

Presentation and Grooming

The breed standard clearly states that the Golden Retriever should be presented in a natural manner in keeping with the breed's purpose.

- *Primarily a hunting dog, he should be shown in hard working condition.*
- *Outer coat firm and resilient, neither coarse nor silky, lying close to body; may be straight or wavy. Untrimmed natural ruff; ...*
- *Feet may be trimmed and stray hairs neatened, but the natural appearance of coat or outline should not be altered by cutting or clipping.*

Please keep in mind that the Golden Retriever is first a functional sporting dog before it becomes a show dog. Basic structure, suitability for purpose, and breed character are essentials that must never be overlooked in favor of superficial prettiness and mere showmanship.

Grooming: The Golden with an ideal coat, properly maintained, will require little more than the trimming of stray hairs. The dog should be clean and well brushed. In practice, the long hair on the feet is scissored to show the natural size and shape of the feet, and it is allowable to *discreetly* neatened unruly or bunchy areas of coat while maintaining a natural appearance. The Golden's coat should **never** appear to have been clipped, stripped, cut or stylized. The Golden is neither setter nor spaniel, and is not to be trimmed closely under the throat or around the anus or tail base. Ear flaps may be neatened but should maintain a natural appearance without evidence of severe scissoring. The use of clippers on the face, feet, ears, or anywhere else on a Golden for show preparation is completely improper.

The trimming of whiskers is optional, and neither the presence nor the absence of whiskers is to be faulted. The natural, untrimmed ruff (especially pronounced in males) is not to be faulted, but obvious shaping or cutting should be faulted.



Excessive trimming affects the expression and soft, natural appearance of the breed, as seen in these two examples. The one on the left is neatly trimmed and the other is overdone.



The base of the tail and vent area of this Golden are inappropriately trimmed.

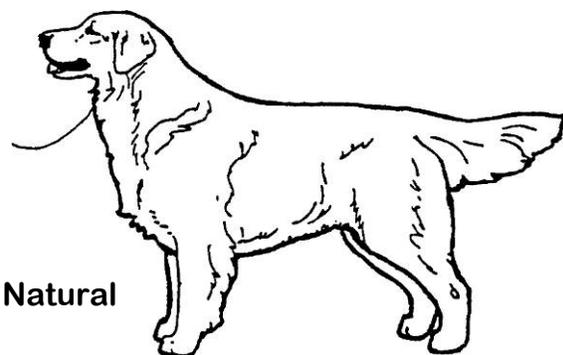
The use of mousse, styling gels, lacquer, powder, or any other foreign substance evidenced in the coat in the show ring is grounds for excusal under AKC dog show rules. Use of any type of coloring material is completely unacceptable. The practice of back-combing or doctoring the coat on legs or body to "build substance" or make the coat stand off is incorrect and must be penalized, as should blow drying the coat into an incorrect open coat.

One must be able to properly assess the correct coat texture and ensure that it will act as a protective, waterproof jacket, keeping the dog dry near the skin, as seen in the photo below.

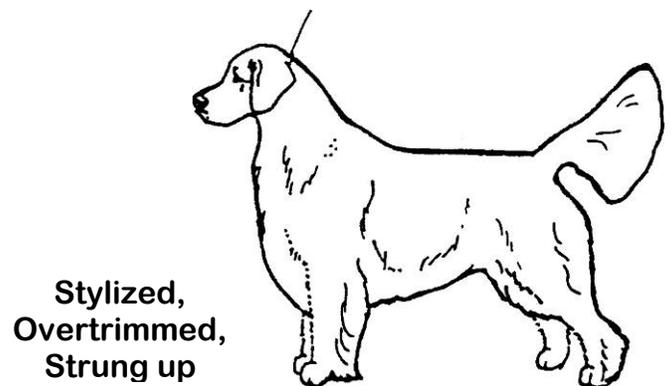


Presentation: A working retriever should be expected to easily handle any type of footing and gaiting pattern normally encountered in the show ring, and do so without the "assistance" of a continually tight lead. If the true gait of the dog is to be judged, the dog must be observed moving for some distance on a **loose lead**. It is necessary and useful to observe the dog "coming and going", and it is also essential to see the dog moving at a working trot from the side. This is a moderate gait and excessive speed should not be tolerated.

Standing, the dog may be positioned by the handler for the judge's examination. The dog should stand squarely without being stretched or strung up. Head and tail should not be positioned or held unnaturally. The dog should also be observed at some time walked into a natural stance without being touched by the handler. If bait (food or toy) is used, it should never interfere with another dog. The handler should be prepared to show the dog's bite, and the complete dentition; or the judge may lift the dog's lips to look at the teeth.



Natural



Stylized,
Overtrimmed,
Strung up