

CAIRN TERRIER

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2026

ORIGIN

Great Britain.

UTILISATION

Terrier.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. For interest, from Wikipedia: The Cairn Terrier]:

Cairn Terriers originated in the Scottish Highlands and on the Isle of Skye, initially grouped in the "Skye Terrier" class alongside the Scottish and West Highland White Terriers. From the early 1900s, the three were bred separately. The Kennel Club of the United Kingdom gave the Cairn Terrier a separate register in 1912; the first year of recognition, 134 were registered, and the breed was given Championship status.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Agile, alert, of workmanlike, natural appearance. Standing well forward on forepaws. Strong quarters. Deep in rib, very free in movement. Weather-resistant coat.

CHARACTERISTICS

Should impress as being active, game and hardy.

TEMPERAMENT

Fearless and gay disposition; assertive, but not aggressive.

HEAD

Head small, but in proportion to body. Skull broad; a decided indentation between the eyes with a definite stop. Muzzle powerful, jaw strong but not long or heavy. Nose black. Head well-furnished.

Eyes:

Wide apart, medium in size, dark hazel. Slightly sunk with shaggy eyebrows.

Ears:

Small, pointed, well-carried and erect, not too closely set nor heavily coated.

Mouth:

Large teeth. Jaws strong with perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK

Well set on, not short.

FOREQUARTERS

Sloping shoulders, medium length of leg, good but not too heavy bone. Forelegs never out at elbow. Legs covered with harsh hair.

BODY

Back level, medium length. Well-sprung, deep ribs; strong supple loin.

HINDQUARTERS

Very strong muscular thighs. Good, but not excessive, bend of stifle. Hocks well let down inclining neither in nor out when viewed from the rear.

FEET

Forefeet, larger than hind, may be slightly turned out. Pads thick and strong. Thin, narrow, or spreading feet, and long nails objectionable.

TAIL

Short, balanced, well-furnished with hair, but not feathery. Neither high nor low-set, carried gaily but not turned down towards back.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Very free-flowing stride. Forelegs reaching well forward. Hind legs giving strong propulsion. Hocks neither too close nor too wide.

COAT

Very important. Weather-resistant. Must be double-coated, with profuse, harsh, but not coarse, outercoat; undercoat short, soft and close. Open coats objectionable. Slight wave permissible.

COLOUR

- Cream, wheaten, red, grey or nearly black.
 - Brindling in all these colours acceptable.
- * Dark points, such as ears and muzzle, very typical.
- * Any other colour or combination of colours, including solid black, white, or black and tan, unacceptable.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Approximately 28cm – 31cm (approx. 11" – 12").

Height in proportion to weight.

Weight:

Ideally 6kg – 7.5kg

***N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 4: CAIRN TERRIER

FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.

Section 2 – Small-sized Terriers .
Without working trial.