



problems are a common issue some bully breeds might face due to their highly active nature. To minimize the chance of future complications, try to walk your dog on dirt or grass, since asphalt is harder on joints. Also try to warm them up with a short 5- to 10-minute walk before any strenuous activity.

Bully breeds are shorthaired dogs that don't require much grooming. Along with a regular "wash and go," start your bully as soon as you bring them home to get used to having their nails clipped or ears cleaned. If you're uncomfortable performing these duties, find a groomer who understands the breed and is well-trained to groom them.

## 2. Adopting a Bully Breed May Take Time

Any reputable shelter will put you through a thorough screening process before allowing you to adopt a dog, but the process is usually more rigorous for someone looking to take home a bully breed. Don't be offended if a shelter really questions your motives in adopting pit bull mixes and other breeds that have a history of abuse or dog-fighting. Most shelters will request a background check, a list of references along with a home visit to see where your adopted bully will live. You should also be prepared to answer a detailed questionnaire in which you will be asked things like why you want to adopt a bully breed and your history as a pet owner.

## 1. Bullies Are Loyal to a Fault

Bully breeds are generally very loving and loyal companions. They normally form very close bonds with their owners and will be a constant presence around your home. As the group Bay Area Doglovers Responsible About Pit Bulls (BAD RAP) explains, "Be ready to commit lots of quality time to your pet for life." These people-lovers won't like being relegated to the backyard or left alone for long periods of time. Be prepared to commit a daily dose of undivided attention to your bully

breed to ensure their happiness. Remember, you can't judge an entire breed by a few negative news reports. If you're ready to adopt a loving and active dog, you will have a faithful companion for life in a bully breed.

### Resources:

- American Kennel Club. "AKC Canine Good Citizen Program." (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/index.cfm>
- American Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Ten Tips for Adopting a Pit Bull." (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/dog-fighting/ten-tips-for-adopting-a-pit-bull.html>
- American Temperament Testing Society, Inc. (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://www.attS.org/>
- American Veterinary Medical Association. "State Legislative Resources." October 2007. (Aug. 17, 2010) [http://www.avma.org/advocacy/state/issues/sr\\_breed\\_ordinances.asp](http://www.avma.org/advocacy/state/issues/sr_breed_ordinances.asp)
- Bay Area Doglovers Responsible About Pitbulls. "Monster Myths." (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://www.badrap.org/rescue/myths.html>
- Bay Area Doglovers Responsible About Pitbulls. "Pros and Cons of Owning a Pitbull." (Aug. 18, 2010) <http://www.badrap.org/rescue/owning.html>
- National Canine Research Council. "Fear vs. Fact" (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/fearfactncrc1.pdf>
- Pit Bull Rescue Central. "Socializing Your Pit Bull." (Aug. 18, 2010) <http://www.pbrc.net/socializing.html>
- Saunders, Kim. "The Adopted Dog Bible." Petfinder. Collins Living. 2009.
- Stilwell, Victoria. "Teaching Dog Safety." Scholastic Parent & Child. February 2010. (Aug. 17, 2010) <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3753354>

**All dogs shown in this brochure were residents of and adopted from the Humane Society of Tuolumne County and are still doing very well in their new homes.**



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# UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIER



## UNDERSTANDING THE MYTHS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIERS

The Humane Society of Tuolumne County firmly believes that every animal deserves a good loving, forever home. Animals are not born "bad", unfortunately they fall victim to people who train or teach them to be bad, mean, aggressive or destructive. This brochure is intended to help you better understand a very misunderstood breed, the American Pit Bull and the American Staffordshire Terriers also known as Pit Bulls, Pitties and Bully Breeds. A Pit Bull can make a great family pet however, they are not the dog for everyone. If you think this dog may be for you, ask yourself if you are willing to learn all you can about this breed so you can educate people and handle the negative image and scrutiny when out in public. Also, ask yourself if you will have time to train, socialize, exercise, and provide a safe environment for your dog. Finally, ask yourself if you will be able to make a lifetime commitment to this breed. Only through responsible ownership can we change the future and the image of the Pit Bull.

The media, newspaper, worldwide web, and other forms of communication spread many myths about this breed. We'd like to help you to understand and dispel some of these so-called myths!

### MYTH 1: DON'T PIT BULLS HAVE LOCKING JAWS?

**Fact:** No, the jaws of a Pit Bull are constructed the same as any other dog except for the size difference. What they do have is strength and tenacity when they grasp on to something. This is a common trait among the Terrier breeds be it a Pit Bull or Jack Russell Terrier.

### MYTH 2: PIT BULLS CAN EASILY TURN ON YOU?

**Fact:** No dog "turns on you." Some dogs after they mature might try to challenge their place. Spaying and neutering can help with that as well as obedience training. Remember, no matter what breed of dog you have, children should always be supervised and taught how to interact with dogs and animals.

### MYTH 3: WILL A PIT BULL THAT SHOWS AGGRESSION TOWARDS OTHER ANIMALS GO AFTER PEOPLE NEXT?

**Fact:** People aggression is a totally different behavior than animal aggression. Although these dogs can have a high prey drive, they were originally bred to not be aggressive towards humans. The people who fought their dogs had to be able to reach in and pull their dog out of the "pit." Dogs that did bite were not bred and were often killed. A Pit Bull that shows aggression towards a human is not characteristic of the breed. Not only is it inhumane to use animals for purposes of fighting and gambling, it is also a felony in the United States, whether you are the person fighting the animals, breeding them or attending the fights...you are subject to arrest.

### MYTH 4: ARE RED NOSE PIT BULLS MORE AGGRESSIVE?

**Fact:** Absolutely not. The color of the nose or hair is no indication of temperament. Genetics and environment shape a Pit Bulls temperament not the color of their hair or nose.

In the American Temperament Test Society statistics for various breeds tested for temperament, the American Pit Bull Terrier had a favorable rating of 83.9% which was higher than the Golden Retriever. This temperament test focuses on stability, shyness, aggressiveness and friendliness, and the dog's ability to distinguish between threatening and non-threatening situations. For additional information on the test and a complete listing of breeds, you can visit [www.atts.org](http://www.atts.org).

The Pit Bull is energetic, playful, comical, loyal, eager to please, intelligent, easy to train, tenacious, strong and athletic, bonds well to people, and is very loving. The Pit Bull excels in obedience training, agility, fly ball, and weight-pulling. Some Pit Bulls are used as Search and Rescue dogs and Animal Assisted Therapy dogs while others are employed as Drug Sniffing dogs. At the Humane Society of Tuolumne County we adopted a Pit Bull named Jade that went into training to become the first Pit Bull Therapy Dog in Tuolumne



County. Jade continues to enjoy her work by being brought to schools, libraries, children's facilities, and associations to help educate people on her breed and to do what she does best...provide unconditional love to people and children of all ages, genders, and ethnic backgrounds.

If you are interested in adopting a Pit Bull, please visit the Humane Society of Tuolumne County in Jamestown, CA, go online at [hsotc.org](http://hsotc.org), or call 209-984-5489.

Now that you know the facts, please pass this information on to others and help us to help a much discriminated against and misunderstood breed...the American Pit Bull Terrier.

## 10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE ADOPTING A BULLY BREED



Tail wagging, tongue lapping, and full body hugs are just a few of the reactions you can expect to come home to when you adopt a bully breed. These sturdy, active dogs make wonderful companions. But too often, unaware pet owners

relinquish their bully breeds to shelters because they didn't realize the commitment required to own such a dog. Before you bring a bully breed into your life, make sure you know all the facts about these dynamic dogs. Are they good with children and other people? How much time and attention do they really need? What is Breed Specific Legislation, and how could it affect your decision to adopt? Read on to learn the answers to these questions and more to determine if adopting a bully breed is really right for you.

### 10. Bullies Are Anatomically Normal

There are a lot of really outrageous -- and just plain wrong -- myths about these breeds' physical make-up. From claims that they come equipped with super powerful jaws that lock like a crocodile's to theories that they have swelling brains that make them go crazy, it's no wonder bully breeds have a somewhat spotty reputation. The University of Georgia conducted research on pit bulls and a variety of similar breeds and concluded they have the exact same anatomy as

any other dog, including that harmless-looking teacup Chihuahua. Rest assured when you adopt a bully breed, they don't come equipped with a supernatural anatomy.

### 9. Bully Breeds Are Active Breeds

Pit bull mixes and other breeds that fall into the bully category are generally very athletic and love lots of exercise. Look for organizations in your area that cater to bully breeds for group activities that will keep them engaged.

### 8. Bullies Require Proper Socialization

If you've ever been to a dog park, you've most likely seen a group of dogs involved in a tussle. Dog-on-dog aggression is not a breed-specific behavior, and even the littlest dogs can turn on each other. According to Pit Bull Rescue Central (PBRC), it's true that pit bull mixes do have a history of being less tolerant of other animals due to the way they were originally bred, but every dog is different. Some might love other animals, while others might only be accepting of those they've been raised with or not tolerant at all. It's up to you to learn your dog's patience for other pets and take the appropriate measures to ensure a safe environment.

### 7. Bully Breeds Love Kids

Bully breeds have a long history of being good with children and are often called "Nanny Dogs" in England thanks to their sweet and nurturing demeanor around kids. Bullies that are well-socialized and properly cared for are normally wonderful pets for children, as they are able to handle any rough-housing and are drawn to kids' carefree dispositions.

### 6. Bullies Need Your Love...Among Other Things

You've got lots of love to give a bully breed, but what about space, time, and money? Most bully breeds can succeed in an urban setting, as long as they get plenty of exercise and at least 30 minutes of outdoor activity on a daily basis. Pit bull mixes are especially notorious for escaping, so if you have a fenced-in yard for playtime, make sure it's secure and that there aren't any loose boards your bully could use as an escape route. Consider the height of your enclosure too, since some bully breeds are excellent jumpers.

The annual cost of owning a bully breed will be about the same as with any other dog, plus a few extra

considerations. Before you adopt, find out if your homeowner's insurance includes exclusion on pit bull mixes or other breeds; you may need to pay an additional premium to call one of these dogs part of the family.

### 5. Bullies Have Breed-specific Laws to Follow

It may be surprising to know there are actual laws on the books in many cities and counties regarding dogs, but thanks to fear and irresponsible pet ownership, many local governments have enacted breed-specific legislation (BSL) to curb perceived issues with bully breeds. The easiest way to find out if your town has passed BSL is to contact your local animal control facility. The shelter where you plan to adopt should know the regulations also, but if you're adopting out of town, it's best to check for yourself first.

Another thing to consider is your long-term living arrangement. Is there a move in your future? If you think you might be moving to another city or state, check to see what BSL is on record in the city to which you plan to relocate. Besides total breed bans, some cities have specific regulations for owning a bully breed, including muzzling in public, mandatory micro-chipping and carrying liability insurance. Do your research before you try to adopt, and be a responsible pet parent by following any rules established in your area.

### 4. Bully Breeds Are Socialites

Bullies are very sociable animals and generally love being around people. They enjoy making new friends and are typically trusting of strangers. Their fondness for human contact and gregarious personality really makes them a perfect companion for someone who is a people person.



### 3. Bullies Have Good Genes

Providing the best care for a bully breed doesn't differ much from any other breed. They all need annual veterinarian exams and vaccines, and should be fed a healthy diet on a regular schedule. These breeds are typically very fit with few health concerns. Joint