

Why I Do Not Dock My Dog's Tails

Dr. Jeannie Thomason

As part of the dog's spinal column that consists of 6-23 vertebra enclosed in muscles, 4-7 pairs of nerves and supporting tendons and cartilage. The tail is used in movement, communication and balance.

The tail is used by a dog as an important balancing tool. This balancing ability of the tail is especially useful when the dog is walking on a narrow passage or running and wishes to make a quick turn in another direction. A dog will also use its tail as a rudder to swim more efficiently.

Hunting dogs are acclaimed for their speed. Hunting dogs have to be fast and lithe to capture the prey. Similar to tightrope walkers that use bars to maintain balance, dogs make use of the tail as a counter balance when scaling cliffs. Used as a counter balance, the tail also prevents a dog making a sharp turn from tumbling over.

Dogs communicate with their tails to reveal their current emotional state – fearful, calm, confident, excited and high alert.

A dog's tail can also be used for preventing fly and insect bites. Some dogs will swing their tail to prevent flies and other insects from irritating them.

Dogs need their tails because without it, dogs do not have the many advantages that the tail provides to the dog. 😊

Tail Postures

By KarylN Atkinson Berg <http://www.timberwolfinformation.org>



This high tail position indicated the wolf is the dominant wolf, most likely an alpha male or female (the ones that lead the pack).



This horizontal stiffly held tail position indicated the wolf is going to attack or is hunting.



The wagging of a wolf's tail in this manner indicates that the wolf is relaxed.



This somewhat drooped tail position indicated the wolf is relatively relaxed.



This drooped tail position indicated the wolf is even more relaxed.



This half tail tuck along with a partially arched back indicated that a wolf is humbling itself to a more dominant wolf and is a form of submission.



This fully tucked tail along with a highly arched back shows that a wolf is extremely in fear of something (a more dominant wolf) and is another form of submission.