

# The Russell Terrier

An Amplified Guide  
for Judges and Breeders

AKC Parent Club Approved

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# Welcome

Whether you are an interested judge, competitor or pet owner, we, the breeders of this versatile little fox-working terrier are relying upon you to help us keep this wonderful old working breed true to its heritage. Breeders, using the Russell Terrier Breed Standard as approved by the AKC, compiled this CD as an aid to those seeking to help us maintain that standard. In addition to information from The American Russell Terrier Club, Inc. material there are additions and clarifications as deemed necessary based on considerations of correct breed type.

The Russell Terrier is a dog of moderates; he is composed of a subtle "balance" of these moderates, creating the perfect picture that conscientious breeders seek. There is only one exception to the rule of moderation, and that is the Russell's small, oval shaped, compressible chest as compared to most other breeds.

The Russell Terrier is not a sparring breed. He is a pack dog, and as such, his temperament is non-confrontational. This is NOT a head/bone breed and should not be judged or bred as such. The modified wedge-shaped head should be evident in all specimens, but correctness is determined by the overall balance, proportion, and correct structure of the entire dog as well as its movement and is not solely based on the head, nor any other single part of the anatomy. We hope you enjoy our presentation, and we fervently hope this guide will assist everyone involved with the future of the Russell Terrier, to maintain it as a breed that can and will hunt.

For further information, please contact the ARTC at [www.theartc.org](http://www.theartc.org).

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# Russell Terrier History

The Russell Terrier originated in England, however, Australia has been designated as the country of development for the breed. The Russell Terrier was developed for use in the sport of foxhunting, using parallel breeding strains from Reverend John Russell's original fox working terriers in the early nineteenth century. The Russell Terrier is utilized today as a working terrier. Two distinct breeds evolved with similar standards except for height and proportion, the Russell being shorter in height with a distinctly rectangular shape and the Parson being taller with a more square in silhouette.

The small size of the Russell breed, 10" to 12", made them an ideal size to be carried on horseback in terrier bags, a requisite for certain terrain. The nose to locate and the voice to bolt the fox was far more important than speed. The Russell Terrier's handy size, small flexible chest, short legs, nose, strong voice and fearless nature made them excellent workers below ground bolting fox. Russell Terriers, derived from Reverend Russell's fox working strains, share many characteristics with the Parson Russell Terrier. However, it must be noted, the two breeds are distinctly different in height, body proportions and length of leg, each having been maintained separate breeds in the US and Europe for many decades.

The American Russell Terrier Registry has maintained the breed since 1995, with full registration at one year of age, requiring a health certificate, evaluated breeding status plus verification of pedigree purity. Breeding lines have been maintained with the specific intent to exclude infusions of Parson Russell Terrier blood lines as well as other "foreign" terrier blood.



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# General Appearance

The Russell Terrier is a strong, active and lithe working terrier of great character with a flexible body of medium length. His height is between 10"- 12", and his weight is in proportion to his height. His smart movement matches his keen expression. The color of a Russell Terrier must be predominately white with tan and/or black markings. Tail docking is optional and the coat may be smooth, rough or broken.

The overall dog is longer than tall, measuring from point of shoulder to point of buttock. The silhouette should represent a definite rectangle. The depth of body from withers to the brisket should equal the length of foreleg from elbows to the ground. His chest must be spannable (approximately 14"-15" or smaller), as well as compressible. The determination of which can only be made by the physical process of spanning.

His front should clearly exhibit the sternum ahead of the point of shoulder bearing no resemblance to the front of the lovely Fox Terrier, either in structure or movement. There is no preference as to coat type or marking, only as to the structure of the dog underneath.



# Russell Terrier Breed Type

Correct Breed Type is in the forefront of the mind as a judge steps into the show ring. Important to the evaluation process is the judges ability to access correct type for the particular breed presented. At a glance, a judge must decide if the exhibit possesses the requisite characteristics described in the breed standard, then rate each exhibit as to its representation of correct type for the breed. Breed Type is a unique set of characteristics rendering one animal distinctly different or recognizable from others of his species. Breed Type requires that a sight hound to be uniquely distinguishable from a bulldog.

Correct Russell Terrier Breed Type dictates that he be a predominately white bodied dog with or without tan and/or black markings, measuring between 10"-12". He presents a rectangular silhouette, his brisket must never extend below his elbow, maintaining the 50/50 ratio of body to leg. The coat may be smooth, broken or rough. In addition, a Russell Terrier must exhibit overall balance of head to bone to height to substance. He must present equal but narrow width fore to aft, equal reach to equal drive, with a flexible, supple body. This enables him to navigate narrow subterranean tunnels chasing his fox. He must have a spannable and flexible chest measuring some 14"-15" or smaller. His brisket must never extend below his elbow and he should show no sign of the Terrier front. The Russell's head shape should be as a blunted wedge with the muzzle being slightly shorter than the flat back skull, with button or drop ears, dark almond shaped eyes and a scissors bite. A Russell should gait with a lively and unrestricted motion exhibiting equal reach to drive, he should double track at slower speeds but should converge slightly as speed increases.



# Typical Russell Terriers



# Temperament

Russell Terriers should be bold and fearless, quietly confident yet friendly. Russell Terriers are never to be aggressive or quarrelsome. Russell Terriers are gregarious at play and brave when working in the field, caring not what is asked of them. Tails may drop when in the show ring due either to boredom or extreme focus. As long as the tail does not drop below the horizontal while standing, and is erect when gaiting, no penalty should be applied. The Russell Terrier is not a sparring breed.





# The Head Piece

The Russell Terriers' head assembly should be in proportion to the size and substance of the dog maintaining the overall balanced image. The back skull is flat and of moderate width, tapering gradually to the eyes and then again to a wide muzzle. The stop is defined but not abrupt. The eyes are almond shaped, dark in color having close fitting black eye rims. Russell Terrier eyes exude keen expression, but are NEVER round or prominent. The nose is black. The ears are button or drop shaped. The jaw is strong, deep and wide, lips are tight-fitting, well developed cheek muscles with large teeth closing to a scissors bite.



The muzzle is slightly shorter than the back skull measuring from the nose to stop and from the stop to occiput. The planes of the back skull and muzzle are parallel.



A blunted wedge shape best describes a Russell Terrier head. The neck should flow cleanly and gracefully taper into the shoulders.

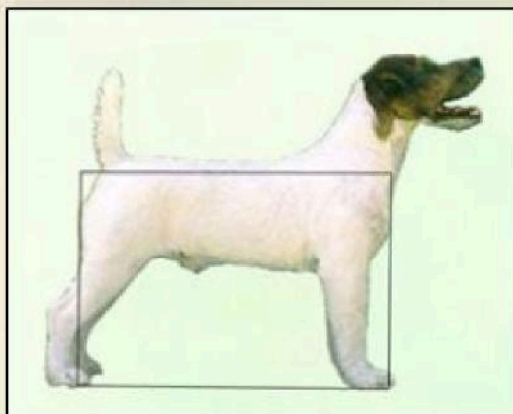
# Typical Heads



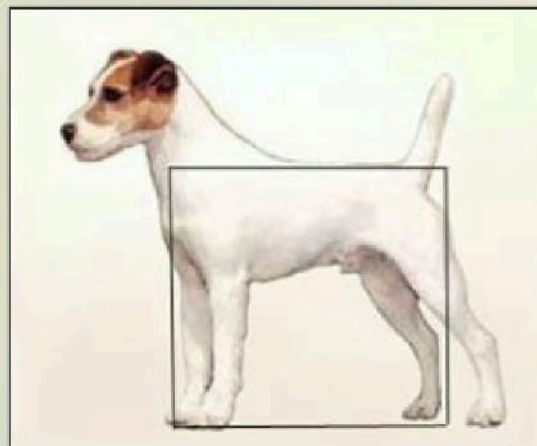
# The Body & Tail

The Russell Terrier is longer than tall, when measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock, the silhouette exhibits a rectangle. **The depth of body from withers to the brisket should equal the length of foreleg from elbows to the ground, maintaining the 50/50 ratio of body to leg. The brisket must never fall below the elbow.** The point of sternum is well in front of the point of shoulder. The chest is spannable, approximately 14"-15" or smaller, and ribs are flexible from top to bottom. The ribs are well sprung, maintaining an oval shape. The back is level, with strong and deeply muscled loins. There is a slight rise over the loin which is felt rather than seen.

The tail may drop at rest, but when moving it is erect. The tail may be natural or docked, if docked, length should appear level with the top of the ear.



The rectangular Russell Terrier



The more square  
Parson Russell Terrier

# Size, Substance & Proportion

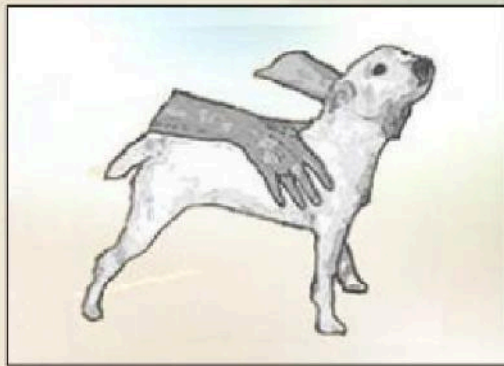
In size the Russell Terrier ideally measures from 10"-12". Weight should be proportionate to height, being neither too course or too refined. The height and weight requirements indicate a lightly built yet balanced dog with smooth transitions, able to traverse narrow tunnels. There may be slight differences between males and females, males should look masculine while females should look feminine. However, both sexes must adhere to the breed standard. The basic body proportion is longer than tall, representing a distinct rectangle when measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock.



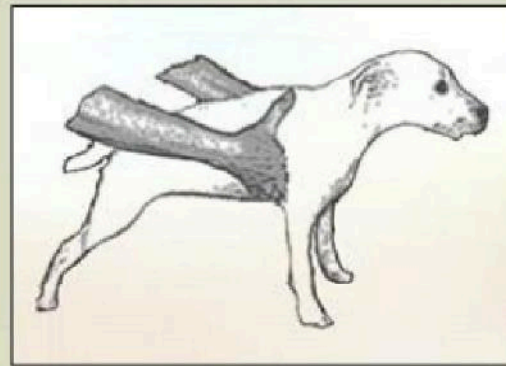
# Spanning Guide

Of critical importance to maintaining correct Russell Terrier Breed Type, is the process of spanning and the judge's ability to assimilate that information into the evaluation process. The procedure takes seconds to complete, most exhibitors will be happy to assist you. You are to assess three important features: the dog's chest size (14"-15" or smaller), chest shape (oval) and the compressibility of the chest. Failure to span or doing so incorrectly adversely affects and forever alters correct Breed Type.

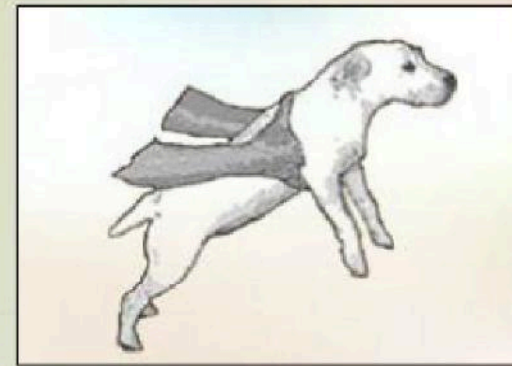
A computer cd is 15" in circumference. Although a cd is not the correct shape nor is it compressible, it is, however, useful for comparing your hand size to the 14"-15" or smaller size requirement, when placing your hands around it.



While on the table move the rear of the dog toward you so the tail-end is closest to you.



Slide your hands around the chest, thumbs meeting over the withers and fingers meeting at the mid-line.

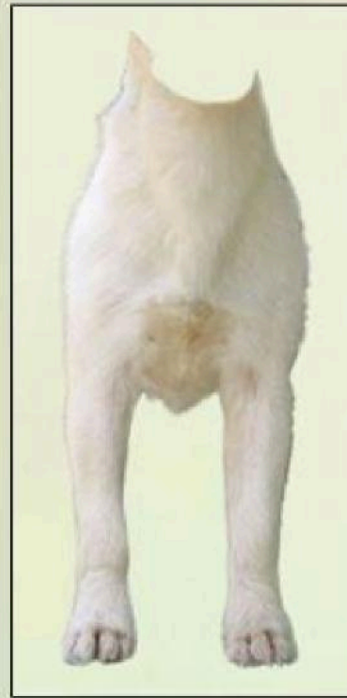
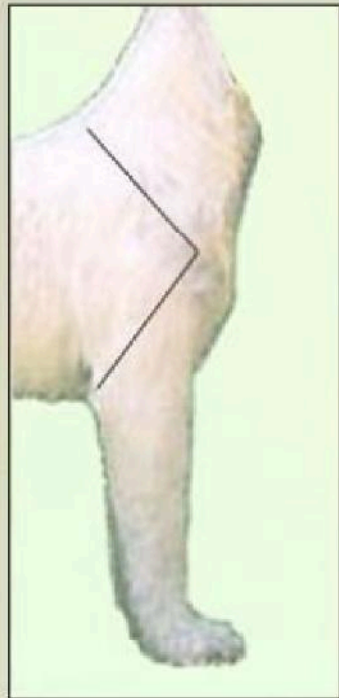


Raise the dog onto the back legs, then exert slight pressure on the rib cage top to bottom.

# Forequarters

Russell Terrier shoulders should be well laid back and never heavily muscled or loaded. The ratio of equal or nearly equal scapula to humerus should be maintained insuring that the elbows are set well under the dog. The front angle is moderate. The typical "terrier front" is contrary to Russell Terrier breed type as well as being structurally incorrect for his underground duties.

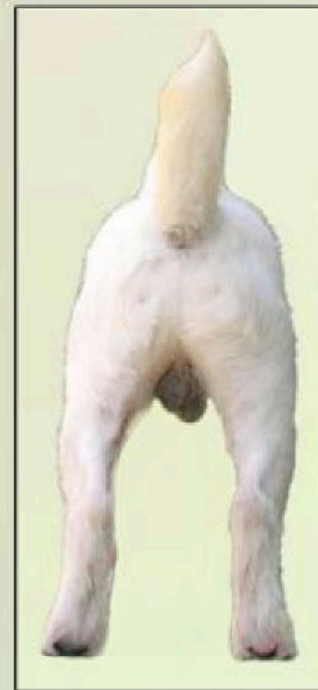
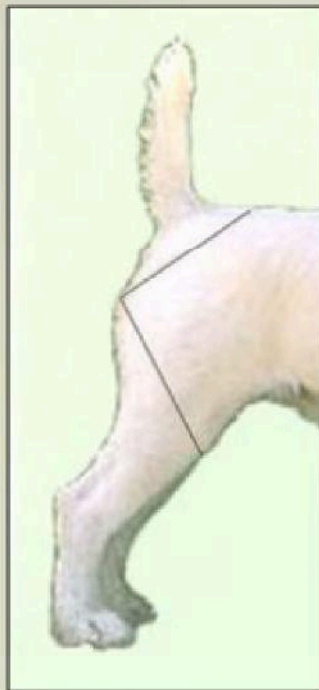
Forelegs are straight of bone when viewed from either the front or side with a slight angle to the pastern. The feet are oval, with hard pads and the toes moderately well arched turning neither in nor out.



# Hindquarters

Russell Terrier hindquarters should be strong and muscular with angulation being equal to and in proportion with the angles of the front assembly. There should be sufficient "dog behind the tail" to promote good driving action so as to balance the reach of the front.

The stifles are well angulated with low set hocks. When viewed from the rear while the dog is standing, the hocks are parallel. The rear feet are the same as the front feet.



## Coat & Color

The coat of the Russell Terrier may be smooth, broken or rough. All coat types must have a dense weatherproof jacket, i.e. a good undercoat as well as a harsh outer coat. Weatherproof coats provide protection from weather, as well as injury from brambles and brush. No preference is given to any one coat length or particular marking. No sculpturing of the coat is allowed.

With tan, black or tri colored markings, white must be the predominant color. The markings may be any shade of brown (from lemon to mahogany), black or tri colored.





## Movement on the lateral

Russell Terrier movement is free of restriction, purposeful and clean on the lateral as well as coming and going. The correct lateral movement is depicted below. Notice the dogs motion is unrestricted and appears effortless. The reach of the front assembly is balanced with the drive of the rear assembly. Also notice the head carriage; it is forward with the neck extended in order to maintain balance. Please note that the Russell Terrier should never be "strung up" for exhibition, he should always be shown with light lead contact permitting a natural head position allowing for balanced and efficient movement.



Scroll below and click the arrow in the center of the picture

## Movement down & back

The Russell Terrier is a double or parallel tracking breed. His coming and going motion should be clean and balanced fore to aft. As his speed increases there is a tendency to converge toward the center line. Again, the Russell Terrier should always be shown with light lead contact permitting a natural head position for balanced movement.



Scroll below and click the arrow in the center of the picture

# Thank you!

We hope this presentation has been of help in the understanding of

## The Russell Terrier

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