

# The Bernese Mountain Dog ~ An Illustrated Commentary on the Breed Standard

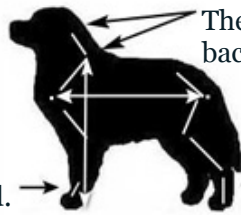
## Structure & Proportion Studies 1

The outline we see when looking at a dog is often a reflection of underlying structure and physical condition. Bernese carry heavy coats which may mask structure. Long furnishings, heavy hair on the legs, and differing lengths of hair occurring on various parts of the body can result in incorrect structure appearing more correct than it actually is. Likewise a dog with correct structure might not appear that way. Dogs carrying heavy, dense coats are sometimes mistakenly called fat; when, in fact, they are in good weight and condition. A hands on examination and watching dogs gait offers insight into how dogs are really made.

The studies below explain a few basic structural aspects of Bernese. A dog's structure influences the kind of work he is capable of doing. It also may determine whether or not he will remain physically sound over the course of his life. Structural defects result in more stress on bones, joints, tendons and muscles which can significantly limit a dog's ability to function in day to day living. Structure is inherited.

### Proportions ~ Length of back compared to length of leg

The dog shown below has correct proportions, and good balance of fore and rear quarter's angulation.



The neck is of medium length and blends smoothly into the back.

The pasterns are moderately inclined.

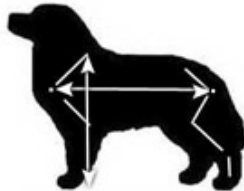
The hocks are perpendicular to the ground. The dog's feet turn neither in nor out.

The dog shown to the right → is short in back and high on leg.



\*How a dog is made - its proportions, length of back, length of leg and fore and rear angulation affects the dog's movement.

The dog shown to the right is → long in back and low on leg.



Correct proportions and angulation allow for efficiency, agility and power when a dog gaits. Long legs coupled with short backs and long backs coupled with short legs are seen in some Bernese. These traits can affect soundness and durability in the dogs that display them.\*

### Correct Angulation & Balance

The standard describes Bernese as *sturdy and balanced, deep chested with a flat topline. Shoulders are moderately laid back, flat-lying, well-muscled and never loose. The thighs are broad, strong and muscular. The stifles are moderately bent and taper smoothly into the hocks.*

Bernese vary somewhat in size, substance and angulation. A well built, balanced dog is functional and durable. Both of the dogs to the right show substance, good balance and moderate angulation. The first dog has slightly more angulation in fore and rear quarters than the second dog. While the two example Bernese differ, they represent typical structures and body styles seen in the breed.

