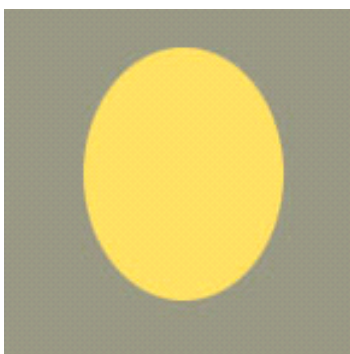
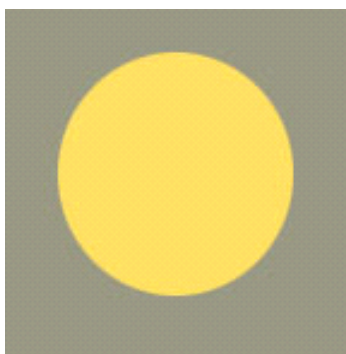


Jack Russell /Parson Russell Terrier Spanning Guide

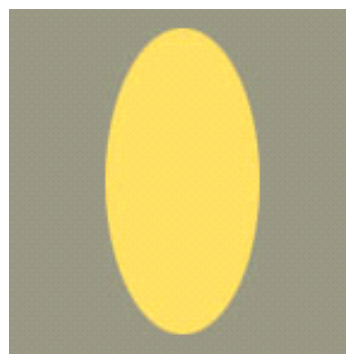
One of the most important attributes of a Jack Russell Terrier is his spannable, flexible chest. Equally important is the shape of his chest. It is this small, compressible, properly shaped chest that allows him to enter and move in the ground. It is this singular characteristic of a spannable, flexible chest that sets him apart from the other terrier breeds and insures that he will be able to function as an earthworking terrier today as he did historically. In other words, it keeps him true to his roots.



**Elliptical Chest Shape
Correct in this breed**



**Barrel ribbed or round
chest-incorrect**



**Slab sided chest
incorrect**

The proper chest shape for the Jack Russell Terrier is elliptical in shape. The elliptical shape allows for compression but is **NOT** a deep chest.

A barrel ribbed dog, or a dog with a round chest, is hampered under the ground. This shape is less compressible than an elliptical shaped chest. In a round rib cage, each point is equidistant from the center, thereby giving this shape maximum structural strength which resists compression.

A slab sided dog, or a dog with a flatter rib cage, is a chest that is deeper at the sternum which is the midpoint of the bottom of the chest. Although the slab sided chest is more flexible and compressible than the barrel ribbed chest, the increased distance from the point of withers to the sternum makes it increasingly difficult for the terrier to maneuver in the earth and will **SEVERELY restrict where he can go in the earth**. Sight hounds are slab sided or flat in the rib cage to allow maximum lung capacity and maximum intake of oxygen while the dog runs long distances. The Jack Russell Terrier is **NOT** required to run long distances. His chest shape is indicative of where he has to fit in the earth. If you see a terrier with a noticeable tuck up then you are looking at a too deep, slab sided, **incorrect** chest.

The breed standard calls for **SLIGHT** to **MODERATE** tuckup. A dog with a slab sided chest (flatter rib cage) will by design have a deeper tuck up because of the greater depth of chest. A dog that is barrel ribbed will have no tuckup because the rib cage is circular. A dog with an elliptical chest will generally have a slight to moderate tuck up.

Note: This breed must have well-sprung ribs that extend well back. Well-sprung designates that the ribs cage is not flat. A flat, deep ribcage is incorrect in this breed.

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Many thanks to Donna Motter for her help with photos and her support in putting this spanning guide together.

How to Properly Span

The litmus test of whether or not a terrier can enter the ground is how he spans.

This terrier **MUST** be able to be spanned behind the shoulders by an average man's hands.

Follow the steps below to properly span a Jack Russell Terrier

1. Turn the dog so his head is facing away from you.
2. Grasp him gently just behind the front legs, lifting his front end off of the ground but always leaving his back legs on the ground.
3. Make sure that your middle finger tips touch underneath the dog's sternum. **Do NOT overlap your middle fingers underneath the dog's chest.** They should only touch.
4. Check to see if your thumbs meet or overlap. ***It is EXTREMELY important to visually use your thumbs as a guide, rather than trying to remember where your middle fingers meet or overlap.*** In this way you can compare the chest size of each terrier that you span.
5. Compress slightly. You are checking the flexibility/compressibility of the chest. Remember that a young dog should be more flexible and an older adult, particularly a veteran, will have a harder chest by virtue of his age. Like humans, dogs' bones do become more inflexible with age. Bitches that have had one or more litters will, in most cases, have a less compressible chest. It is recommended that a judge ask the age of each dog and factor that into the judging equation.
6. Feel the **SHAPE** of the chest to determine whether it is the proper, elliptical shape, or an improper slab sided or barrel ribbed chest.

Spanning: A foreign concept

There seems to be quite a bit of confusion among non Jack Russell Terrier breeders as to what is the "average man's hands" and correspondingly, what is and is not considered to be spannable. Hand sizes vary from person to person just as the shape and size of terriers' chests vary from terrier to terrier. Every person is going to experience a different span on a terrier depending on his or her individual hand size. After you have spanned hundreds of terriers, you will begin to understand what is and is not considered to be spannable without giving it a second thought.

Until spanning and relative chest size become second nature, we offer some relative comparisons to guide you in both how to span and in how to interpret and use the result of spanning into the judging equation.

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Spanning: Procedure and Size Comparisons

The following photographs show:

- 2 very different hand sizes (a ladies size 6 and a ladies size 9 which is approximately equivalent to an average man's hand in length of hand and length of fingers),
- 2 plastic soft drink bottles for comparison purposes—a 2 liter and a 3 liter bottle, and
- 2 terriers with vastly different chest sizes.

Although the round soft drink bottles are not representative of the proper chest shape or feel of a Jack Russell Terrier, they are representative of actual circumferences that are spannable and borderline spannable. Any chest larger than a 3 liter soft drink bottle is considered to be questionable.



The photo to the left shows a comparison between a ladies size 6 hand and a size 9 hand.



Circumference of 2 liter bottle 14"



Circumference of a 3 liter bottle 16"

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Size 6 ladies hand spans 2 liter, 14" circumference bottle

Note: middle fingers touch as they would underneath a dog's chest, thumbs almost touch.



Size 9 hands span 2 liter, 14" circumference bottle

Note: middle fingers touch as they would underneath a dog's chest, thumbs overlap.

The visual comparison of a span is whether thumbs touch, do not touch or by the amount of overlap of thumbs. This is the **only method** of spanning that allows for the **visual** comparison of one terrier's chest to another.

Note:

Size 6 hands can **ALMOST** span a 14 inch circumference

Size 9 hands can **EASILY** overlap a 14 inch circumference

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This terrier's chest circumference
Just happens to be the same as
the circumference of the 2 litter
soft drink bottle.

The spanning process is always the same.

Face the terrier away from you.

Gently lift terrier's front end off the table.

Terrier's back feet **MUST ALWAYS** be touching the table or the ground.

Make sure your middle fingers are touching underneath the terrier's chest.

Now check to see where your thumbs are.

Do your thumbs

- Touch
- Not touch and by how much
- Overlap and by how much

Now you have a visual approximation of the chest size to compare this to the next terrier's chest you span.

Compress very slightly on the chest to see how much flexibility the chest has.



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Size 6 hands and size 9 hands spanning a 14 inch chest



Size 6 hands spanning a 14 inch chest. Middle fingers meet underneath the chest. Thumbs do not meet but are not far apart.



Size 9 hands spanning a 14 inch chest. Middle fingers meet underneath the chest. Thumbs overlap by more than the first thumb joint.

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Circumference of a 3 liter bottle 16"



Size 6 hands spanning 16" circumference. Note thumbs miss by about 3 inches.



Size 9 hands spanning 16" circumference. Note the thumbs almost touch.

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This terrier's chest circumference
Just happens to be slightly larger
than the 16 inch circumference of
the 3 liter soft drink bottle.

The spanning process is always the same.

Face the terrier away from you.

Gently lift terrier's front end off the table.

Terrier's back feet **MUST ALWAYS** be touching the table.

Make sure your middle fingers are touching underneath the terrier's chest.

Now check to see where your thumbs are.

Do your thumbs

- Touch
- Not touch and by how much
- Overlap and by how much

Now you have a visual approximation of the chest size to compare this to the next terrier's chest you span.

Compress very slightly on the chest to see how much flexibility the chest has.



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Size 6 and size 9 hands spanning a 16 1/2" inch chest



Size 6 hands spanning a 16 1/2 inch chest. Middle fingers meet underneath the chest. Thumbs do not come close to meeting by approximately 4 inches.



Size 9 hands spanning a 16 1/2 inch chest. Middle fingers meet underneath the chest. Thumbs almost touch but not quite. This approximates a span by an average man's hands. This terrier is **very borderline** in his spannability.

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Summary and Observations

Everyone cannot reach around every terrier's chest the same amount, but everyone can span every terrier with the same relative comparison from terrier to terrier and with a equal sense of whether that terrier IS or is NOT spannable.

What you can do to determine what **you** can span and, consequently, how much distance there will be, if any, between your thumbs is to use a 2 liter and 3 liter soft drink bottle as a proxy for circumference size. Make sure that you measure the bottles with a tape measure because sizes may vary on various manufacturers plastic drink bottles.

Note: that the upper limit that an average man's hands can span is **approximately** 17 inches or about 1 inch more than the 3 liter plastic bottle. Practice spanning a 2 and then a 3 liter plastic bottle and commit to memory the distance (lack of distance or overlap) from one thumb to another thumb. A visual representation is ALWAYS superior over a "feel" that you try to remember. Humans are visual beings. Distance in inches is something that you **can** remember when spanning any number of terriers. Trying to remember a feel is **not** something you can remember.

Note: A round plastic bottle is not being used as a proxy for chest SHAPE but only chest size.

Additional Considerations

The chest size should be **in proportion** to the build of a terrier.

A taller, larger boned terrier will generally span larger than a terrier of equal height but with less substance or a terrier of equal substance but lesser height.

Regardless of the height and substance of any terrier, if that terrier cannot be spanned by an average man's hands, he is considered unspannable and should be penalized as such. Please remember that the FUNCTION of the Jack Russell Terrier is to enter the earth, locate the quarry and bolt the quarry from the earth or hold the quarry until dug to. If the terrier is **NOT** spannable, then he is **NOT** functional regardless of his other attributes.

A younger terrier, particularly a puppy, should have a more flexible and smaller chest. An older terrier will generally have a less flexible and larger chest. A bitch that has carried and whelped puppies will generally have a less flexible and larger chest.

You are allowed and should ask the age of each individual terrier in order to determine whether the chest size and flexibility is consistent with age as well as size.

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