

Lehigh Valley Pit Bull Awareness Club

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Who are we?

The LV Pit Bull Awareness Club (PAC) was created, in 2010, in order to present the public with a positive image of the bully breeds. We aim to educate the general public and help push aside the negative stigma associated with these dogs. Whether you're a pit bull owner, or just a pit bull lover, we ask you join us in reclaiming the great name of these dogs.

Breed History

The history of these dogs is a mix of speculation and legend. What is known is that as early as the Roman era, dogs were fought for sport and entertainment. These dogs were direct decedents of the Molossian breeds, which then laid form to the Mastiff breeds. Soon, the tenacity of these cross-breeds became sought after, and butchers would use similar dogs to bait bulls into the slaughter house, and then to bait bulls in the ring. This is thought to be the origin of the "bull" portion of the now infamous name. The original bulldog took form over the years, with purposeful breeding of strength and disposition. In order to train bulldogs to hunter small critters, original bulldogs were bred with small terriers, namely the fabled "white" terrier.

Fighting pits soon became commonplace as the art of bull baiting was shown to be

barbaric. Once again, these dogs were forced to fight each other for the enjoyment of man. Pits were made to contain the dogs, and this sport grew huge in popularity. Like most things, these dogs soon were brought to America, bringing forth the American Pit Bull Terrier.

But it's not all about fighting. These dogs have been prized for their love of humans, and willingness to serve. They've starred in TV shows, been symbols of this country, and warmed their way into the hearts of families. In the early 1900's, it's thought that the APBT was the most common family dog in America.

What is a Pit Bull?

The term "pit bull" does not refer to a specific breed of dog, but rather a generic classification of many breeds. Initially, the American Pit Bull Terrier was the sole breed, and generically referred to as a pit bull. Owners, though, found resistance from the AKC when wanting to register their dogs. The name of the breed was then augmented to American Staffordshire terrier, and these dogs were soon accepted as an official AKC breed. Meanwhile, another Staffordshire breed, the Staffordshire bull terrier, was enjoying popularity among the masses in England and most of Europe. These dogs were also recognized by the AKC in the 1930's.

It's not just these three breeds that have been lumped into the pit bull discussion. Other bulldog breeds with similar history have also been incorrectly characterized as pit bulls. The English Bull Terrier, American Bulldog, Olde English Bulldog, and others have similar histories and are considered to be pit bulls, in certain circles. Beyond these breeds, Presa Canarios, Cane Corso Mastiffs, and even Thai

Ridgebacks have been labeled as pit bulls, quite incorrectly.

The pit bull breeds share genetic make-up with many beloved breeds, including the boxer, bull mastiff, AKC bulldog, and the French bulldog. The Boston terrier was originally bred for pit fighting and was directly bred from the American Pit Bull Terrier.

Is a pit bull right for me and my family?

Pit bulls are not right for everyone. Their strength and size are not always compatible with everyone's lifestyle. While they are amazing family dogs, it is up to each individual to do research and make an educated decision.

Each dog is unique. Some prefer the couch and a warm blanket to a walk, while others will need daily exercise. Pit bull breeds take well to training, and proper training is needed in order to present a bully ambassador to the public. Responsible pit bull owners work heavily on socialization. Whether it's a trip to the pet store or a walk downtown, a proper pit bull will benefit from the interactions with people, as well as other animals. Not all pit bulls enjoy the company of other animals, but many can live long and happy lives as part of a four legged family.

If you're considering a pit bull as the newest family member, do your homework. The world is full of irresponsible breeders. This has overwhelmed shelters and rescues with amazing dogs that simply want a loving home. Please consider adoption first.

If you're looking for a show dog or simply have decided that purchasing is the right choice for you, here are some thoughts. First, good breeders don't advertise in the newspaper. There are many back yard breeders who are willing to sell anyone a dog for a

profit, no matter what the temperament or health. Good breeders are hard to find. Many have such a demand for their well-bred dogs that the waiting period is over one year. Ask questions, and do your research.

Spay and Neuter

You are not a breeder, no matter how amazing your dog is. Breeding is neither profitable nor enjoyable. Good breeders, that consistently produce quality dogs, have made lifetime commitments to the breed. It is the irresponsible breeders, those who produce unstable and unhealthy dogs, which continue to give these animals a bad name.

We highly encourage you to spay and neuter your pets, no matter what breed. Every day, shelters take in more animals than they adopt out, making the financial strain overwhelming. By spaying and neutering your pit bull breed, you can contribute to the solution. Also, do what you can to encourage those around you to spay and neuter their animals. Every educated individual can make a difference.

Training

Bully breeds have an incredible urge to serve their masters. This incredible ability has been exploited by fighters and promoters, but loved by family and friends. Your pit bull is only as good as his owner. Training is a must for any responsible owner, from learning basic commands like “sit” and “stay” to encouraging your dog not to jump up on people, waiting, instead, for admirers to approach.

The basics can be taught in a home environment. Like most dogs, pit bulls respond well to a variety of encouragements. It is up to you to choose the method works best. Clicker

training and treat/reward training are two popular methods, and can easily be explored on the internet. Just remember to always assert yourself, and any human, as alpha dog. You’re in charge, and your pit bull will love and respect you for your control.

Toys and Treats

Many people have differing views on appropriate toys and recreational needs for pit bull breeds. Many energetic dogs will benefit well spring poles and flirt poles. This does not mean you’re training your dog to fight.

Beyond poles, some owners choose to exercise their dogs with treadmills. While many fighters do use treadmills to help build muscle tone, responsible owners will also use these to exercise their dogs when a walk is not possible.

Pit bulls tend to destroy toys at a faster rate when compared to smaller breeds. We recommend toys that are built with strong dogs in mind. Kongs, rope toys, tire toys, and other tough tugs are perfect for your pit bull. Appropriate toys will not fall apart under heavy play. You want to make sure no small parts can break off and be swallowed.

When in doubt, stuffed animals are fun for most bully breeds. These should be given under supervision only, as most stuffed animals will last no longer than an hour in the paws of a bully!

Myths

As an owner of a bully breed, you may find yourself having to defend your dog. Unfortunately, media reports and myths have influenced those who don’t know better. Fear and ignorance have fuelled many falsehoods about these dogs. Pit bulls do not have locking

jaws. A pit bull’s mouth is no different than that of a golden retriever. Bully breeds do not have ever expanding brains that grow too large for their skulls. In the 1970’s, this was a common myth when discussing Dobermans, and it has now carried over to pit bulls breeds.

These dogs do not “snap”. A pit bull is only as well behaved as its owner. Their jaw pressure is not over 1200 psi. Instead, it is closer to 240 psi, lower than Rottweilers and German Shepherds, among other breeds. Animal aggression and human aggression are two separate things. A pit bull who doesn’t like other dogs will love every human that approaches.

There are other ridiculous myths out there. The key is to learn as much as possible and have correct, well thought out responses to those who protest your choice in dog. Not everyone will listen, but if you can educate just one person at a time, you can make a positive difference.

References

For more information, consult the web pages and books listed below.

www.workingpitbull.com

www.realpitbull.com

www.pitbullovers.com

www.ats.org/statistics.html

www.pinupsforpitbulls.com

www.bulldogbreeds.com

www.pbrc.net

<http://www.pulldoggies.com>

Colby's Book of the American Pit Bull Terrier

-Louis B Colby and Diane Jessup

The Book of the American Pit Bull Terrier

- Richard F. Stratton