

JUDGING THE ITALIAN GREYHOUND

by Lilian Barber

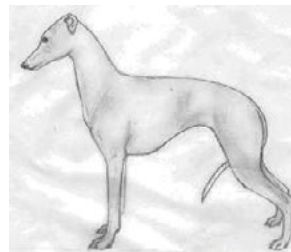
One of the first things you may notice when looking at a class of Italian Greyhounds is that there may be little consistency in size or type. As far back as we have been able to research, consistency has been a problem in the breed. This has made judging the IG a little more difficult.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

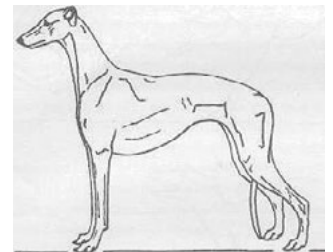
The ideal Italian Greyhound should be able to effortlessly accompany his owner on a long country stroll and should physically be able to chase small game. The same IG should also be able to be carried by his owner through a crowd without showing an unreasonable amount of fear, barking at everything, or attempting to attack anything that comes near. 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 Breed Standard begins with this comparison, it is important to understand the Greyhound Standard in order to understand the Italian Greyhound Standard. 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.

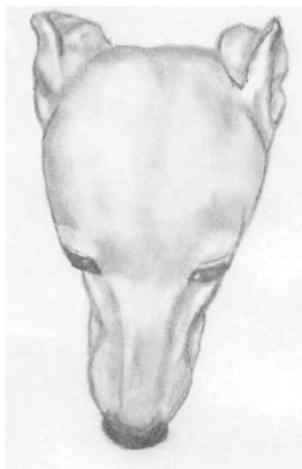
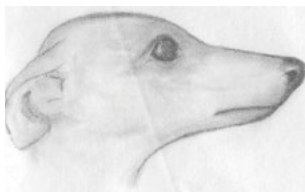
Nose: Dark. It may be black or brown or in keeping with the color of the dog. A light or partly pigmented nose is a fault.

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 a stop.



While both heads above 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 is 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.

A small ear as in these examples is preferred.



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

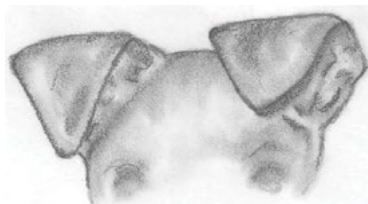


Rose ears are alert, still folded but held at right angles to the head.

Although preference is for the smaller ear, these larger ears are also acceptable.



Both of the ear types below are incorrect.



Button Ears



Erect Ears

Neck: Long, slender and gracefully arched.

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



The neck is long, slender, and gracefully arched.

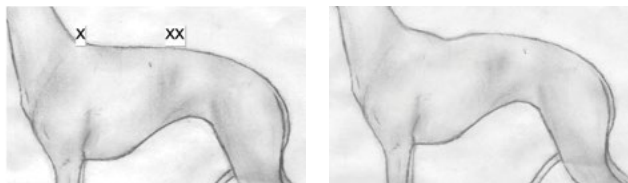


An incorrect, bulging "ewe" neck is often seen.

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.

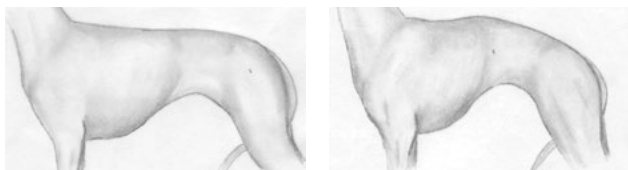
Greyhound: Back: Muscular and broad. Loins: Good depth of muscle, well arched, well cut up in the flanks.

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. X = wither. XX = highest point of curve.

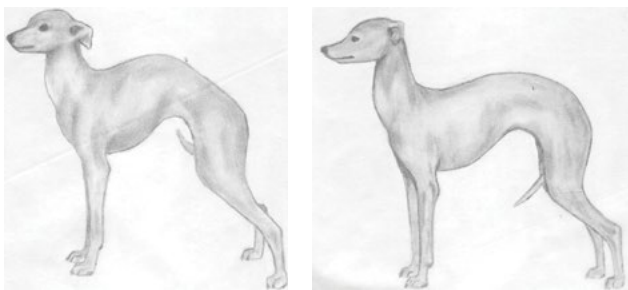


left: The Ideal Body and Topline. right: Although this topline is correct according to the Standard, the dip behind the shoulders is undesirable, as it lacks the elegant smoothness of the ideal topline.

The below examples are not what is meant by “S” curves.



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



left: This dog’s topline is completely wrong. The 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. A dog built like this is likely to also be a poor mover. right: 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.

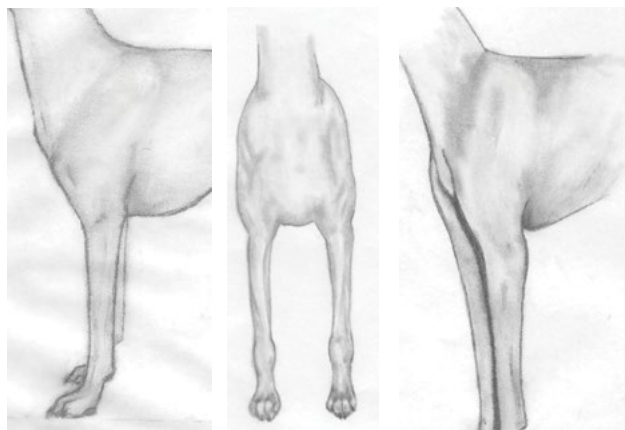
Greyhound: Placed as obliquely as possible, muscular without being loaded.

Chest: Deep and narrow.

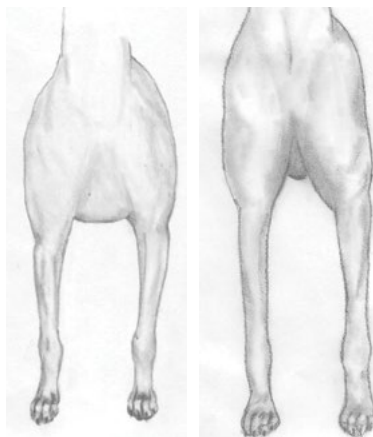
Greyhound: Deep, and as wide as consistent with speed, fairly well-sprung ribs.

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.



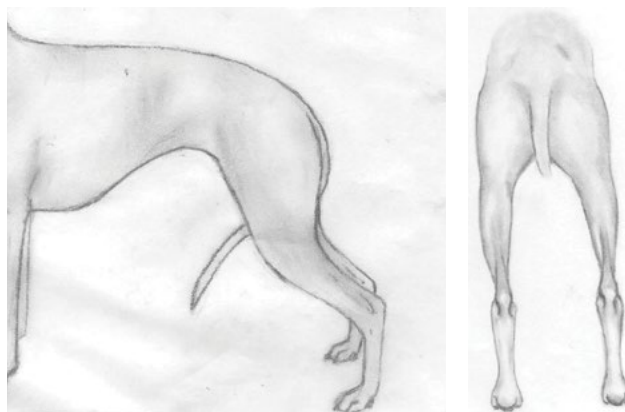
left and middle: The ideal front assembly, shoulder long and sloping, legs set well under, chest deep and narrow. right: This front is incorrect. The shoulders are straight (upright), the legs are set on too far forward, and the chest is shallow and hollow.



left: Chest is wide rather than narrow, with too much rib spring. right: Chest is hollow. Even with the legs stacked straight there is incorrect attachment of the upper arm to the ribs.

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

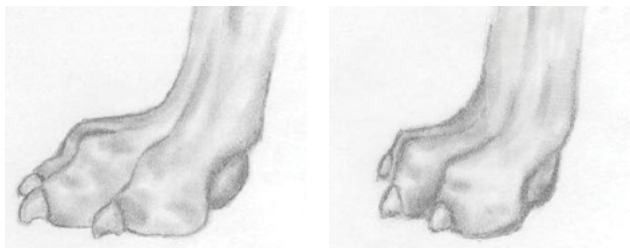
Greyhound: Long, very muscular and powerful, wide and well let down, well-bent stifles. Hocks well bent and rather close to ground, wide but straight fore and aft.



The Ideal Rear Assembly

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

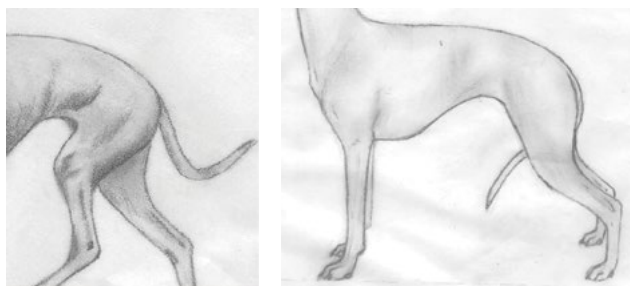
Greyhound: Hard and close, rather more hare than cat feet, well knuckled up with good strong claws.



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



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.

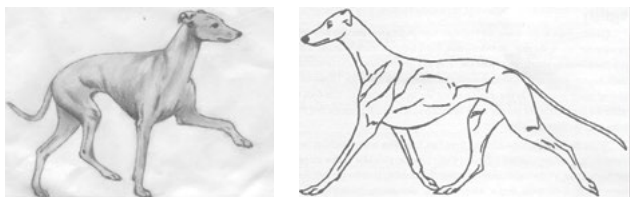
Color: Any color and markings are acceptable except that a dog with brindle markings and a dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds must be disqualified.

Greyhound: Color Immaterial.

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

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.



left: The action is high stepping and free, with a bend at the pastern, not a stiff-legged goose step or an exaggerated hackney gait, neither of which is "free." right: This is where the IG Standard and the Greyhound Standard differ the most. The Greyhound Standard makes no reference to movement and does not ask for lift in the forward movement.

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 that the dog is actually brindle or has tan markings in all the areas where they are found on Miniature Pinschers, Doberman Pinschers, 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. ■



left: A true brindle has darker stripes. middle: Tan markings will be clearly defined and occur in the same places as they would on a Doberman Pinscher or Miniature Pinscher. right: 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 "armpits," and on the back of the thighs.