

My nine month old Jack Russell terrier is a wonderful dog. He is full of energy, great with our kids and very smart. My concern is with his ears. They used to be folded over and he looked so cute. Recently they started standing straight up and don't have the fold in them anymore. Why is this? Can they be fixed?

According to the breed standard if you want to register your dog with the Jack Russell Terrier Club of America, the ears should be small "V" shaped drop ears carried forward close to the head and of moderate thickness. Some dogs have ears that stand erect and are referred to as prick ears. These dogs cannot be registered by the organization. When it appears, the prick position is usually permanent, but in some cases during the teething period, from 4 to 7 months, the ears may change position and then when all the adult teeth are in, return to how they stood before that time period. Sometimes one ear stays folded and one stands up, which makes for a very unique look. You may hear of techniques some breeders have used to glue the ears, but I wouldn't recommend doing anything to them, as there is a risk of causing him pain and permanent damage for a purely cosmetic concern.

There is a lot of variety in the breed in addition to ear carriage. There are three coat types- rough (wiry outer coat with hair over the eyes and a beard below the muzzle), smooth (short flat coat), and broken coat which is basically smooth with some longer hairs. To make things even more complicated, there are Jack Russells and Parson Russells recognized by the United Kennel Club. The Parson Russell terrier is named for the British parson of the same name who developed this type of terrier to use for fox hunting in the 1800s. The Parson type terrier is slightly bigger, with a longer head, larger chest and longer legs than the Jack Russell. Rough coats are not recognized in Parsons. The Parson still is used to work with hounds, while the shorter Jack developed from breeding with Corgis and other dogs after the death of Parson Russell and is used for hunting rats. The AKC recognizes two separate breeds, the Parson Russell Terrier and the Russell Terrier.

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