

## WEST HIGHLAND WHITE 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 West Highland White Terrier]:

At various times during the breed's existence, the West Highland White Terrier has been considered a white off-shoot of both the Scottish Terrier and the Cairn Terrier. Dr A. Flaxman, from Fife, developed his line of "Pittenweem Terriers" out of a female Scottish Terrier that produced white offspring and continued to do so regardless of the sire to which she was bred, and, after drowning over 20 of these offspring, he came upon the theory that it was an ancient trait of the Scottish Terrier that was trying to reappear. Flaxman is credited with classes being added to dog shows for white Scottish Terriers towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The popularity of the breed continued to grow and, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was such that dogs were being exchanged for hundreds of guineas. As of 2010, the Westie is the third-most popular breed of Terrier in the UK.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

Strongly built; deep in chest and back ribs; level back, and powerful quarters on muscular legs, and exhibiting, in a marked degree, a great combination of strength and activity.

### CHARACTERISTICS

Small, active, game, hardy, possessed of no small amount of self-esteem, with a varminty [ed. mischievous] appearance.

### TEMPERAMENT

Alert, gay, courageous, self-reliant, but friendly.

### HEAD

Skull slightly domed; when handled across forehead, presents a smooth contour. Tapering very slightly from skull at level of ears to eyes. Distance from occiput to eyes, slightly greater than length of foreface. Head thickly coated with hair, and carried at right angle, or less, to axis of neck. Head not to be carried in extended position. Foreface gradually tapering from eye to muzzle. Distinct stop, formed by heavy, bony ridges immediately above and slightly overhanging eye, and slight indentation between eyes. Foreface not dishd or falling away quickly below eyes, where it is well made up. Jaws strong and level. Nose black and fairly large, forming smooth contour with rest of muzzle. Nose not projecting forward.

#### Eyes:

Set wide apart, medium in size, not full, as dark as possible and set well under heavy eyebrows, which gives the dog a sharp and intelligent piercing expression. Light-coloured eyes undesirable.

#### Ears:

Small, erect, and carried firmly; terminating in sharp point; set neither too wide nor too close. Hair short and smooth (velvety), should not be cut. Free from any fringe at top. Round-pointed, broad, large, or thick ears, or too heavily coated with hair undesirable.

#### Mouth:

As broad between canine teeth as is consistent with varminty expression required. Teeth large for size of dog,

with regular scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

## NECK

Sufficiently long to allow proper set-on of head required, muscular, and gradually thickening towards base, allowing neck to merge into nicely sloping shoulders.

## FOREQUARTERS

Shoulders sloping backwards. Shoulder blades broad and lying close to chest wall. Shoulder joint placed forward, elbows well in, allowing foreleg to move freely, parallel to axis of body. Forelegs short and muscular, straight, and thickly covered with short, hard hair.

## BODY

Compact. Back level, loins broad and strong. Chest deep and ribs well-arched in upper half, presenting a flattish side appearance. Back ribs of considerable depth and distance from last rib of quarters as short as compatible with free movement of body.

## HINDQUARTERS

Strong, muscular, and wide across top. Legs short, muscular, and sinewy. Thighs very muscular and not too wide apart. Hocks bent and well set in under body so as to be fairly close to each other when standing or moving. Straight or weak hocks highly undesirable.

## FEET

Forefeet larger than hind, round, proportionate in size, strong, thickly padded, and covered with short, harsh hair. Hind feet are smaller and thickly padded. Under-surface of pads, and all nails, preferably black.

## TAIL

13cm – 15cm (approx. 5" – 6") long, covered with harsh hair, no feathering, as straight as possible, carried jauntily, not gay or carried over back. A long tail undesirable, and on no account should tails be docked.

## GAIT / MOVEMENT

Free, straight, and easy all-round gait. In front, legs freely extended forward from shoulder. Hind movement free, strong and close. Stifle and hocks well-flexed and hocks drawn under body giving drive. Stiff, stilted movement behind and cow-hocks highly undesirable.

## COAT

Double coated:

- Outer coat consists of harsh hair, about 5cm (approx. 2") long, free from any curl.
- Undercoat, which resembles fur, is short, soft, and close.

Open coats highly undesirable. Free from obvious skin problems.

## COLOUR

- White. Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable

## SIZE

### Height at withers:

Approximately 28cm (approx. 11")

*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.

©Copyright Kennel Club, London 09/2007 – Reprinted with permission

The publisher of this edition is the Kennel Union of Southern Africa. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without permission in writing from the publisher.



**When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:**

**FCI Standard No. 85: WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER**

**FCI Classification: Group 3 – Terriers.**

Section 2 – Small-sized Terriers .

Without working trial.