

AKC GAZETTE-March 2021 Edition

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COTON DE TULEAR CLUB

The Coton de Tulear Coat



Sunlight shining through an abundant coat gives us a glimpse of “What’s under the Coton Coat?”

The Coton de Tulear coat, and the distinctive structure required to create its unique silhouette, are Hallmarks of the Breed.

Originating on the exotic Island of Madagascar, with its diverse climate and topography, the “natural cotton ball” texture of the “stand off” Coton coat serves as an insulator in temperature extremes. Challenging survival conditions required endurance and agility. Centuries of natural selection developed a breed with a rectangular skeleton to accommodate a long back with a slight rise over a wide, strong loin insuring flexibility. Well sprung ribs, extending well back, provide the capacity to house strong lungs for greater stamina.

The 21st Century AKC Coton Standard clearly describes the white coat, with specific amounts of acceptable color.* It defines ratios, angles and proportions that allows us to know, “What’s under the coat?”

Key Point: Height and weight varies greatly in a Coton but all dogs should be correctly proportioned to standard.

Coat: The coat is **natural**, long, white, dry, profuse, very soft and supple, with the texture of cotton. It is never hard or rough. The coat is dense, profuse and can be very slightly wavy. **Severe Fault** - Atypical hair or hair that is tightly curled, wooly or silky. **Severe Fault**- Trimming, sculpting or grooming which alters the natural appearance of the dog is a severe penalty.

Of utmost importance, is coat quality and texture. The coat is dense and feels like a natural cotton ball. Severely fault silky, thin or stripped coats that lay flat as that is atypical hair causing the coat to flow excessively in an undesirable “Maltese like” fashion. Correct coats “stand off” and have body with a minimum amount of flow in motion. Powders, gels and sprays can dramatically effect coat texture. Hold a small amount of hair and twist it upward. A “cotton like coat” will stand up while a “thin or silky coat” will drop.

The distinctive silhouette of the Coton de Tulear is a harmonious natural blend of coat and correct skeletal proportions of body, head, topline, and tail. Accurate assessments of correct type cannot be visually achieved. Hands on examinations are imperative.

Body: The body is a rectangle of 2 high and 3 long (point of shoulder to point of buttock) e.g. 10" high = 15" long. See Standard for height DQ.

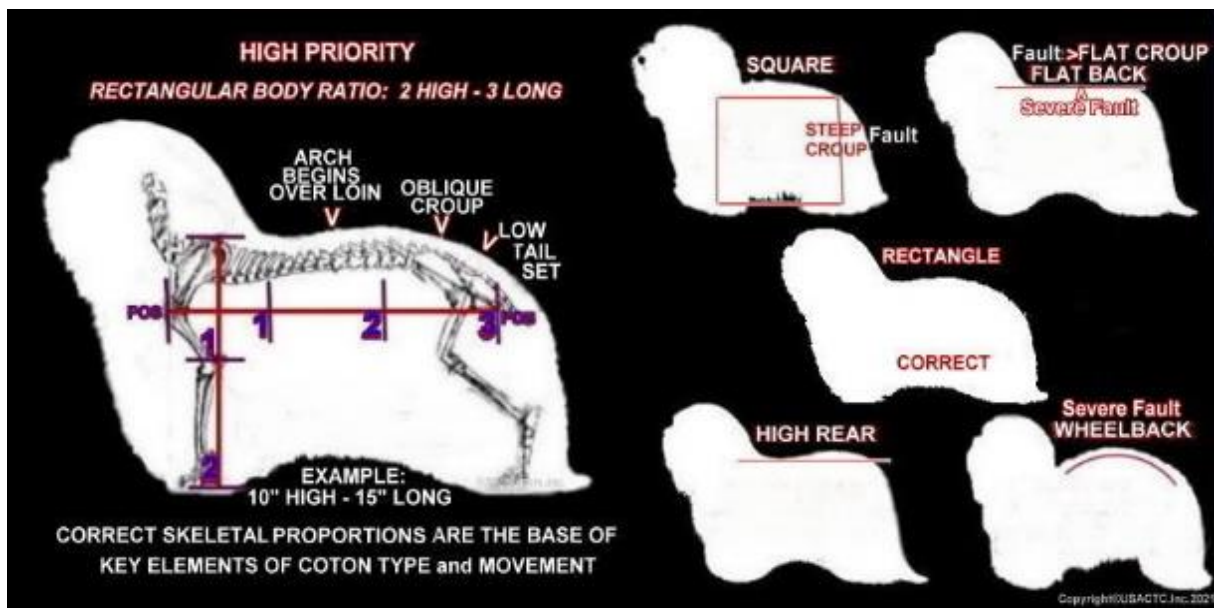
Head: The head is **short**, triangular, and rather wide relative to its length, with a slight stop and well developed zygomatic arches. Head to body ratio is 2 of 5 ranging between 5.1" to 7.2" long. The muzzle is straight with muzzle to skull ratios of 5 to 9. Muzzle length minimum is 1.82" and maximum is 2.57". The necks blends smoothly into the shoulders and is in balance with the height and length of the dog.

Topline: The topline runs smoothly from withers to loin. Beginning over the loin, is a graceful natural arch, not too accentuated, that carries through over the croup. The arch is continuous without flatness, resulting in a low tail set. The tail is long and carried down at rest reaching below the hock with the tip of the tail slightly raised. *

Presentation: Coton are shown naturally as is consistent with good grooming. Trimming, sculpting or grooming which alters the natural appearance of the dog is a **severe penalty**.

When structure and skeletal proportions are correct, no need exists for excessive or creative grooming, scissoring or sculpting to "create" the silhouette. **Severely penalize** any trimming, anywhere on the Coton including scissoring around the hindquarters to create optical illusions that hide faulty leg conformation.

Exception: trimming around the pads and very bottom of feet is acceptable.



Abundance of coat carried several inches over the forequarters and hindquarters tricks the eye. The skeletal structure defines the rectangular 2 high to 3 long body ratio. An arched topline can easily be combed into a level topline or to minimize high rears and tail sets. **Faults:** A dip behind shoulder blades or a steep or flat croup. **Severe Faults:** A wheel back or flat back.

Hands on examinations are essential to correctly assess rectangle proportions and should be used to establish the beginning of the graceful natural arch over the loin continued by a gentle fall-away into the oblique croup. The low tail set finishes the curve. These elements are vital to create the unique Coton de Tulear silhouette.



Coton de Tulear Expression

Lively, Intelligent, Inquisitive, Alert & Happy

Natural grooming highlights expression.

The headpiece does not appear sculpted or stiff.

Excessive sculpting, backcombing (teasing) and sprays distorts head size making it appear disproportionately large.

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Head length, shape and proportionate muzzle length are particularly challenging to evaluate. Hold the coat down close to the skull. The head is short, triangular and wide with well-developed zygomatic arches. The ears are set high, directly above the line of the eyes. Accurately locate the slight stop with your hands. This landmark determines muzzle to skull ratios.* The muzzle is short and straight with a strong chin. Artistic grooming is used to shorten disproportionately long muzzles causing the stop to appear deep, creating the undesirable visual of deeply set eyes. Coton expression is lively and happy.

The beautiful Coton coat is a “Coat of Illusions”.

“Do your hands confirm what your eyes perceive?”

* Visit usactc.dog to view the Coton de Tulear standard, Elaboration of the Standard and a guide to evaluating Coton Tails in Motion.

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