

# THE MOVEMENT



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A L F A  
D O G  
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The characteristic movement of a breed is that which allows a dog, irrespective of its breed, to move from point A to point B, with the minimal consumption of energy.

We will start by saying that all the dogs are able to move in walking, trotting or galloping, but the type of movement is characteristic to the breed and is exclusively in relation with the anatomical construction of the dog. Dogs are subdivided according to anatomical construction in:

- Branchi-Meso-Doligomorphic;
- Dogs with square outline and with rectangular outline;
- Dogs with short feet (chest greater than 50% of the height at the withers); dogs with long feet (chest lower than 50% height at the withers); dogs with medium size feet (chest equal to 50% height at the withers);
- Dogs with horizontal croup, with slightly sloping croup, with sloping croup or highly sloping croup;
- Dogs with level top-line, arched or sloping top-line;
- Dogs with highly inclined shoulder and closed scapula-humeral angle (scapula  $45^\circ$ -angle  $90^\circ$ ), shoulder of medium

inclination (scapula  $50/55^\circ$  - angle  $100/105^\circ$ ), slightly inclined shoulder (scapula  $55/60^\circ$  - angle  $110/115^\circ$ );

- Dogs with perpendicular metacarpus, slightly sloping, medium sloping, high sloping;
- Dogs with open angles of the hindquarters, with moderately open angles and with closed angles.

All these characteristics have an impact on the type of movement.

According to the characteristic type of their movement, dogs are divided into:

### Gallopers

The galloping dogs have a three beat gait, characterized by a high instability of the balance plus a significant tilting of the cervical equilibrium.

In our domestic dogs, we encounter three types of gallop: regular gallop, slow gallop (shortened or canter), racing gallop (or full speed).

Galloping dogs are subdivided into fast gallopers on long distance (pointer types) and very fast gallopers on short distance (greyhound type). The first category is characterized by a square outline, moderately open hindquarters, horizontal croup, forearm of medium length,



slight angulation of metacarpus, longer tail than that of trotters, chest width just above the 50% of the chest height (mesomorphic). The dog belonging to the second category (very fast gallopers) are characterized by a square outline, longer forearm, higher center of gravity, chest width lower than 50% of the chest height (doligomorphic), highly sloping croup, flexible femur, shoulder of medium inclination.

Of course, there are exceptions to these classifications, such as the Italian Spinone, a breed with square outline, but nevertheless, a trotter.

### Amblers

The ambling dogs have a two time gait, with two diagonal pair of legs movement. We can distinguish two types: a walking amble and a fast amble (or racing). The walking is characterized by always having a leg in contact with the ground (in zoognostics it is considered to be a defect, exception the Bobtail).



The fast amble or race amble is the gait where is added a phase of complete suspension between the two beats; being a faster movement than the trot, it is considered a defect by some and accepted by others, since some trotters may intercalate this with the trot, for the purpose of resting certain muscular groups.

We need to underline the fact that this gait is characteristic to the animals that cover long distances without resting, like the giraffe, the camel, the elephant etc.

### Trotting

Trotting is a gait in two times with movement of two diagonal pair of legs. There are three types of trotting: regular trot (jumped pace for diagonal legs, with a total suspended phase lower than that of the support), slow trot (missing the period of suspension), extended trot (equal to regular trot, but with a suspended phase greater than that of the support).

### Anatomical characteristics of the trotter:

Larger support base, therefore rectangular outline, width of the

chest superior to that of gallopers, sloping and long croup, angulated hindquarters, more inclined and longer arm as compared to gallopers, inclined and long metacarpus.

In the movement we see:

- 1) Complete pace: It is considered completed when all four limbs have accomplished a support and a lift.
- 2) Footprint: is the imprint of the foot on the ground
- 3) Gait: can be walk or bounce:

*Walk:* there is always contact with the ground

*Bounce:* there are moments in which the dog is suspended in air

The gait can be extended, short or regular:

*Extended:* when it overlaps, that is the footprint of the hindfeet surpasses the footprint of the forefeet;

*Short:* the footprint of the hindfeet remains behind the footprint of the forefeet;

*Regular:* the footprint of the hindfeet covers that of the forefeet.

- 4) Speed: is in proportion to the frequency and amplitude of the steps.

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5) Stride: distance between a foot leaning on the ground in the moment of maximum forward extension and the foot of the corresponding limb, leaning on the ground in the moment of maximum backward extension. Stride can be long or short:

*Long:* when the front leg, in maximum extension, overpasses the vertical line traced by the tip of the nose and when with the back leg in maximum extension, the tip of the leg is positioned before the vertical line traced by the tip of the ischial tuberosity.

*Short:* the opposite of the long stride

In the case in which the stride is reduced, this can show two classical defects:

'Dog that works the carpet': the limb is carried forward almost touching the ground;

'Dog that steppes': the limb is carried forward in an abnormal elevation.

To have a good extension, the gait must be grazing in the sense that the dog has to extend forward and not upward so that the chest has the tendency to lower itself. Consequently, the movement becomes grazing (typical movement of the Cane Corso).

The Cane Corso is, for some,



close to a trotter, for others not so much. Actually, the Cane Corso is classified as a trotter bordering a galloper; this can be seen even in its anatomical characteristics: a mesomorphic dog, with rectangular outline, legs of medium length, slightly sloping croup, slightly inclined shoulder (scapula 50° scapu-

la-humeral angle 100/105), slightly inclined metacarpus, hindquarter angles moderately open (f/t 125° and t/t 140° femur 70°).

With the Cane Corso, the stride corresponds to 90/95% of the height at the withers, the gait is flowing, extended and overpassing.