



Classic Pit bull Temperament

150 years of selective breeding for people-soft qualities has given us a hardy, vibrant and highly social little working dog that loves a good challenge as much as it loves a good belly rub...

Valued for their longtime role as cherished family companions, your typical American Pit Bull Terrier is devoted to children and is outwardly flirtatious with strangers. True to their terrier temperament, pit bulls need to be managed around other animals, although most can enjoy affectionate friendships with select dogs given measured intros and proper supervision. They're intelligent, eager to please and full of clownish antics. Many excel in dog sports, canine obedience and service work.

The Standard: The UKC standard for temperament states that "APBTs make excellent family companions and have always been noted for their love of children...The APBT is not the best choice for a guard dog since they are extremely friendly, even with strangers. Aggressive behavior toward humans is uncharacteristic of the breed and highly undesirable." Pit bulls should be medium sized dogs, with males no more than 65 lbs. They're often misidentified and confused with other breeds and breed mixes.

The Challenges: As charming as they are, today's anti-pit bull climate can make it tough to own one of these dogs. Breed myths are widespread and can force owners to wear thick skins while defending their pets from hurtful biases. Finding breed-friendly rental properties requires persistence. Dog tolerance levels vary, so pit bull owners are obligated to understand terrier traits and be realistic about their responsibilities. Bred to be canine athletes, they can be energetic and crave ample exercise – a tough goal to reach in urban areas (Small play groups with known dog friends are preferred over chaotic, problem filled Dog Parks). They're hard wired to be tenacious and can be pushy and demanding if not trained. Their exuberance can test a passive owner's patience.

NOTE: Dog-dog aggression and human-directed aggression are two VERY different, unrelated behaviors. It is 100% normal to see some degree of dog-intolerance in this manageable and eager to please breed. Human-directed aggression however, denotes a damaged dog. It's an unforgivable trait in pit bulls that warrants the quick intervention of professional help and in some cases, humane euthanasia.

'TEMPERAMENT CORRECT' PIT BULLS ARE:

Gregarious and affectionate with people, including strangers. Optimistic, confident, resilient to stress. Happy to be touched, appropriately submissive to people, biddable, good natured, reliable and well balanced. Typically very eager to please. Will not aggress onto humans, even when highly aroused. Can be intolerant of other dogs if challenged, provoked and/or poorly managed.

Signs of an ill bred, improperly raised or damaged pit bull: Fearful, nervous, easily stressed. Aloof, disinterested in people or distrustful, not happy to be touched. Hyper aroused. Very territorial of humans and/or dominant (especially if mixed with a guarding breed). Willing to redirect aggression onto humans when provoked and/or aroused. **NOTE:** If a dog displays one or more of these improper traits, its owner is obligated to seek quick professional help. Dogs with temperament faults should never be bred.