



Straight - Normal

The **normal gait**, as viewed from the front, should be a free, effortless, easy gait without physical contact between individual members. The legs should be carried straight forward from the point of last pad contact to the next one, and the back legs should follow in the same angled plane. Watching the dog move away from you should also show a straight column of bones - from hip socket to pad. The rear leg will angle inward toward the center line as the speed increases, moving in the same plane as the front leg.

This inward angling, called **single tracking** is normal in canine gait. The tendency is for the legs to incline more and more under the body as the speed increases. Eventually, the paws, as seen by their imprints, come to travel in a single line.



Single Tracking

Correct single tracking requires that the column of bones from shoulder to pad remains in a straight line and should be distinguished from **moving close**, either front, back, or both. When moving close, the fore or hind limbs are insufficiently well separated from each other during movement, and, in extreme cases the legs may interfere by brushing up against one another along their inner borders.



**Out at Elbows
Paddling**



Toeing-Out



**Weaving, Crossing Over,
Plaiting, Dishing or Toeing-In**



**Bandy, Moving
Wide in Front**

There are many possible deviations from normal gait caused either by poor conformation or conditioning. Any deviation from the straight-line column of bones during the entire swing of the limb is a fault. The most commonly seen are among those illustrated here. **Crossing over** is an abnormality of gait in which the feet when extended cross over in front of one another as well as over an imaginary center line drawn under the body. **Paddling** is incorrect and energy wasting movement of the forequarters in which the pasterns and feet perform circular, exaggerated motion, turning or flicking outwards at the end of each step. When **toeing-in** the forefeet are rotated towards each other and the center line instead of being in direct continuation with the line of the pastern. **Toeing-out** involves the opposite rotation of the forefeet. **Weaving**, also called **crossing over, dishing, plaiting, knitting and purling**, occurs when, in front or hind quarter motion, the free foot at first swings around the support foot and then forward and inward, eventually crossing the latter's path before being set down on the ground. Frequently a clever handler can conceal **cow hocks or bow hocks** by deft manipulation when stacking a dog. These structural faults are revealed however, when the dog is being gaited.

References:

Spira, Harold R., *Canine Terminology*, First Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1982

Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, Third edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989



Close Behind



Cow-Hocked



**Bow-Hocked, Bandy,
Moving Wide Behind**

Crabbing or sidewinding is faulty forward movement in which the spinal column is not pointed in the direction of travel, rather, it deviates at an angle so that one rear leg passes on the inside of the front foot, while the other does so on the outside of its partner, instead of traveling in a straight line with them.