs to move forward in a straight line.



High stepping with reach and a slight bend at the pastern. Neither a stiff-legged goose step nor hackney action is correct.



The Greyhound standard makes no reference to action and does not ask for lift in the forward movement.

Size: Height at withers, ideally 13 inches to 15 inches.

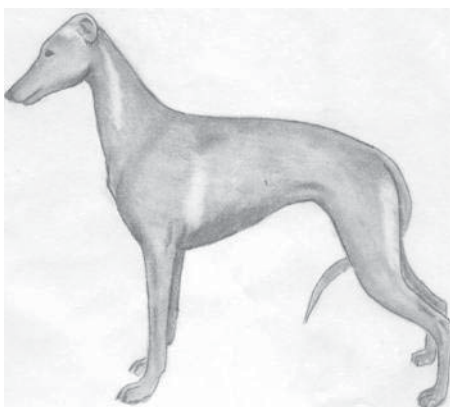
A good small dog is preferable to an equally good large one but a good larger dog is preferable to a poor smaller one.

Disqualifications: A dog with brindle markings. A dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds.

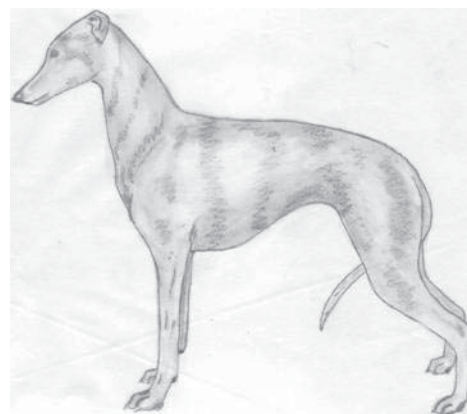
Disqualifications for brindle and for tan markings of this type are included in the standard because a purebred Italian Greyhound cannot genetically be any of these colorations. It is important to make sure the dog is actually brindle or has tan markings in all the areas where they are found on Miniature Pinschers, Dobermans, etc. before disqualifying it. Sometimes seal colored IGs have shading that tends to mimic these markings. True brindle or tan marked dogs are rarely seen in the show ring.



Disqualifying tan markings will be clearly defined and occur in the same places as they would on a Doberman or Miniature Pinscher.



Tan or gold markings on a seal IG are shadings of color and are most typically located at the base of the ears, the side of the neck, the “arm-pits”, and on the back of the thighs.



A true brindle has darker stripes all over the body like those found on brindle Greyhounds, Whippets, Boxers, etc.