



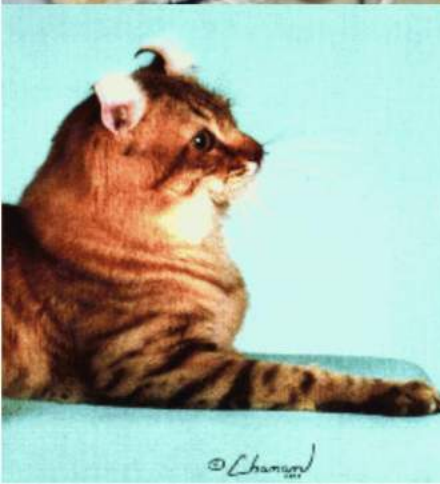
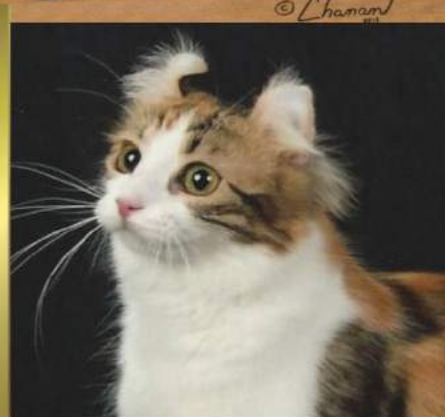
**CFA Breed Council Presentation**

***The American Curl***

**2018**

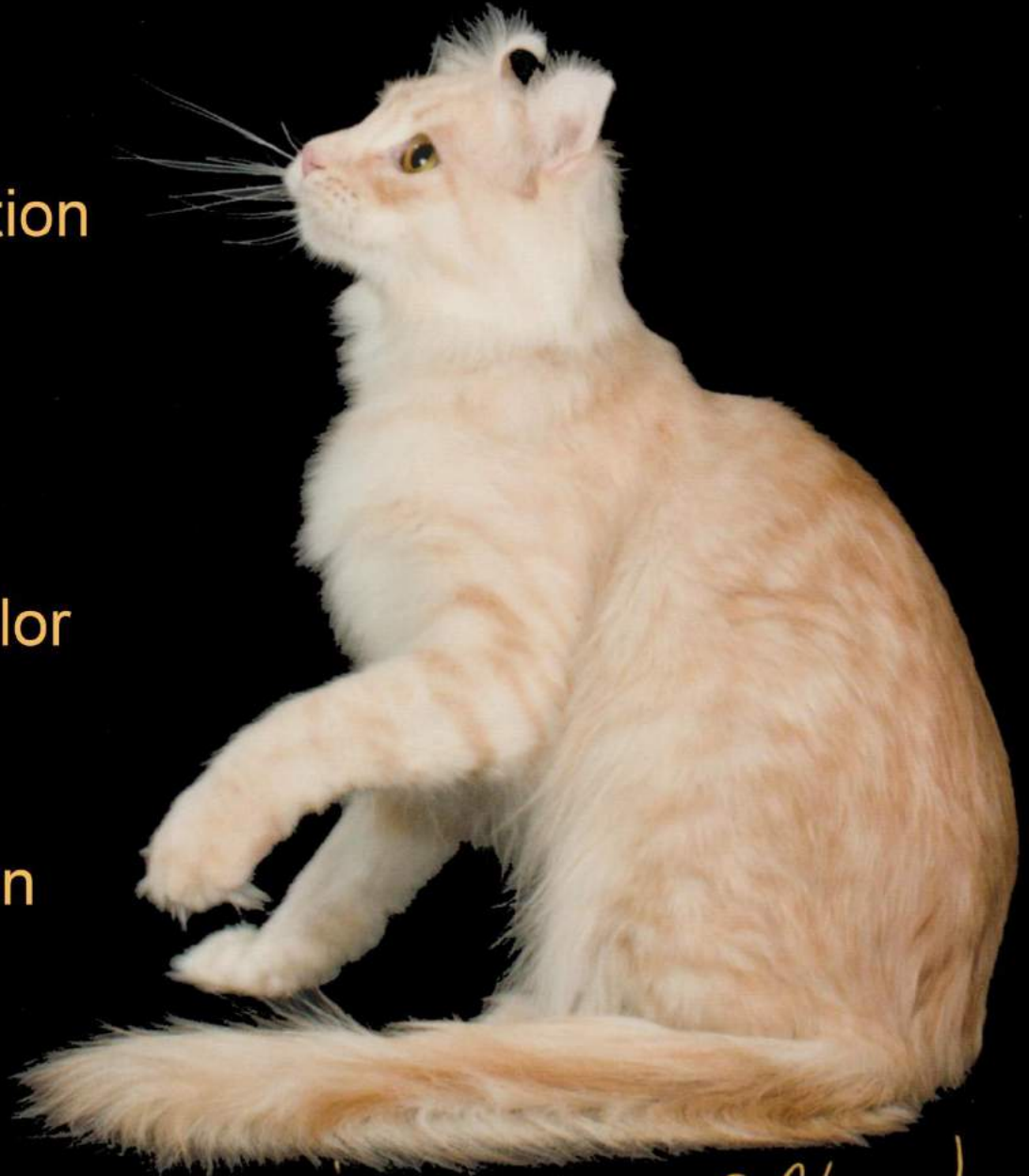
UPDATED

Produced by: Michael Bull - Breed Council Secretary  
in conjunction with the American Curl Breed Council



# Outline

- General Description
  - Topics
    - Ears
    - Body
    - Head
    - Coat & Color
    - Eyes
  - Penalties & Disqualification
  - Handling
  - History



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# GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The distinctive feature of the American Curl is their attractive, uniquely curled-back ears. The original American Curl, a longhaired female named Shulamith, was first noted in Southern California in 1981.

Curls are elegant, well balanced, moderately muscled, slender rather than massive in build. Females are to weigh from 5-8 pounds, males weigh 7 -10 pounds. They are alert, active, with gentle, even dispositions.





# CFA American Curl Standard

## **Head** 20

Shape & Size	8
Profile	6
Muzzle	4
Chin	2

## **Ears** 30

Degree of Curl	10
Shape & Size	10
Placement	8
Furnishings	2

## **Eyes** 10

Shape & Size	6
Placement	3
Color	1

## **Body** 25

Torso & Neck	9
Size & Boning	6
Legs & Feet	5
Tail Length	5

## **Coat & Color** 15

Silky Texture	6
Minimal Undercoat	4
Body Coat Length	2
Tail Length	2
Color	1
[Pattern	0]





# EARS - Total 30 Points

## Degree of Curl (10 points)

Minimum 90 degree arc of curl, not to exceed 180 degrees. Firm cartilage from ear base to at least 1/3 of height.

## Shape & Size (10 points)

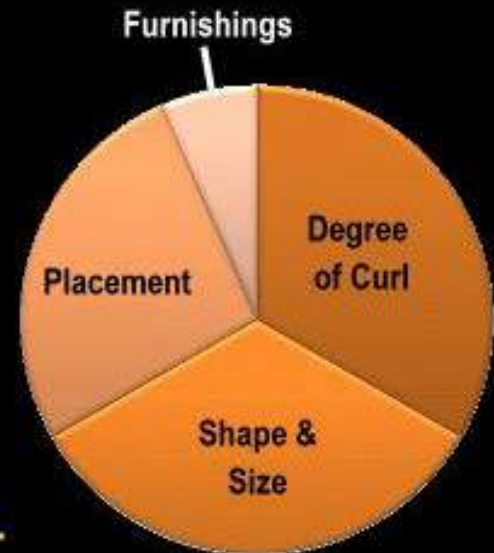
Shape: wide at base and open, curving back of ear in smooth arc when viewed from front and rear.  
Size: moderately large.

## Placement (8 points)

Erect, set equally on top and side of head

## Furnishings (2 points)

Furnishings desirable

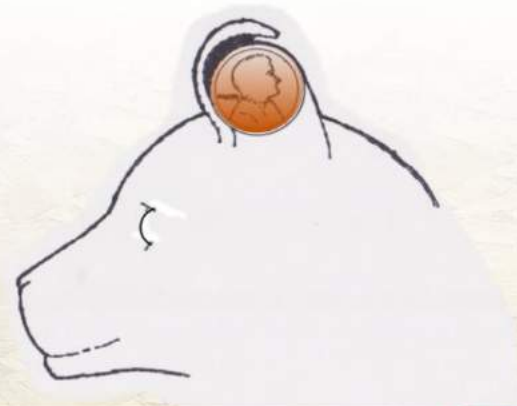


Penalize: Vertical or horizontal crimps. Interior surface which appears corrugated. Low set ears. Abrupt change of direction rather than smooth curve. Penalties and DQs will be addressed later.



# Ears

The Standard states the ears should be 90 degrees to 180 degrees. The more open 90 degree curvature is preferred. The 180 curled ear is allowed, if in fact, the arc of the ear is rounded and circular. The ideal curvature is to mentally image a coin placed in the arc of the curl. The curvature of the ear should conform to the curvature of the coin.



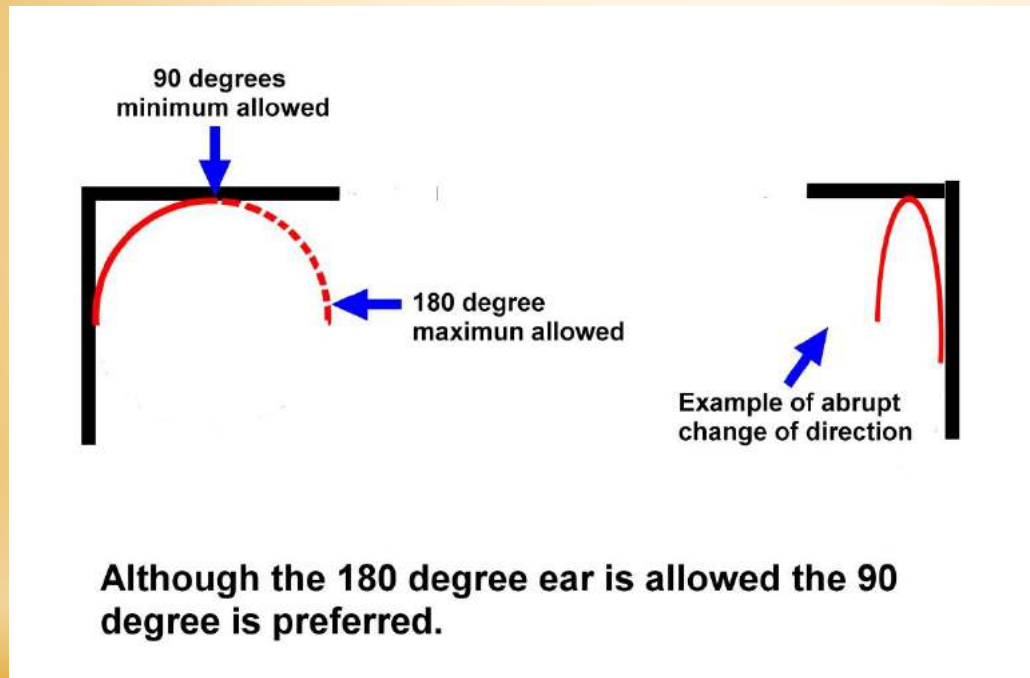
Although 180 degree curvature is within the Standard, you will rarely see a Curl with this type of ear curvature which would allow you to visualize a coin in the arc of the curl. Likewise, ears with less than 90 degrees of curl do not fit the Standard at all and should not be in the show halls.

Balance plays a weighted factor in choosing the "better" ears. Short (tightly-curved) ears combined with a long head will appear to be unbalanced. Also, a cat with a shorter head and tall looser ears will also look unbalanced. However, we must remember that ideally, the head should be longer than wide.



**Degree of Curl** – “90 degrees not to exceed 180 degrees”.  
Here’s what that would look like:

\*

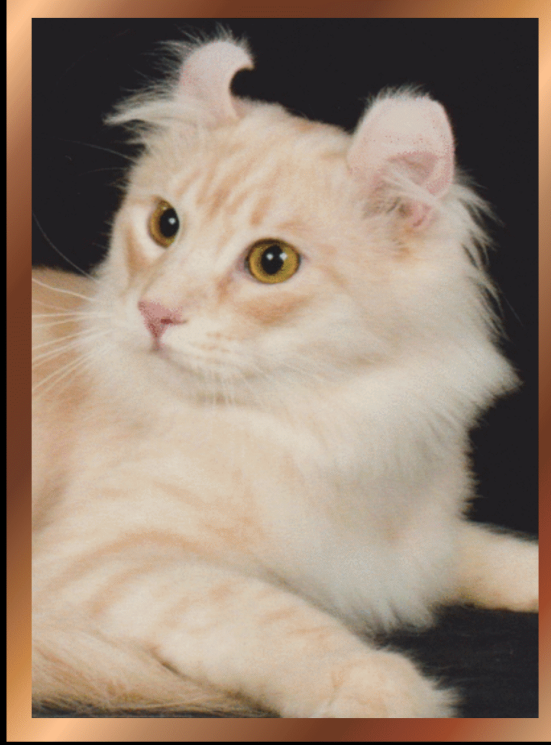


Note that the tips of the ears on the diagram to the left would never point to the center of the base of the skull... rather to the skull somewhere closer to the base of the ear

**Ears – Degree of Curl**



**Show quality ears must be 90 degrees to 180 degrees. An open smooth arc to the curl is preferred to a tight curled ear that could be considered an abrupt change of direction.**



**"Arc of curl" tells us this is a circular line. We know that 90 degrees is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a circle. And 180 degrees is  $\frac{1}{2}$  a circle. No matter what angle you look from, you want to see curvature, not bends or an abrupt change of direction.**



# Examples of "Smooth Open Curl" in the American Curl



# Ears

## Ears - Shape and Size

Shape also refers to the comparison of the amount of curl in each ear. Identically curved ears are **WONDERFUL!** But not easily attainable. The closer matched the better. The best way to compare the shape of the two ears is from the back of the head. This will also be covered in more detail in "Handling a Curl."

Judges frequently comment at shows about how few American Curls they see in the show halls. One reason is the difficulty in producing a show quality Curl. Every feature of the Curl can usually be determined more or less by evaluating the parents body length, head shape, profile, etc. The genetics that determine the shape and curl of the ears are still something of a **WILDCARD!** Both parents can have great ears and may not produce good quality show cats in their offspring. Frequently, the genetics for the kittens with good ears for shape, size and degree of curl will skip 2-3 generations. The better ear traits can be credited to the grandparents or even great grandparents.

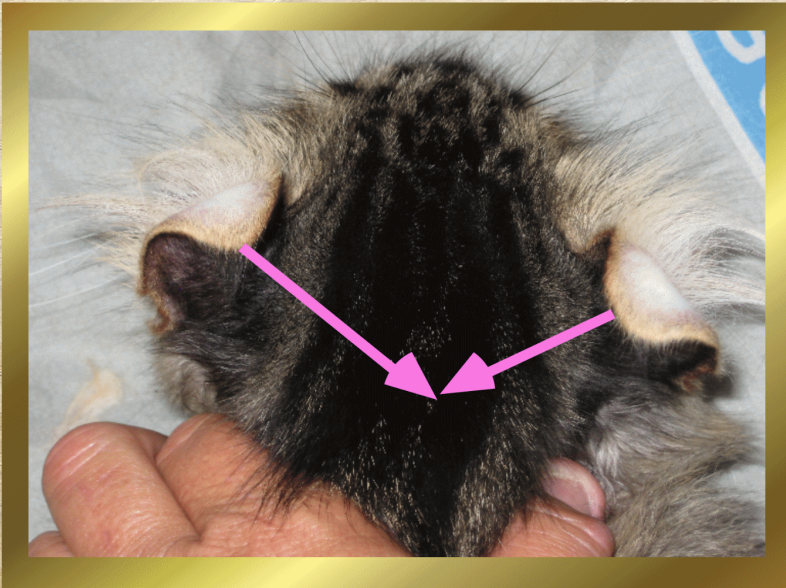




# Ears: Placement (Total 8-points)

**Placement of ears:** erect, set equally on top, and side of head.

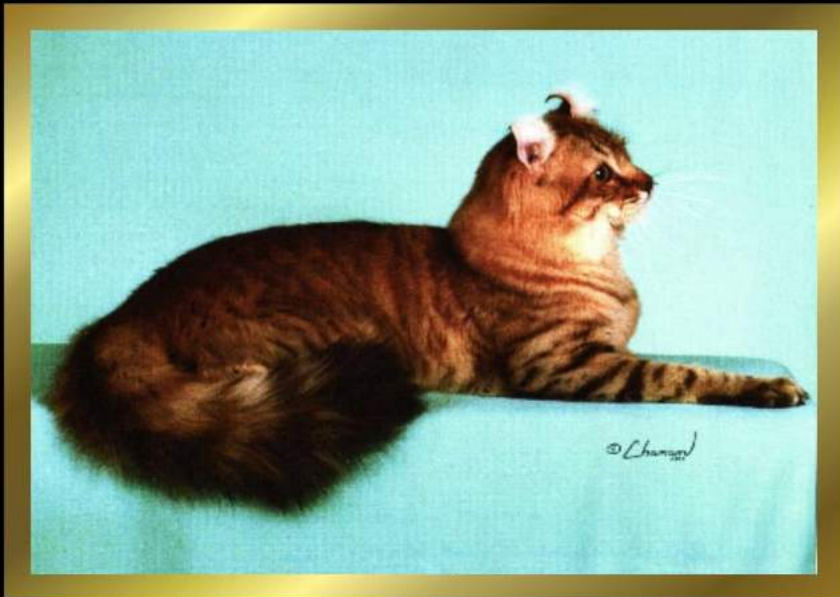
This refers to PLACEMENT of the ears on the head, not to degree or type of curl. The American Curl's ears can swivel independent of each other, and when listening to something beside or behind, the curl of the ears may not point to the center of the base of the skull.



**NOTE:** When curls are alert with ears swiveled toward the front, lines following curve of ear through the tips should point to the center of the base of the skull. Lines following curve of ear through tips beyond 90 and up to 180 degrees may intersect at a point farther up on the skull, but not beyond the top of the skull.



# Ears



**Good example of smooth, open curl. These Curls also have excellent profiles.**



# Furnishings - 2 points

## Furnishings Desirable

Furnishings are the tufts in the ears. They can also include the small wispy hairs on the tips of the ears. Ears are to be rounded, but they can also have small hairs on the tips which are also considered 'furnishings'.



**Ideally, the tufts should dramatize the curve of the ear and sweep towards the outside edge of the ear.**





# Eyes - 10 points

## Shape & Size - 6 points

**Shape:** Walnut, oval top and round on the bottom

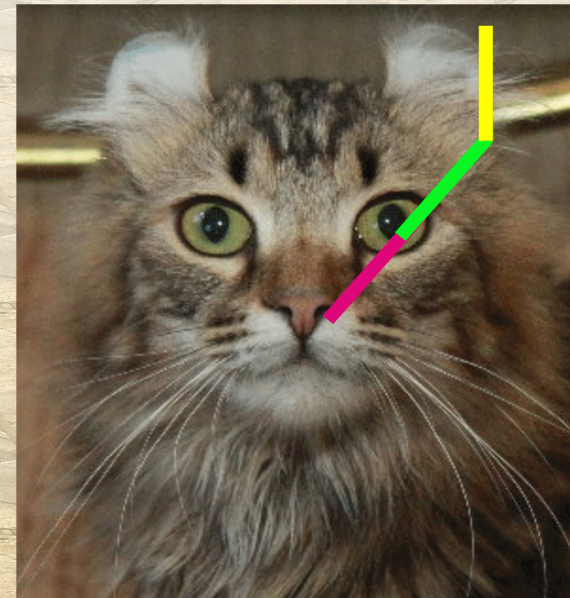
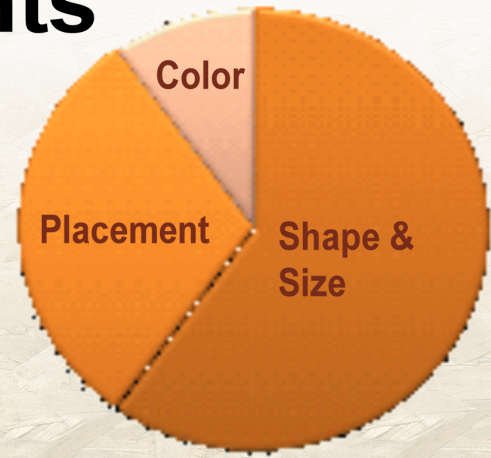
**Size:** moderately large

## Placement: - 3 points

Set on slight angle between base of ear and tip of nose, one eye width apart

## Color - 1 point

Clear, brilliant, no relation to coat color except blue eyes required in colorpoint



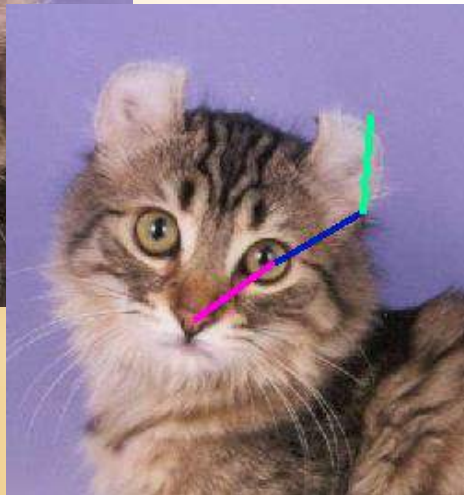
***Correct Walnut  
Eye Shape***

**Eye placement should be midway between the nose and the base of the ear and slanted upwards towards the outer edge of the ear.**



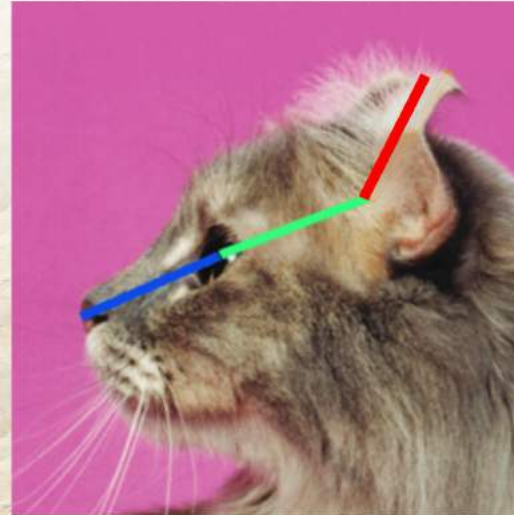
## Eyes - General considerations

An ideal Curl should have a head with three equal "thirds": one third from the nose to the center of the eye, the second from the eye to the outer base of the ear, and the third being the ears themselves. These pictures demonstrate this proportion.





# GOOD EYE SHAPE AND PLACEMENT





# Body 25 points

## **Torso & Neck (9 points):**

Semi-foreign rectangle, length of 1-1/2 times the height at shoulder, medium depth of chest and flank.

Neck: medium

## **Size & Boning: (6 points)**

Size: intermediate, females weigh 5 to 8 pounds, males weigh 7 - 10 pounds.

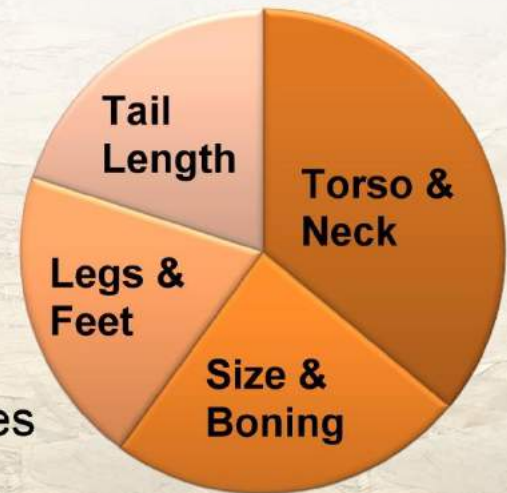
Musculature: Moderate strength and tone, flexible. The American Curl is "medium" in many respects, however, it must be remembered that the Curl Standard was written on a female and not a male. The General Description also describes the Curl as "slender". The smaller side of medium is preferred.

## **Legs and Feet (5 points):**

Legs: Length medium in proportion to body; set straight when viewed from front or rear, medium boning neither fine nor heavy.

Feet: medium and rounded.

**Tail Length (5 points):** flexible, wide at base, tapering; equal to body length  
Flexible, wide at base and tapering; equal to body length.





# Body

## Examples of good body length



**Body length to be one and a half times height measuring leg from shoulder.**





# Body

## Examples of Good Body Length





Note that the statement “Allowance is to be made for normal male characteristics” was deleted in the 2016-2017 revision to the Standard. Also removed was the reference to proportion and balance being more important than to size. These phrases were originally included in the Standard during the development of the American Curl breed during the period of time when excellent cats were scarce. That time is past. The American Curl is one of the few breeds to put in writing the specific parameters of weight which identifies and defines the “intermediate” term used to describe the expected and desired ideal size of an American Curl.

Because of the unique position of the breed being evaluated on the female (NOT THE MALE), reference to proportion and balance being more important than to size had been taken out of context and used as an excuse to ignore the required overall size boundaries. This is an area where breeders need to take responsibility and judges need to take a leadership role. When a judge lets an owner know (privately, of course) that according to the Standard, their cat needs to conform better in a particular area... it is always helpful.

In the same 2016-2017 revision, the weight limits of 5-8 lbs. for females and 7-10 lbs. for males was added to the description of the body to add more emphasis on the importance of overall size for the breed. The following page shows 2 different sizes of cats both who would be considered “medium” or “intermediate” The front leg is being measured with a dress maker tape to show the difference in size of boning in the two cats. The smaller is preferred. This is not something judges are expected to determine, but just think “slender”... not fine, i.e., the smaller side of medium.

# Size & Boning



# Size & Boning



**Measuring here an 11 month old female where her leg measures about 6-3/8cm.**

**Evaluating slender boning for semi-foreign structure. Smaller side of "Medium" is preferred to assist in maintaining our weight boundaries.**



**Another female of the same approximate age measures 7-1/2cm.**



# Head (20 points)

## Shape & Size - 8 points

Shape: modified wedge without flat planes, moderately longer than wide, smooth transitions

## Profile - 6 points

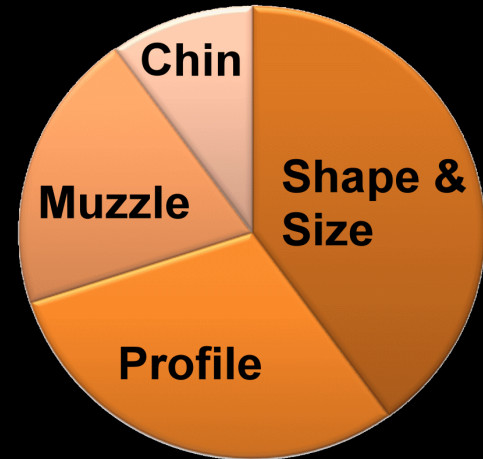
Nose, moderate in length and straight, slight rise from bottom of eyes to forehead, gentle curve to top of head, flowing into neck without a break

## Muzzle - 4 points

Rounded with gentle transition, no pronounced whisker break

## Chin - 2 points

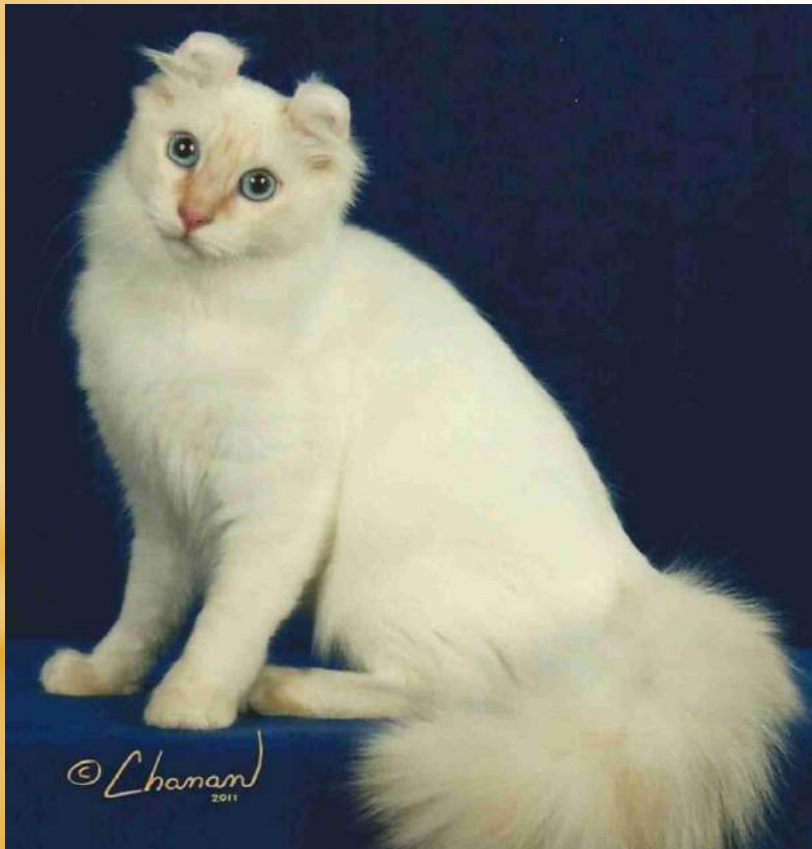
Firm in line with nose and upper lip





## Head Shape & Size (8 points):

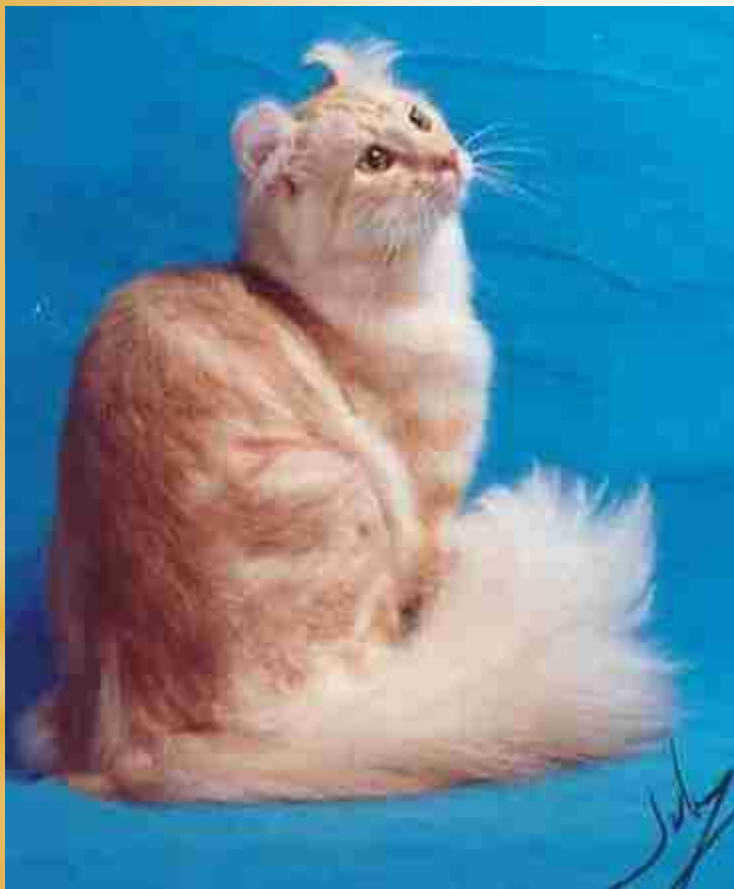
Modified wedge without flat planes, moderately longer than wide, smooth transitions. Following are several examples of good head shape.



**Good Head Shape**



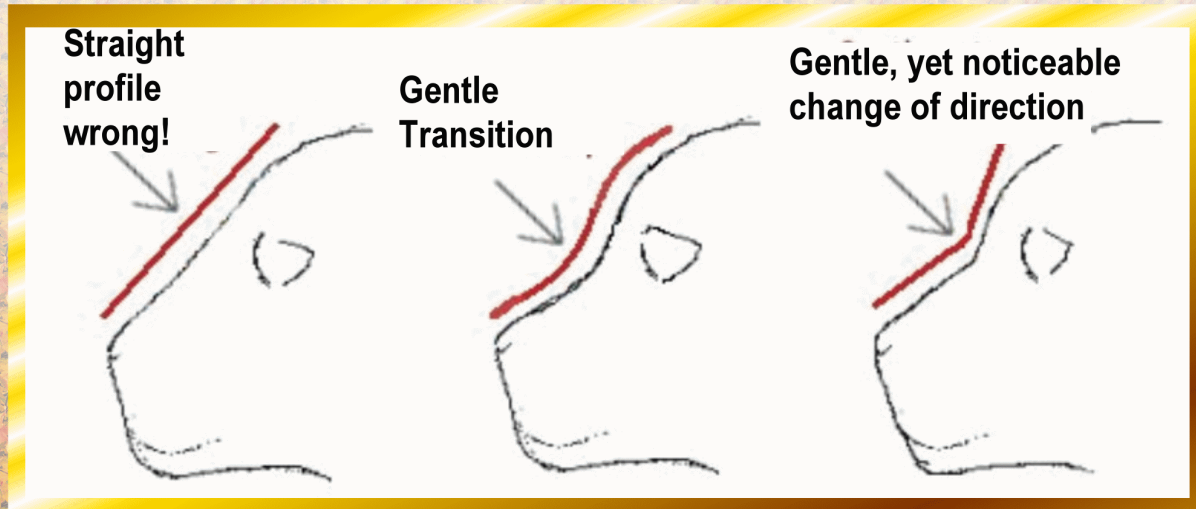
Following are several examples of good head shape



**Good Head Shape**



# Profile



**Good Profile**



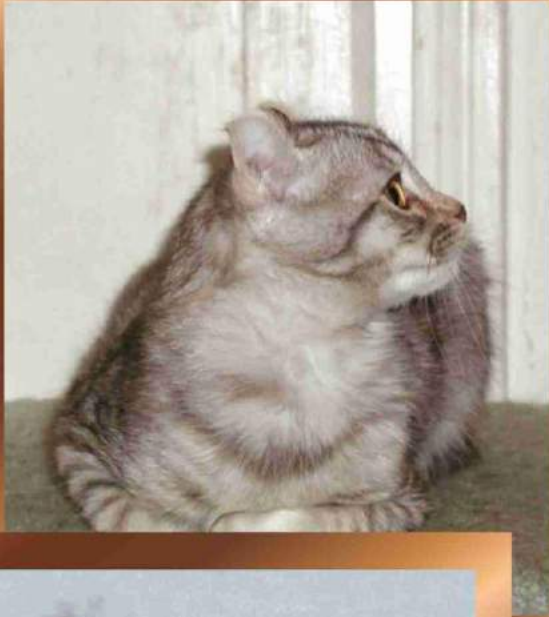
**Good Profile**



**Good Profile**



# GOOD PROFILES





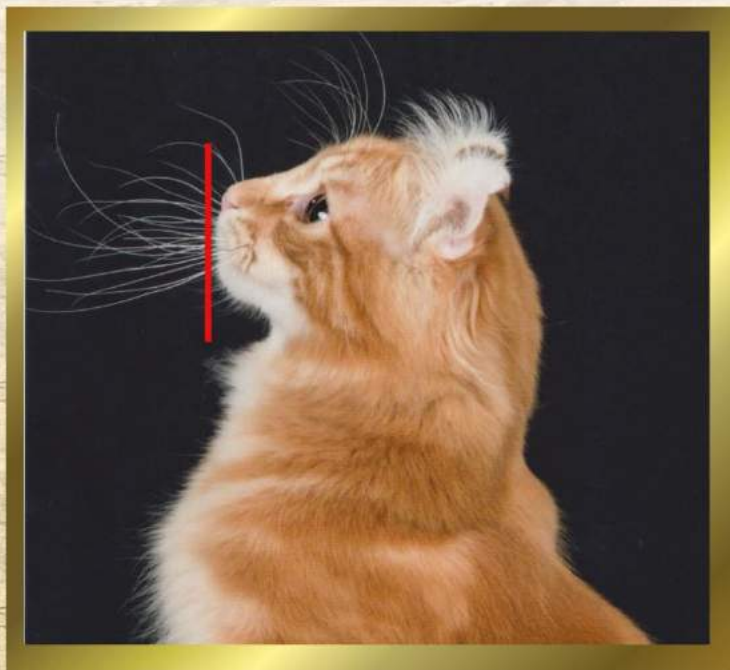
# PROFILE



**Straight nose with gentle rise from bridge of nose to forehead which then flows into the arched neck without a break.**



# Muzzle & Chin



**Chin firm, in line with nose and upper lip. Total 2 points.**



**Muzzle rounded with gentle transition, no pronounced whisker break. Total 4 points.**



# Coat & Color

## Silky Texture - Total 6 Points

**Longhair Division:** Texture: fine, silky, laying flat.

**Shorthair Division:** Texture: soft, silky, laying flat, resilient without a plush dense feel.

## Minimal Undercoat - Total 4 Points

**LH & SH:** minimal.

(Note: Minimal intended to refer to "as little as possible". Some undercoat is accepted, but less is best.)

## Body Coat Length - Total 2 Points

**Longhair:** semi-long

**Shorthair:** short

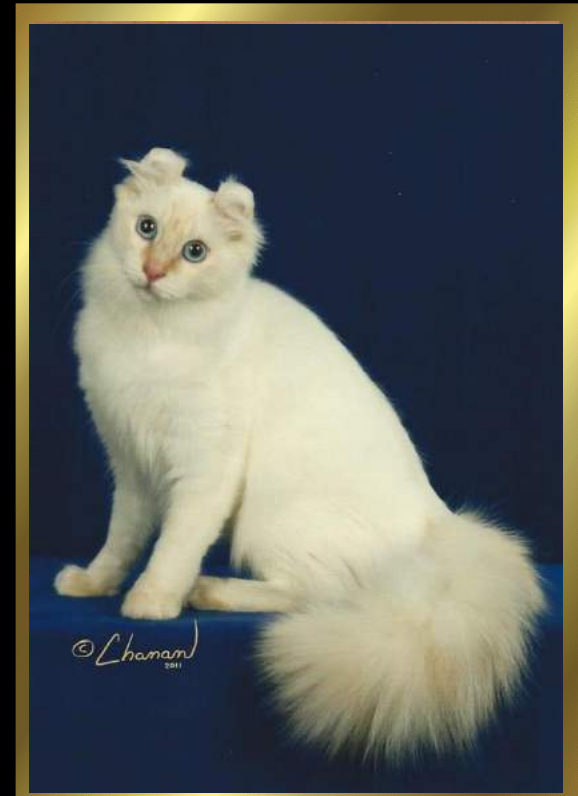
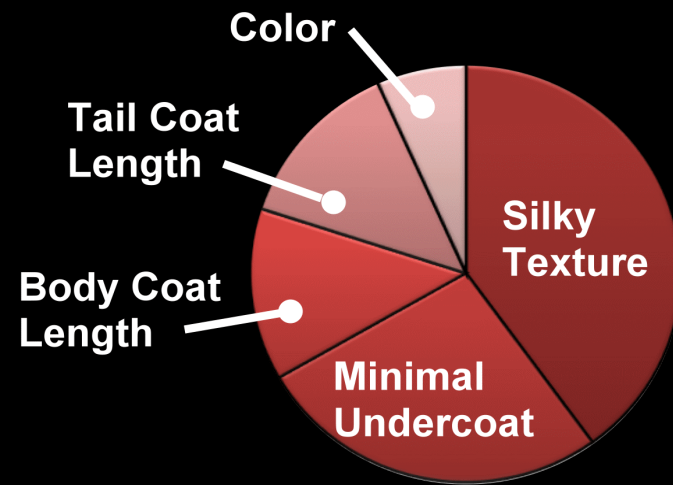
## Tail Coat Length - Total 2 Points

**Longhair:** full and plumed

**Shorthair:** same as body length

## Color - Total 1 Point

**Color:** all colors accepted



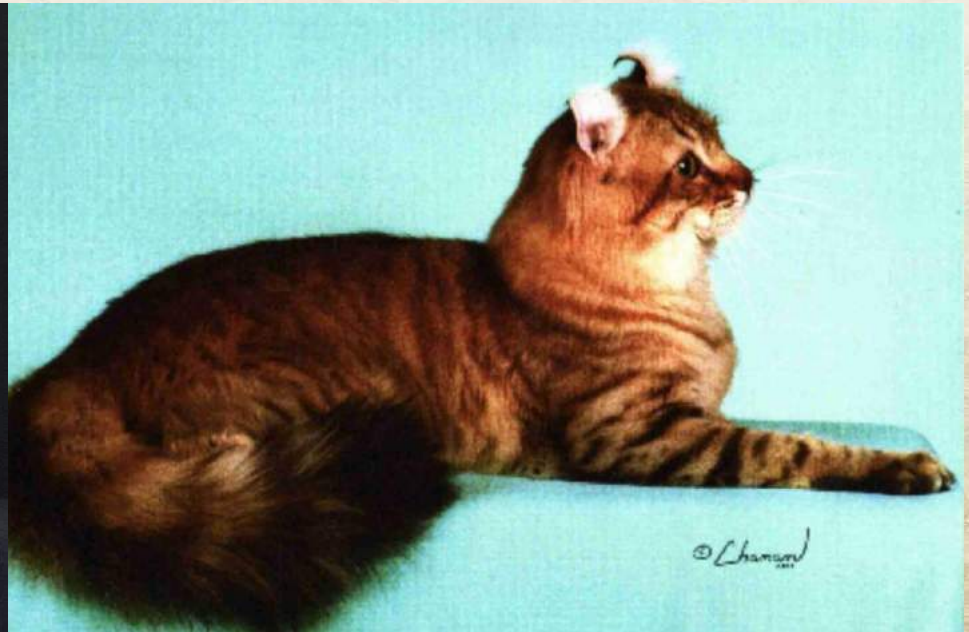


# Body Coat Length/Tail Coat Length/Color

## Total 5 points



Body Coat Length: 2 points  
Tail Coat Length: 2 points  
Color: 1 point  
Pattern: 0 points



Longhair Division: Coat length semi-long  
Tail Coat Length: full and plumed  
Shorthair Division: Coat length short  
Tail Coat Length: same as body coat.

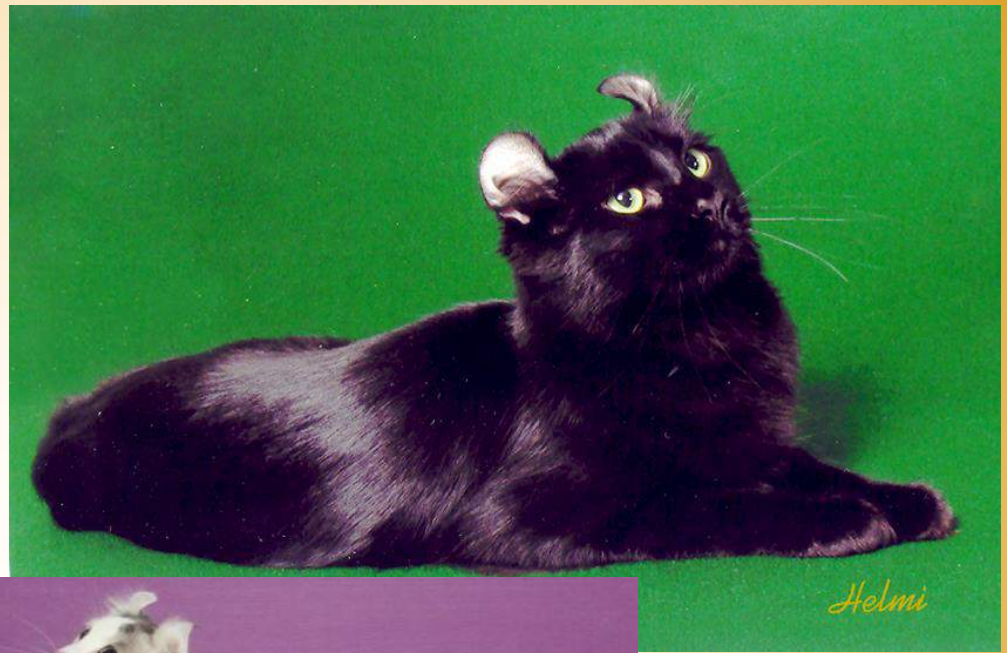




**Cats on these pages have various degrees of curl in the ears. All are good show quality cats.**

## **Examples of Good Long Hair American Curls**





Coat texture is fine, silky, laying flat with minimal undercoat as opposed to "soft & fluffy".

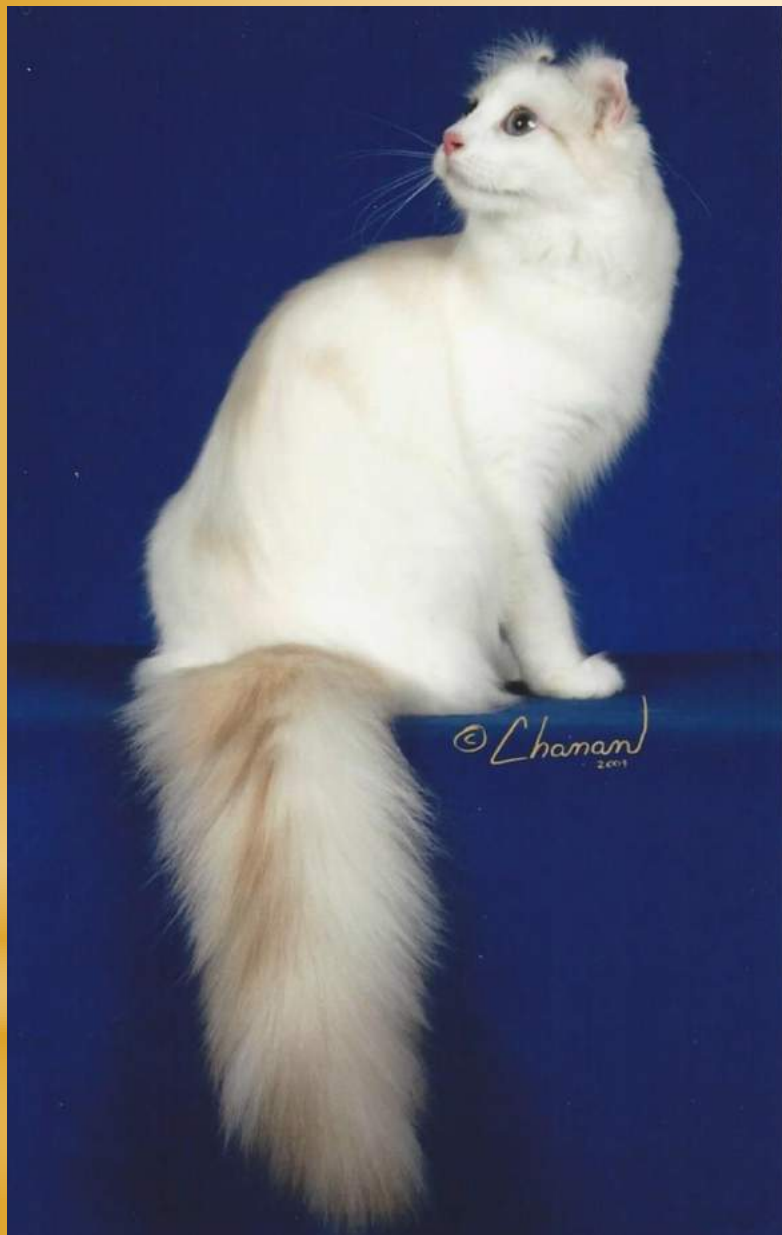
## Examples of Good Long Hair American Curls





**Examples of Good Long Hair  
American Curls**





Coat length: semi-long

Tail coat is full and plumed

**Examples of  
Good Long Hair  
American Curls**



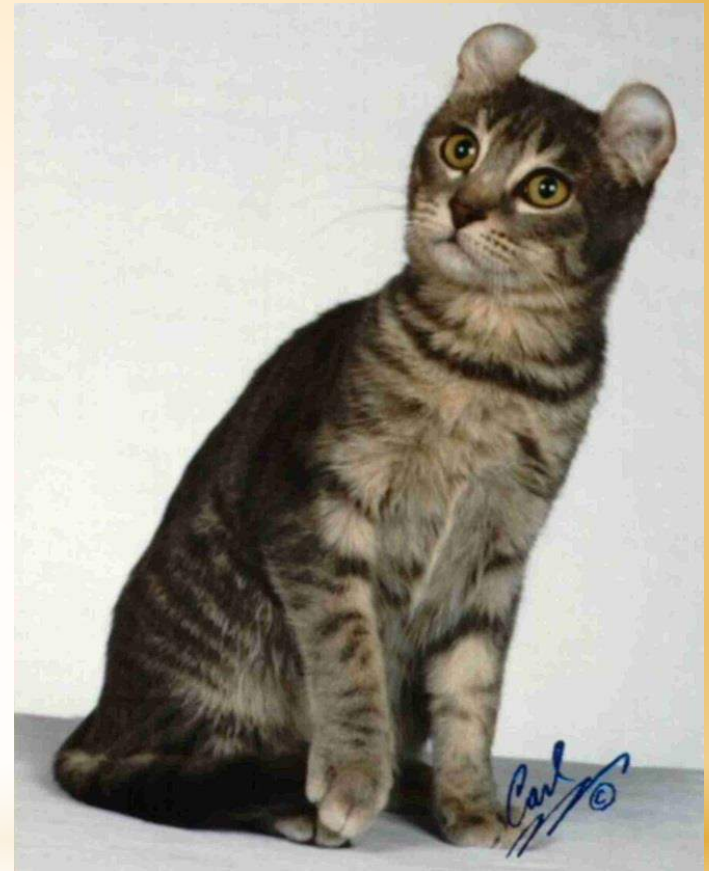


A shorthair coat should be soft and silky to the touch and have resiliency. It should only be single coated, which helps with the silky feel. The coat should not be "painted on" but rather always have a bit of spring or bounce to it.

It should also be noted that SH Curls will always be somewhat more "extreme" looking, as they do not have the longhair to soften their features and morphology.

**Example of a  
Good Short Hair Curl**





**Examples of  
Good Short Hair Cats**



- ❖ **Low set**
- ❖ **Abrupt change of direction without smooth transition**
- ❖ **Pinch**
- ❖ **Horizontal crimp**
- ❖ **Vertical crimp**
- ❖ **Interior surface which appears corrugated**

**Penalty: Ears**



## **Low Set Ears:**

**Looking at the cat's full face, low set ears appear to be sliding off the side of the head. This is often seen when the head is domed (rounded over the crown of the head, from side to side).**



**Usually these ears do not accurately 'point to the center of the back of the skull' because of their poor positioning. Ears correctly placed do not face forward. Correctly placed ears should be set facing outward at a slight angle so that the imaginary line following the center of each ear will intersect at the base of the skull.**

## **Penalties/Low Set Ears**



**Abrupt change of direction.** "Taco" ears or "flat top" ears are not a smooth curvature and are a penalty. Even if the "taco ear" may have a smooth round curve, and even if the ears don't touch the base of the head which is a disqualifying feature... the ear is too tight. Refer to the section of the standard that describes the ears and refer to the portion under Furnishings that states that the "lines following the curve of the ear through tips should point to the center of the base of the skull". The tip of the ear needs to point downwards towards the skull. But if the curvature is too tight (even though it may not be a DQ), the points would point to the skull, but not to the center of the skull.



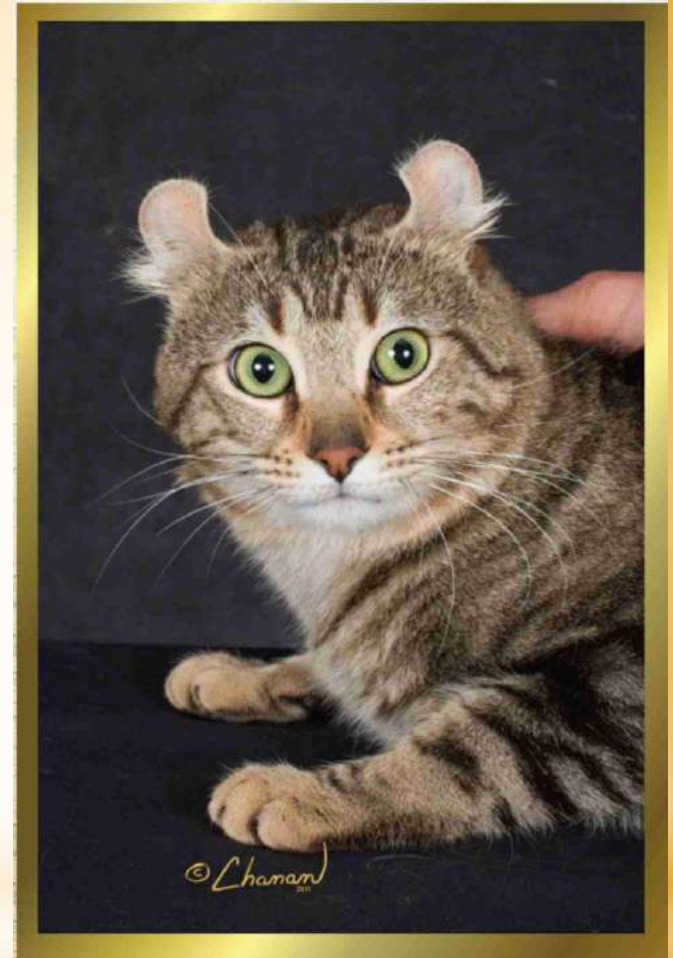
# Penalties Ears



## Horizontal and Vertical Crimps

A vertical crimp is the result of a narrow ear base. Beginning at the base of the ear and continuing along some or all of its height, the outer edge of the ear bends or rolls vertically in toward the center of the ear giving the outer edge of the ear a pinched or crimped aspect. Vertical and horizontal crimps will always be more distinct in the SH Curl than in the LH Curl. The crimp, whether VC or HC will have a corrugated or “bumpy” feel to the touch.

The photo to the far right is a vertical crimp. The photo to the immediate right is a horizontal crimp.



## Penalties/Ears



**Below are close-ups of an ear with severe HC**



It is worth mentioning that ear faults in American Curls are aesthetic only and do not imply any health concerns.

**Penalties/Horizontal Crimp**



## **Penalty: Interior surface which appears corrugated.**

Curled ears will have the normal ear convolutions at the base and interior of the ear. However, a curled ear should be a smooth texture and not appear dimpled or corrugated on the upper 2/3rds of the ear.



Notice the dimpling or corrugation on this cat's curled portion of the ear. This is another reason the ears need to be appropriately handled to determine faults.

**Penalty/  
Corrugated Surface**

**Body:** tubular or cobby, excessive size

**Coat: LH:** heavy undercoat, heavy ruff, course or cottony texture

**Coat: SH:** heavy undercoat, course texture, dense or plush coats.

**Penalty: Body – Coat - Nose**



**Nose: Deep Nose Break:** Curls have a straight nose, with a change of direction in the profile at the bottom of the eye. Some people say the Curl has a 'curved' profile. A deep nose break would be more like the Persian type, or a American Shorthair type which is undesirable.

## **Coat & Color:**

### Long Hair Division

- Heavy undercoat
- Heavy ruff
- Course or cottony texture

### Short Hair Division

- Heavy undercoat
- Course texture
- Dense or plush coats

**Penalties: Deep Nose Break  
and Coat & Color**

## **Tubular body or cobby:**

Siamese and Oriental breeds have tubular body type, The body is actually shaped like a round pipe “O”. American Curls are semi-foreign in structure type. When holding an American Curl, the body should be long and slender but have a “U” shape to it. The Curl has more depth of chest cavity than a Foreign structure type.

## **Excessive size**

The top weight limit of an American Curl is 10 pounds. The specific weight limits **of 5-8 lbs. for a female** and **7-10 lbs. for a male** as described in the General Description was also added to the body description in the 2016-2017 revision to the Standard. Curl breeders are serious about **not allowing the American Curl to become a larger breed!** With our listed weight, we are smaller than most other breeds in the “medium” or “intermediate” category. We expect judges to penalize larger Curls. That’s why the penalty is there. Likewise, smaller cats within the approved size parameters should not be penalized.

**Penalize: Body: Tubular, Cobby,  
Excessive Size**



**Extreme curl in adult where tip of ear touches back of ear or head.** If the hair has to be trimmed to visually confirm this, it is a guaranteed DQ.

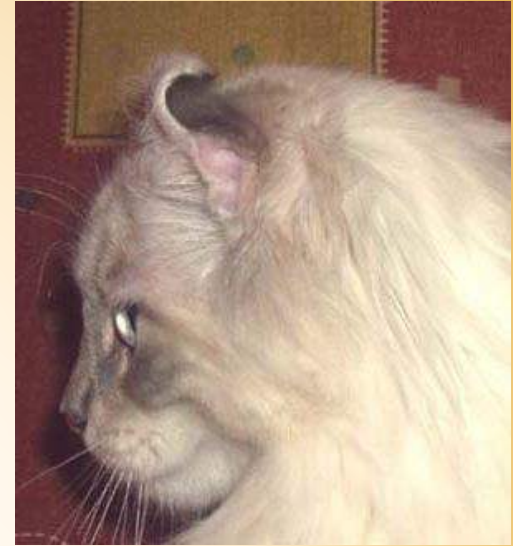
**Ears that are straight, severely mismatched, thick or having inflexible tips.** The height of the cartilage may vary from cat to cat, but it should never reach the tip of the ear, causing the tips to be inflexible. This is why the ears MUST be felt.

**Lack of firm cartilage in base of ear.** For any American Curl to be showable, the base of ear MUST be firm to the touch.

**Tail faults.** A tail fault is a knot, kink, or abnormality in the cat's tail. Sometimes tail faults are severe and noticeable to the naked eye, while at other times it must be felt by running your hand along the cat's tail.

**DISQUALIFY**

The American Curl is known for its curled ears. 60% of the points for a Curl are on the ears, eyes, head and the neck. 25% of the total points are on the body. A website has been created at [www.theamericancurlstandard.com](http://www.theamericancurlstandard.com) to help breeders (and judges if they choose to look at it) to know how to evaluate their Curls and to give them direction for their breeding programs.



The standard for the American Curl was written to emphasize **STRUCTURE** over **FLASH**. A pretty face (or sweet expression) with poor curl to the ears should never be rated better than the cat with the better ears. Too often the cat with overly large eyes and tightly curled ears and an abrupt change of direction will be rated higher than the cat with correct ears and less flash. The eyes, including size, shape, placement, and color all total 10 points. The size & shape of the ears alone are 10 points.

# Don't Major on the Minors



**Here's some of the minors:**

- **Color is all of 1 point.**
- **Pattern is 0 points.**
- **Chin is 2 points.**
- **Body length is 2 points.**
- **Body coat length is 2 points.**
- **Furnishings are 2 points.**

**These are basically “tie-breakers”.  
Given two curls that have been  
evaluated as relatively equal,  
these can be “tie-breakers”**

**between those two cats. For the Curl, the only real purpose for making sure  
the color is correct is for the pedigree.... Same for pattern.**

**Curl breeders should be focusing on the major features of the ears, size,  
placement, thickness, crimps, head shape & size, coat texture & boning...  
the majors.**



# Major on the Majors

## Introduction

There's an old saying in the fancy that "smart cats make lousy show cats".

As a pet owner, one of the most charming characteristics of the Curl is its extreme intelligence. As an exhibitor, this same trait can be frustrating. Some breeders have chosen to breed for show temperament and consistently have cats that are very amenable to handling and showing... Others choose to maintain the intelligence and "spark" they find so endearing in Curls, realizing they may end up with lovely, fun companions that do not enjoy the show hall.

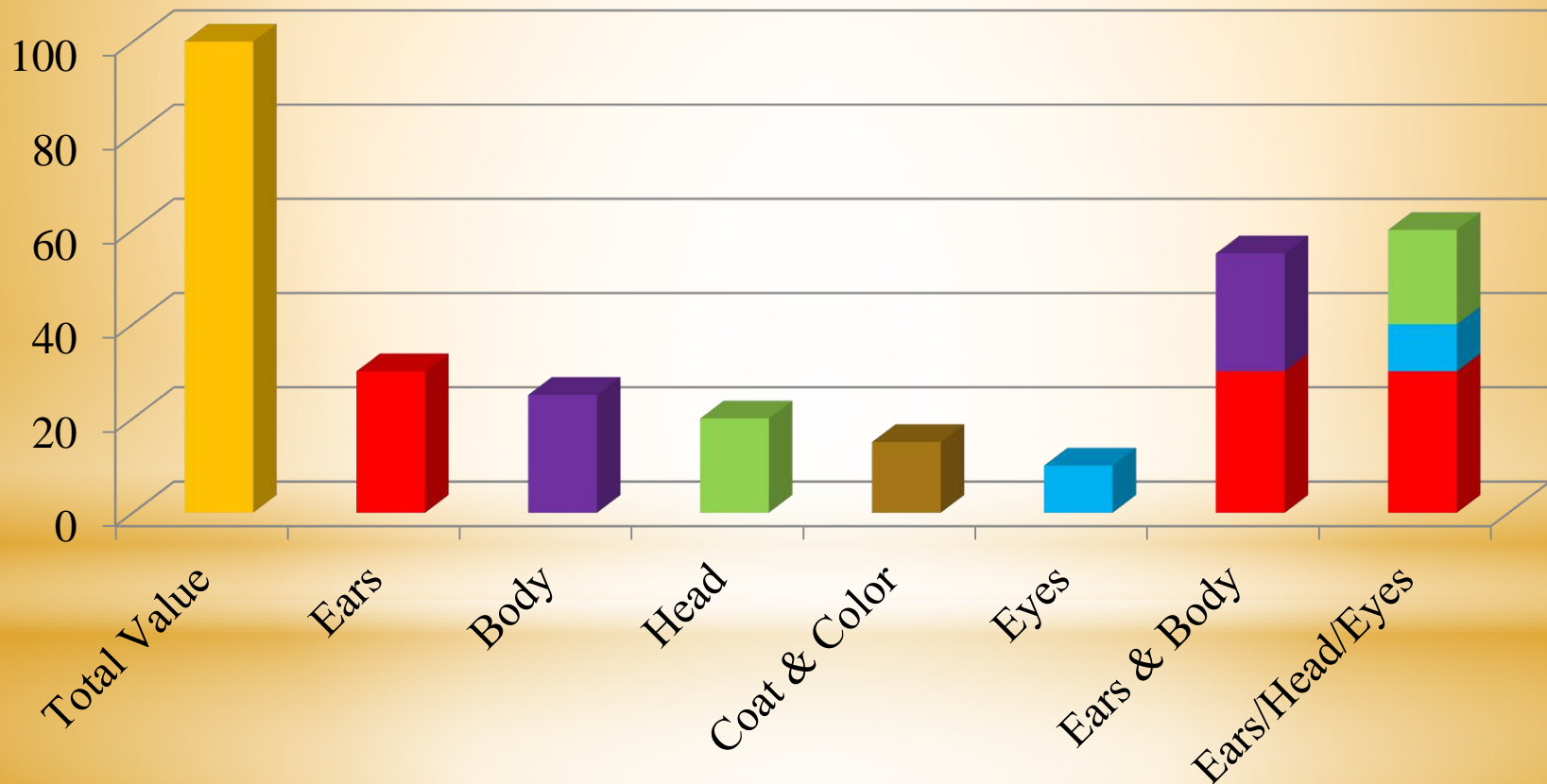
When judging and handling a Curl, it is always best to be reminded that you are handling a breed that has been known to turn on lights to get attention, purposefully change the TV channel, and kittens who have been caught trying to figure out how the door handle works at 4 weeks of age.

# Judging and Handling an American Curl



# Analyzing Point Values

Breeders expect judges to know our point values, and if in doubt, to refer to the Standard to confirm. The chart below will help. It shows the individual categories, as well as major categories weighted together.



## Judging and Handling an American Curl

**At first glance....**Before removing a Curl from the cage in the ring, the judge can take a good look at the face for shape and overall balance. With a little encouragement, you should be able to divert Kitty's attention to one side or the other for a quick glance at ear shape, eye shape, head and neck... i.e., overall balance.

Every cat is an individual and will behave and react differently to handling. However, we can make several generalizations:

Curls tend to be "four on the floor" cats. It is therefore recommended that the judge stretch the cat while taking the cat to the judging table, or at least when the hind feet are on the table to determine body length and shape. While some Curls are amenable to being stretched so the judge can get a good view of body length, others may have to be "stretched" while on the table.

## **Judging and Handling an American Curl**



**Checking Ears.** The ears are the most distinctive feature on a Curl. The ears and body combined are 55% of the total point value of the Curl.

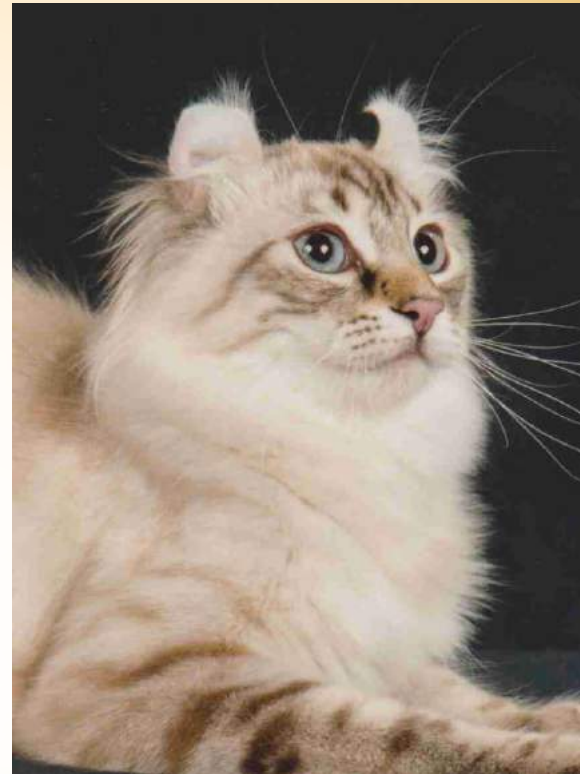
Degree of Curl and Shape & Size of the ear total 20 of the overall 30 points for the ears.

Judges should not be afraid to handle the ears, but at the same time, they need to know how to handle them without alarming the cat or hurting the cat. This is really something that is better seen or demonstrated in person (or video), rather than explained in text and photos. A breeder training website at [www.theamericancurlstandard.com](http://www.theamericancurlstandard.com) contains a video of Grace Ruga, founder of the breed, briefly showing breeders how they should expect their cat to be handled at a show and how they should be handling their cats. The following pages will attempt to demonstrate this in photos.

### **First some DON'T's...**

- **DON'T** try to uncurl or bend the base of the ear.
- **DON'T** stick you fingers into the ear. Keep in mind that NO cat likes to have its ears handled. None of them like to have someone stick fingers into their ears (especially with long nails – ouch!). American Curls are no different.
- **DON'T** try to force the ear into an unnatural position.
- **DON'T** “fiddle” with the ears.

## **Judging and Handling - EARS**



The real key when evaluating the curvature of the ear is to look at the cat and the ears from every direction. Everywhere you look on these ears should be smooth... think of a perfect circle of a coin. You really want to be able to imagine a coin fitted neatly in the curvature of the ear.

**Judging and Handling - Ears: Degree of Curl**



**Degree of Curl.** Remember that curled ears are mobile – noises can make the ears swivel towards each other giving an entirely different impression. If the cat is not listening to the front, the ears will not point to the center-back of the head, even when the setting is correct..

Ears swiveled outwards with the tips pointing inward allow for another opportunity to evaluate how equally matched the ears are.

**Are the ears equally matched in terms of degree of curl?**

Remember, just like in human ears, if you look close enough, there will always be some differences. However, any mismatch in either degree of curl or size of ears in a show quality Curl should be minimal and ideally unnoticeable during normal judging.



**Judging and Handling - Ears**

## Checking Ears Degree of Curl

Note in this photo, fingers are placed GENTLY in front and behind the ear on the base of the skull. No pressure is applied to the ear itself or to the cartilage. The cartilage of the ear is swiveled just so slightly so the tips of the ears point towards each other.



This won't hurt the cat, but if the cat is nervous about the show hall, or the judge is unsure about how to handle the ear, it might be best to just look for curvature by looking down on the cat from the back to view the ears from behind. Swiveling the ears in this manner, however, will provide the truest evaluation of the ears.

## Judging & Handling – Ears: Degree of Curl



## Checking Ears Faults

Some ear faults can be seen visually, for instance, abrupt change of direction, however, minor HC, VC, corrugation, especially in long hair Curls may be difficult to find without actually feeling the ear. The cat won't mind this if your touch is quick, gentle and relaxed.



To check for these faults, gently allow the surface of the ear to slide through your index finger and you thumb. This is quick. The cat won't even notice. You're just quickly feeling for any unusual bumps or irregularities in the surface of the ear.

This should only take no more than a second. This would also be a good time to quickly check the tips of the ears to be sure they are flexible.

**Judging and Handling - Ears: Degree of Curl**

## Checking Ears: Degree of Curl

When the cat is alert with ears swiveled toward the front, do lines following through the curve of the ears point to the center of the base of the skull?

To determine the proper direction the ears are pointing, they should be in a normal relaxed, forward position. A feather or toy held high and rather still will provide a good view from the profile and rear. A good “second look” can be made after returning the cat to it’s judging cage as it looks up at you.

Viewing from the back...Are the ears correctly set on the head?



**Judging and Handling - Ears: Degree of Curl**



**Head Length & Shape – Viewing from the back.** To check the head shape, place Kitty Curl on the table facing away from you so you are looking down at the top of the head from behind.

Place thumbs behind the ears and forefingers along the side of the head down to the nose, forming a triangle with your fingers to check for the modified wedge. The head should be longer than wide. There should be no flat planes or whisker break.



# Judging and Handling an American Curl

**Head Length & Shape – Viewing from the front.** Either while the cat is still in the judging cage or once it is on the table, evaluate the balance of the head. This is also a good time to evaluate eye shape, size and placement.

**Is the head, including the ears, pleasing to the eye and divided into 3 relatively equal thirds?**

Remember that the from the nose to the eye should be  $\frac{1}{3}$ , the eye to the base of the ear should be another  $\frac{1}{3}$  and height of the ear from the base of the ear to the curve should also be  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

**Are the eyes too big or too small for the face?** Remember, eyes are moderately large. Bigger is not necessarily better... cute as they might be... they need to FIT. Everything needs to be balanced.

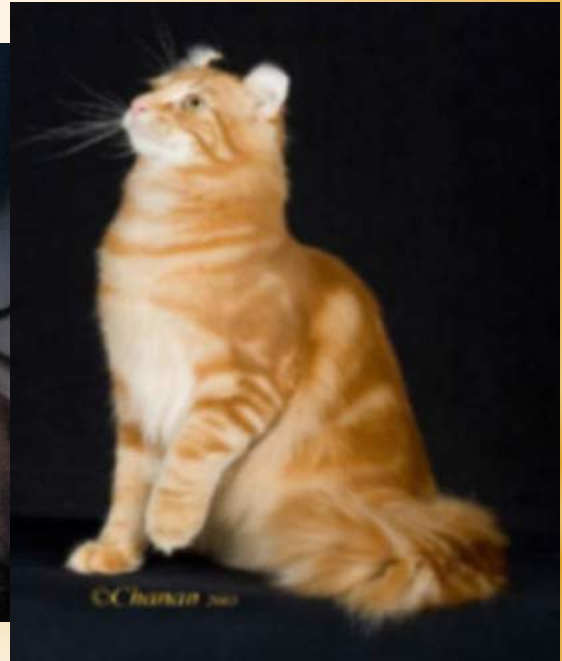


**Judging and Handling – Head & Eyes**



Baby Curls are born with straight ears. Within 2-3 days, they curl up into little “rosebuds”. By 2 weeks, they will start to uncurl as the head starts to grow. The ear is considered “set” by 16 weeks. It can still change after that, but any change should be minor.

Below is a kitten at approximately 2 weeks, then again at a month, then at about 2 months, and finally full grown.



**Breeder's Corner**

To help breeders around the world to learn how to correctly evaluate their cats for their breed programs, several members of the American Curl Breed Council including the founder of the breed have created a website with video tutorials to offer training to breeders on how to evaluate their young curls for breeding programs and showing.

There is some thought that American Curls from different regions can look different when the desired goal is to establish “one look” around the world. In the past, there was a different look between the East Coast and the West Coast in the U.S. and another look in Europe and another in Asia. With the breeders working closer together and with the Curl training website at ([www.TheAmericanCurlStandard.com](http://www.TheAmericanCurlStandard.com)), this gap should begin to narrow.

## Developing the Breed



**Some common misconceptions about the American Curl:**

**MISCONCEPTION:** The American Curl is a “natural” breed, and like the Main Coon or American Shorthair, should be a large, solid cat.

Not so. The original standard was based on a domestic named Shulamith, unanimously described by all judges who saw her as “Turkish Angora type”.

The Standard emphasizes weight to make sure the term “intermediate” for size is not inflated over time. Females are 5-8 lbs. Males are 7-10 lbs. The Standard was revised in 2016 to remove wording stating that proper balance was more important than overall size, to ensure that the American Curl would continue to be a medium cat with refined boning rather than a heavier boned breed.

The same applies to smaller cats as well as larger cats. Smaller cats fitting the standard should not be penalized for their size. Extremes on either end (oriental or cobby) are also unacceptable.

# Major Misconceptions #1

Another misconception relates to the amount of the curl in the ear.

**MISCONCEPTION:** More tightly curled ears are preferred over more loosely curled ears.

Again... NOT SO! In fact, ABSOLUTELY NOT SO! This is not just for looks, but for the health of the cat. Breeders have found that the tighter curled ears can narrow the ear canal as the cat matures resulting in ear infections and/or hearing loss. Some breeders have refused to breed a cat with tightly curled ears for this very reason.

Also, as stated previously, if the tips of the ears are expected to create an imaginary line to the back of the skull, tightly curled ears would point to the skull behind the cup of the ear. The tips could never create an imaginary line where they would intersect.

Showable ears can range anywhere from 90 degrees to 180 degrees, but the more open rounded curvature is preferred.

## Major Misconceptions #2

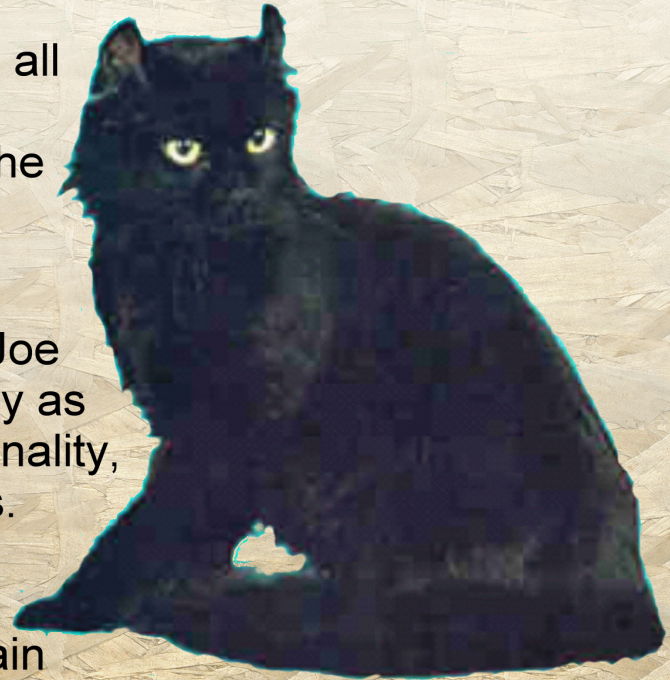


# History

Meet Shulamith, the foundation cat from which all American Curls must descend. Unfortunately, there are few pictures of her, but you can get the idea of what she looked like.

"Shu" was a domestic cat from Lakewood, California, that showed up on the doorstep of Joe and Grace Ruga and quickly adopted the family as her own. They were soon smitten by her personality, intelligence and, of course, those unusual ears.

Shulamith herself was used as a model on which the Standard was based - although certain "improvements" were incorporated. For example, Shu had a weak chin and her ears were not as nice as her offsprings' who had larger, more tightly curled ears. Those ears were the basis of what is considered ideal today.



*Shulamith of Curlniques*

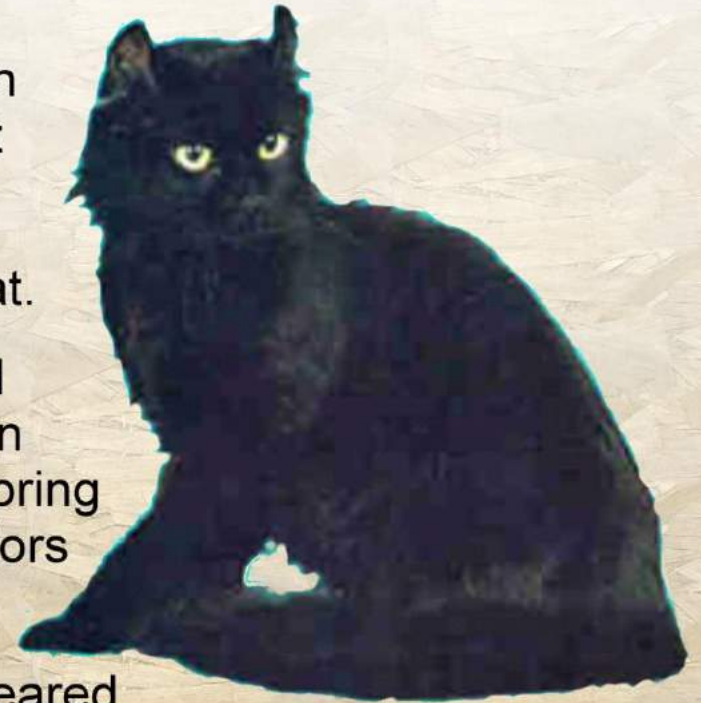


Shulamith was not a large cat, but medium with refined boning, what we call "to the smaller side of medium", and a long slender body. When presenting her to the judges for evaluation, they unanimously compared her to a Turkish Angora.

Her head was a nice modified wedge, longer than wide, with smooth transitions. Her profile was not straight, but had a gentle change of direction.

Her coat was semi-long, with little to no undercoat.

Although a "plain" black cat, Shulamith produced many interesting colors right from the start. When bred to "plain old" domestic cats, she or her offspring produced chocolate, colorpoint and Burmese colors (mink).



When Shulamith delivered her first litter of curly-eared babies, no one involved knew anything about the Cat Fancy, selective breeding or how to go about developing a cat breed. They did realize what a special thing they had on their hands, so they proceeded to seek guidance from breeders involved with other breeds. The first advice given was to contact a geneticist, to be certain the mutation did not carry any harmful effects.



After careful study, it was determined that the Curl gene gave no indication whatsoever of having deleterious effects on the health of the cats.

The next step was to write a standard for this new breed of cat. Shulamith herself was used as the model for the standard and most of the text used in the written standard was based on the standards of other breeds which presented similar characteristics. For example, her profile most closely resembled that of an Abyssinian or Egyptian Mau, so the profile description in those standards served as the basis when drafting the first American Curl Standard.

Fortunately, in earlier years breeders made strides towards reaching a homogenous look in the breed and their efforts had been noted by judges and breeders alike.

Unfortunately, breeders in other international areas began to develop a larger curl and breeders are now working together to bring the breed back to a single standard in the show halls where most Curls are quite similar: a medium-sized cat (5- 8 lbs. for a female, 7 -10 lbs, for a male), with medium, refined boning, a body 1 & 1/2 times height, head longer than wide, with walnut shaped eyes and, of course, those lovely curled ears.

