

Grooming Front Legs

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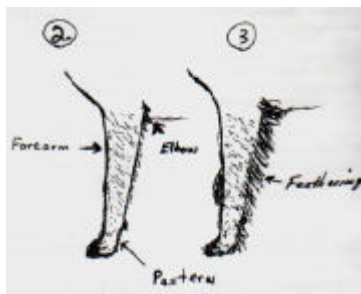
“Forelegs: Straight and not too heavy in bone.” It is this part of the standard we attempt to depict in grooming the front legs.

A common mistake seen in the ring is too much coat left at the wrist (where the front legs bend forward) as seen in Figure 1.



This detracts from the desired straight leg as the dog moves toward the judge. The trick is to groom this excess coat out so the leg looks clean and straight. When working on a “rolled” coat, I prefer to use a medium tooth stripping knife that is somewhat dull. I thin out the hairs a little at a time until my mental image of perfection is achieved. Don't be afraid to make a mistake grooming this area, as the coat here grows quickly and will fill in fast. Over time, one becomes proficient in this area.

Another common grooming error is excess coat left on the back of legs and pasterns. This gives the appearance of “feathering” and heavy bone, neither of which is appropriate for Borders. Figure 2 shows a neatly groomed leg from the side. In figure 3, too much fringe is left at the back of the leg, including elbow and pastern, which gives the appearance of heavy bone.



“Medium” is the objective in appearance. I usually use my fingers or a “Dr. Scholl's” contoured pumice file in the manner of a stripping knife to gradually work the back of the leg. In the pastern area, I would use a fine tooth stripping knife to gradually work the back of the leg. In the pastern area, I would use a fine tooth stripping knife or a “Mars” brand thumb comb to gradually work out a bit of

hair at a time. When grooming a pet Border, I use small scissors to tidy up the back pastern area to remove any remaining hairs the dog resisted having removed manually. In no way would I insist that this area has to be groomed with a knife or fingers, as the comfort of the dog is more important than being a “purist”.

Now, to address the inner part of the front legs. A medium or fine tooth knife is recommended to strip this area, with fine finishing work done with fingers. This method helps to achieve a nice straight look (see figure 1).

My best advice is to watch front legs of Borders moving in the ring from both front and side to develop the correct mental image of a straight leg with medium bone.

Best of Luck,

Phil