

PROFILE MOVEMENT IN REVIEW

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PURPOSE: Working gaits for the retriever breeds include the walk, trot, canter and gallop, and are comparable to wild canids of similar size and conformation. The trot is discussed here.

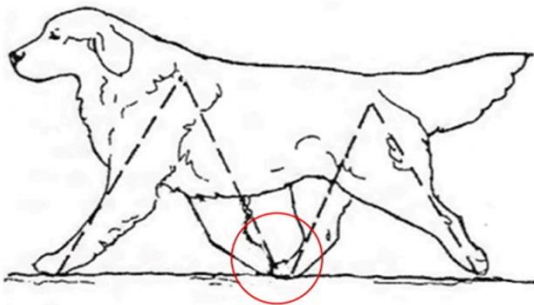
ANATOMY: The trot is a two-beat gait which uses alternating legs that form matching “triangles” at the point of greatest extension. The right front/left rear legs move at the same time, followed by the left front/right rear legs. In a Golden Retriever with ideal conformation (12:11 length-to-height ratio, 1:1 length of leg, and balanced angulation front and rear) correct foot timing allows for the front foot on one side to lift just before the rear foot of that same side lands on the same track without striking the forefoot. When conformation is faulty the dog compensates in a number of ways which include sidetracking or crabbing, shortening its stride, pounding or padding, moving wide behind, and kicking up in the rear.

AKC BREED STANDARD: *“When trotting, gait is free, smooth, powerful and well-coordinated, showing good reach. Viewed from any position, legs turn neither in nor out, nor do feet cross or interfere with each other. As speed increases, feet tend to converge toward center line of balance. It is recommended that dogs be shown on a loose lead to reflect true gait.”*

JUDGING: The trot shows the virtues and faults of a dog’s conformation more clearly than any other gait. Extremes are not desired. The Golden Retriever should be shown on a loose lead at a moderate speed, and allowed to carry its head forward in a natural position, demonstrating efficiency of movement for endurance in the field. When viewed in profile, a level topline indicates good transmission of thrust from the rear, through the back, to the forequarters. Any movement faults not due to training/handling errors are indicative of underlying structural or health-related issues.

REMINDER from the AKC breed standard: *“Overall appearance, balance, gait and purpose to be given more emphasis than any of the component parts. Any departure from the described ideal shall be considered faulty to the degree to which it interferes with the breed’s purpose or is contrary to breed character.”*

[Some material is from “A Study of the Golden Retriever” and “Discussion of the Breed Standard,” copyright Marcia Schlehr, and used with permission.]



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Correct structure and foot timing allow the front foot to lift just in time for the rear foot on the same side to land on the same track without striking the forefoot. When structure is faulty the dog has to compensate by sidetracking or crabbing, shortening its stride, or moving wide behind.



This coordinated profile movement is ideal, and exhibits good reach and rear extension; a strong, level topline; matching “triangles” front and rear; and proper foot timing in the center.