

## SAINT FEET ARE IMPORTANT

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One of the first things to attract the attention of people UNFAMILIAR with the Saint Bernard breed is the size of a Saint's foot. Remarks like "Look at those big feet!" are heard repeatedly at benched shows as the admiring public files past the Saint Bernards.

To admire the foot size is one thing and to admire to foot structure is quite another. Once the Saint gets on his feet, and enters the ring, how many people FAMILIAR with the breed appraise each dog from head to tail and TOE? If they don't, they should, as every good judge certainly will before the dog wins, places, or loses.

Beauty in a Saint Bernard's foot can be seen in high "cat's-paw" toes, tightly held together, short in length, springy in action. The contrasts seen in all too many Saints are long extended toes, often splayed (they give you the impression of a small built person wearing size eleven shoes). Action is hindered as much as for a flat-footed human.

Not every Saint has the genes that would make a beautiful foot, but at least something can be done to help the "not so blessed", along with the "blessed." The answer lies in rearing a young puppy with careful regard to his feet. He ought to be kept on a rock surface, or a hard surface for most of his living, and exercise. The time he spends on grass or on linoleum floors, or the like, should be at a minimum. A strong, high, tight foot comes from pounding that rockhard surface countless times a day, a week, a month, a year. At the same time, strong pasterns are being built - hocks are moving straight instead of "cow-hocked." Good fronts, strong rears, springy action, posing "up on the toes" means the judge will like your dog BETTER than the one that shows the effects of too little work - let's rear him so he can work, or at least give the impression of strength in every muscle including those fundation toe muscles.

Now if your Saint has the kind of feet and toes to be justly proud of, by all means have them groomed to the limit before entry into the show ring. What a difference it makes! Neatly cut that long hair away from the rear of hock, rear of pastern, all around the pads- strive for that trim look. It takes time to do this job well, but a good trim will look completely natural with no sign of chopping, of hasty mis-cuts or unevenness.

You are ready now to face the greatest test-approval from the judge. If your Saint had a good chance, his chances of winning increase sharply if he shows off good feet and legs, perfectly goomed.