

Structural Conformation Check List



****The only time you can evaluate a puppy for structure is +/- 3 days of 8 weeks.****

Before you do anything the most important thing you can do is get dressed for success! You need to have a shirt on that is the opposite color of your puppies. Sometimes a litter of puppies will require a wardrobe change in the middle of evaluation because you have a variety of color in your litter.

1. Evaluate the top line.
2. Check for an ewe neck
3. Check for a slipped hock
4. Check for twisted legs, lagging leg, cow hock and or bow-legs
5. Tail Set: Saber or Curly?
6. Dangly Legs: Are they angling straight down, forward or backwards?
7. Check the body ratio: Body should be 50% and legs from the armpit to the ground should be 50%. If it's a dramatic difference, there is a good chance that your puppy has double copies of IVDD.
8. Check the front brisket. Is there substance there or is it narrow and or boney?
9. Tail set: Drop a line from the top of the tail bone to the table. Does the line drop on the front of the rear paws?

10. Shoulders: Does your pup have butter or are they rough?

11. Check your dog's bite. Bites are NON- negotiable. They cost puppy buyers a lot of money and can cause pain for the dogs. If you are getting base line narrows, over or under bites from lines I would suggest letting it go. It's too hard to get rid of and will haunt you for multiple generations until you can get it under control. Mean while, while you don't have it under control you will have pet families with vets that are eager to rack up a dental bill and will want to start pulling teeth. Your puppy families will not think highly of you.

Tips: If your puppy has a thick fluffy coat, sprinkle some water on the topline and then comb the hair to help pat it down.

Be sure to check every puppy in the litter. If you are keeping a puppy, it is never a good idea to keep a puppy from a litter that has a bunch of bite issues or multiple puppies that are not structurally correct. It's always best to retain a puppy when the majority of the puppies in the litter are really nice.

Always Check every puppy in the litter. You can not properly evaluate your litter if you only stack the one that you think you want to keep. It's super important to know what your dogs are throwing.

No puppy is perfect. Every puppy even the best of them have a default. The pickier you are the stronger your program will be and the faster your program will become known for structure.

Pat Hastings was NOT always gentle. In the beginning I would set my litters up for her and I would tell her which cute little puppy I wanted to keep. Of course it was always the flashy pretty one. She would just smile and say, “We, will see”. More times than not she picked my “intended keeper puppy” to shreds... It hurt my feelings at times. Was it disappointing, ABSOLUTELY! But after she showed me why she was right I got it. I never went against her advise. She helped us setup our program for structure. It was the best investment I could have ever made.

Now... fast forward 10 years of breeding Australian Labradoodles and we have dogs with solid structure, great coats and fabulous smart, confident dispositions.

The process of cleaning up a program can be PAINFUL and COSTLY! Been there done that too many times to count! But when you start making the tough calls you will see improvement in your lines.

The BEST advise I can give anyone, do not buy from a breeder who can not stack their puppies. They do not know what they have or don't have. Why would you spend \$12K+ with a breeder that can't show you what they have? \$12K+ for a puppy is a professional wage. You should expect a professional presentation. Worst case scenario if the breeder isn't able to stack, they can lay on the ground and get a video of the puppy moving.

I will not buy a puppy without seeing a stacked photo. If they can't stack the puppy and I really want it... I will ask for videos. If I think the puppy looks like it's going to be okay but I'm not 100% by the video, then I get on a plane and I go see the puppy in person.

Same Puppy!

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Labradoodles
From Our Home To Yours



Proper Stack

3 days ~ 8 Weeks on an empty tummy, fresh
Out of the bath and blow dry



Improper Stack

8 weeks +1 Day FULL tummy
4 days since last bath
Front legs too far forward
Rear legs not far enough back

The Dangly Test

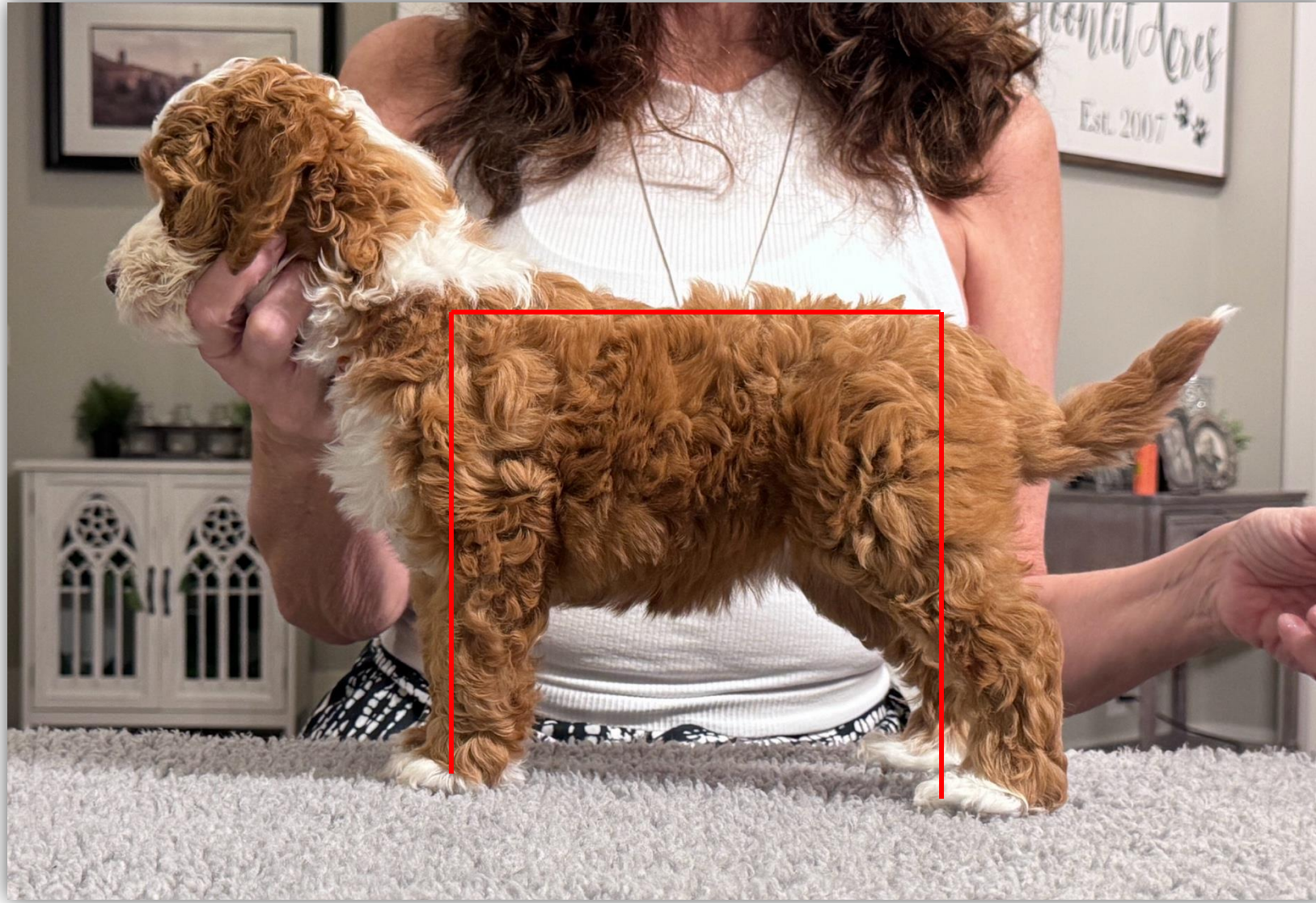
Hold your puppy mid air.
The legs will go one of three
ways:

Forward, backwards or
straight down.

You want them to dangle
straight down.

If the legs are going forward
or backwards you have a
structural issue either on the
front end or the rear end.





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Square

When positioning stack the rear legs first.

Then make sure the front legs are directly under them and straight as possible

Top Line

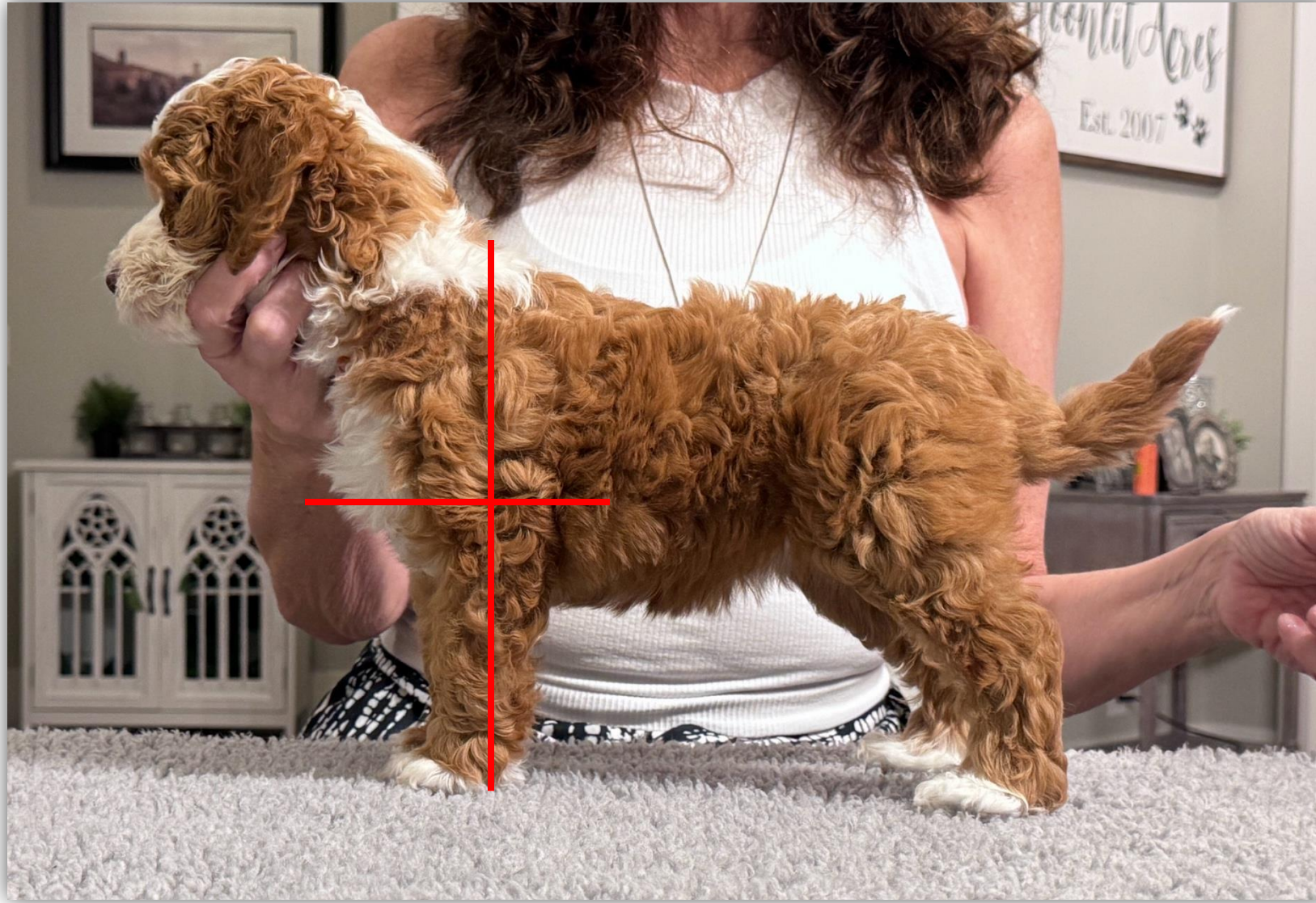
Your pups topline should be straight and you should have a gentle slope from the top of the head to the beginning portion of the shoulders.

This pup has great spacing on the neck portion. And a very nice topline. If a pup has a compacted neck it will have shoulder issues

If your pup has a sag in the middle it's not good. If your pup has a hump in the back it's called roached... it's really not good. Breeding dogs with weak toelines will compromise how well your dog will age.

A dog that is not put together correctly can not age as gracefully as a conformationally correct dog.



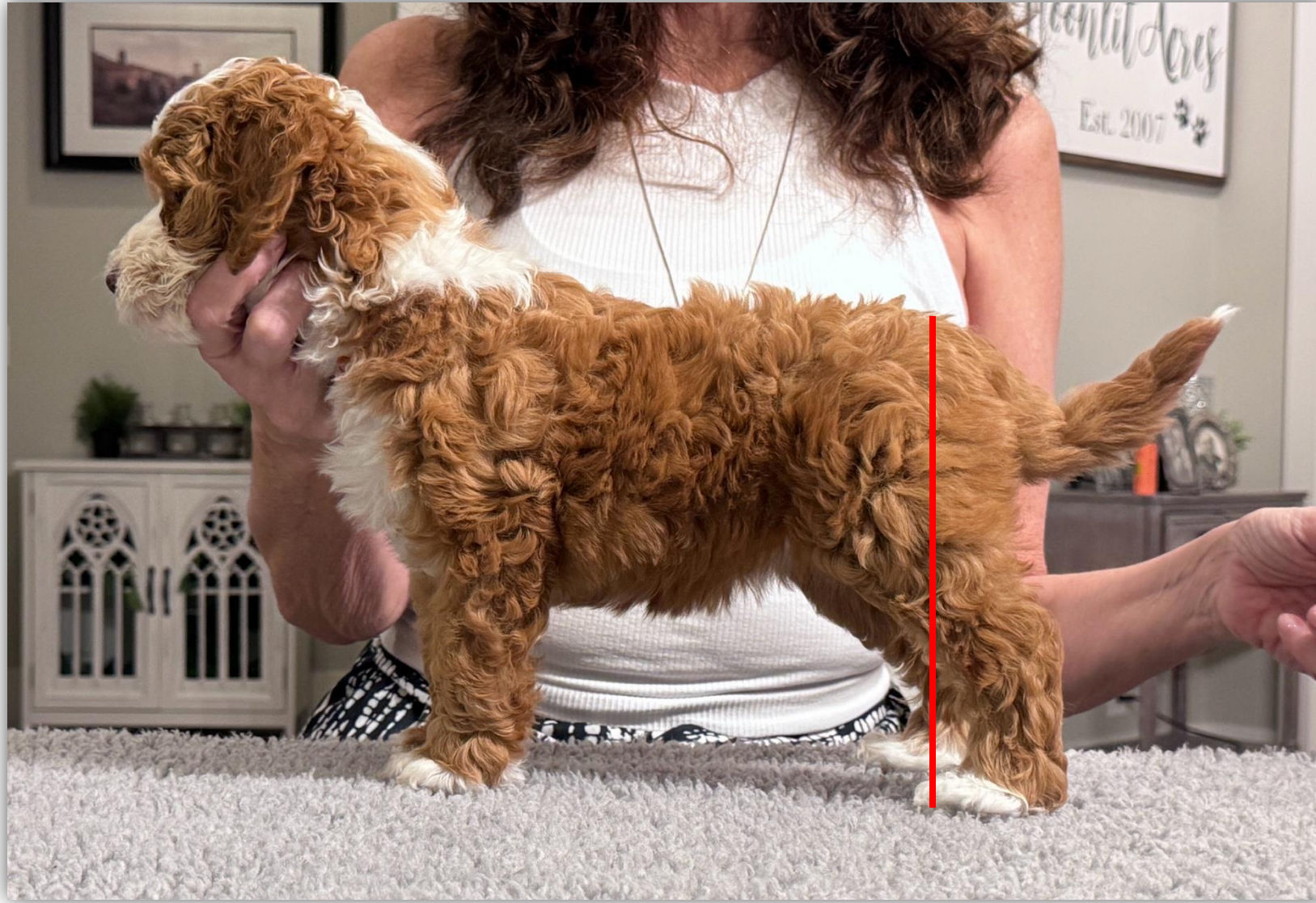


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Leg to Body Ratio

The body should be 50%
& The Legs should be 50%

This puppy is close to 50/50 but
not quite 50/50



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Tail to Feet

Draw a line from the top of the tail set to the ground.

The line should land on the front of the puppy's rear feet.



Ewe Neck Check

Place your hand on your puppy's shoulders. Gently tip the head upward.

Your puppy's neck should not be able to go past 1 PM on a clock.

If it goes past 1 PM then your puppy has a ewe neck.

This puppy's grandmother could touch her nose to her butt. We bred her grandmother to boys with super strong topline picked by Pat Hastings.

We were able to get rid of it with this girl's mother. It's not always that easy to get rid of though. But I let Pat pick the boys to be used with her.

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Checking the shoulder blades.

Pat used to call shoulders ROUGH or BUTTER. You want BUTTER.

Stack your pup and feel for bones in the shoulders. If they feel sharp, then your dog has weak-rough shoulders. If you can barely feel the shoulder blades, then you have BUTTER.

Weak shoulders will affect how a dogs carry themselves and how graceful they age



Check for twisted or cow hock legs

Stack your puppy and take a photograph from the rear.

Are the puppy's legs straight, slightly curved, bow legged?

You want straight!

Also does the puppy stand straight on its own or is it leaning to one side? If it's leaning it has a weakness either in the front or the rear.

If one leg is off to the side and the puppy doesn't leave its leg where you put it, then the backend of the puppy has an issue.

If your puppy stands there comfortably and doesn't move much and is super easy to stack, then most likely your puppy has GREAT structure. If they move a lot and you have to fight to get the puppy to stay in the position you want, then it's not a comfortable position for that puppy and they are trying to get to a stance that feels good for them. I would NEVER keep a puppy that will not hold still on the table.



Slipped Hocks

(Not all puppies from the same litter are of the same quality)

I forgot to do a photo of checking rear hocks. Jazzy went home with her family earlier today. So, I had to use her sister. I did attempt to stack quickly so I could get this wrapped up I did not have my mirror up any longer. So did this blindly.

Not a great stacking job!

In this photo my hands are on her rear hocks. Apply pressure on the rear hocks if they bend easily then your pup has a slipped hock and will have a weakened rear end. Pups with slipped hocks do not age as gracefully due to the weakened backend.

If you keep a pup with a weak back end, find a boy with a **STRONG** back end.