

The Art of Dog Shows

MORE THAN JUST WALKING IN A CIRCLE



Dog shows are more than a simple walk in a ring. It's an art form that challenges both humans and dogs.

Perfect presentation, teamwork, and preparation are the keys to success. But what's really behind it?

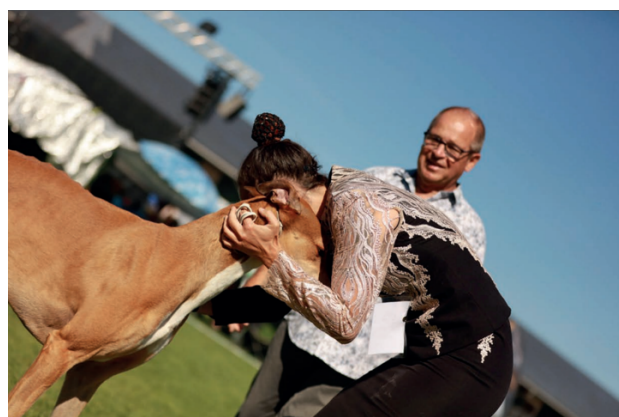
THE BASICS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DOG SHOWS

Before you begin preparing, it's important to understand the basics. Dog shows follow clear rules and a structured process that applies to all participants.

The goal: To present your dog in the best possible light.

Key Points:

- **The Breed Standard:** Every breed has a defined standard that describes in detail how a dog should look, move, and behave. This standard is the benchmark against which judges evaluate your dog.
- **The Classes:** Dogs are divided into different classes depending on age, gender, previous achievements, or breeding status. These include, for example, the Puppy Class, Open Class, or Champion Class.
- **The Evaluation:** Dogs are judged both standing and moving. The appearance, charisma, and teamwork with the handler are decisive factors.



One thing is certain: A well-prepared dog stands out – and unfortunately, so does a handler who doesn't know what they're doing.

UNDERSTANDING THE BREED STANDARD

A crucial but often underestimated aspect of preparation is familiarizing yourself with the official breed standard. The breed standard outlines in detail how a dog should conform to the ideal of its breed in all aspects – from appearance to behavior. And let's be honest: If you don't know how your dog "should look," how will you present them optimally? Only those who know the requirements can highlight their dog's strengths and downplay any weaknesses.

Knowing the breed standard is essential. It forms the basis for presenting your dog to their best advantage – or at least ensuring that deviations from the standard are not obvious. It also helps you realistically assess weaknesses and work on them during training. Only those who thoroughly understand the standard can meet the requirements in the ring and bring out the best in their dog.



"READY FOR THE RING – OR NOT?"

The fundamental process in the ring should be second nature – after all, you don't want to look like a clueless tourist who has no idea where to go.

The dog moves counterclockwise in the ring with its handler. The dog is almost always led on the left side so that it remains between you and the judge – ensuring the judge has a clear view of the dog at all times.

Placeholder for Image: "Handler Leading Dog Counterclockwise"

Even this seemingly simple task of moving counterclockwise can be a challenge for some. If the pace is too slow, the dog appears sluggish. Too fast, and the gait becomes unsteady.

Positioning the dog correctly – left, right, always facing the judge – can become a mental puzzle, especially if the dog suddenly decides to take their own path, interact with other participants, or bounce around energetically. Add to that the handlers struggling to keep up with dogs pulling on tight leashes, making noises like an old vacuum cleaner. This can quickly spoil the overall impression.

SHINING OR STUMBLING: TEAMWORK IN THE RING

A dog show demands teamwork at the highest level. It's not just about your dog – it's about the two of you as a team. While your dog must stand and move beautifully, it's up to you to lead them discreetly and confidently. Your posture, demeanor, attire, and even your facial expressions can make a difference. An insecure handler can throw even the best dog off balance – and it shows immediately.

The challenges don't stop there: Besides movement, the stance – known as “stacking” – is also evaluated. The dog must remain still in a perfect position while the judge examines them. This requires patience, training, and a good connection between you and your dog – because a seamless performance is always the result of hard work.



STANDING STILL SOUNDS EASIER THAN IT IS

“Stacking,” or correctly positioning the dog in a stand, is a central part of any dog show – and one of the biggest challenges.

What does stacking mean?

Stacking is more than simply standing your dog somewhere. The dog should be in a perfect position that highlights their best features and aligns with the breed standard. Each paw must be in the right place, the back straight, and the posture proud. A minor misstep or unflattering position can quickly spoil the overall impression.

Placeholder for Image: “Correct vs. Incorrect Stacking”

Standing still? Tell that to my dog!

For the dog, this means standing still while the judge carefully observes – and often touches them. This is easier said than done, especially in an environment full of distractions, unfamiliar people, other dogs, and strange noises. The dog must learn to remain calm and focused regardless of the situation.

CONCLUSION: MORE THAN JUST WALKING IN A CIRCLE

Dog shows require effort and preparation – for both human and dog. From familiarizing yourself with the breed standard to targeted balance and movement training, teamwork is essential. It's not just about presenting in the ring but about growing together.

But the effort is worth it: There's nothing more rewarding than standing in the ring as a perfectly harmonized team with your dog. Whether or not the scorecard reflects it, the pride in that shared moment is priceless.

Dog shows should never be taken too seriously. See them as an opportunity to work on your bond with your dog – and most importantly, to enjoy the process together.

Placeholder for Image: "Happy Handler and Dog Leaving the Ring"

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