

Living with a Bully Breed

What is a bully breed?

A dog classified as a bully breed falls under the “bulldog” or “bull and terrier” groups of pure bred dogs. They are often mislabeled as “Pit Bulls” (but the only breed that can actually be given that nickname is the American Pit Bull Terrier).

Bulldogs were originally bred for bullbaiting, a “sport” that involved tying a bull to a stake and watching it fight off a pack of dogs. When bullbaiting and other blood sports were banned, people moved onto “sports” that weren’t out in the open. Thus, pit-dog fighting arose and became popular, as this could be hidden in cellars. This illicit activity required quicker, more animated dogs than the plodding Bulldog of the early 19th century, so gamblers crossed various terrier type dogs with bulldogs, and created the early ancestors of today’s bull-type terrier breeds.

Common bully breeds:

- American Bulldog
- American Bully
- American Pit Bull Terrier (aka Pit Bull)
- American Staffordshire Terrier (aka Am Staff)
- Boston Terrier
- Boxer
- Bull Mastiff
- English Bull Terrier & Mini Bull Terrier
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier (aka Staffie)
- Old English Bulldog



Staffie



Am Staff



English Bull
Terrier



American
Bulldog

Physical Characteristics:

- Short, dense fur with no undercoat
- Muscular neck and body
- Broad chest
- Brachycephalic (broad and short skull/muzzle)
- Block-shaped head (except for the Bull Terriers, whom have egg-shaped heads)

Bully breeds are known for being highly affectionate, tenacious, bold and fearless, yet sensitive. They are loyal and have been known to be great with children. It can be difficult to tell them apart, especially with so many mixed breeds seen in shelters; usually there is a difference in size and head shape. Staffies, for instance, tend to be more squat and have a large, square shaped head, whereas Am Staffs are a bit more lean with a slimmer head, and APBT tend to be large.

Bull-terrier type dogs are typically “sprinters”, meaning they tire out quickly. Their shorter muzzle makes it more difficult to breathe, especially when it’s hot out, and they are more susceptible to heat stroke than other dogs. Never leave them in a car on a warm day!

These dogs tend to enjoy playing games that utilize their skills –jumping, grabbing, tugging, and focusing. If not trained, these behaviors can become a nuisance. If trained properly, however, these behaviors can be very useful. Along with their sweet disposition and loyal nature, many bull-terrier type dogs have the makings to be great working dogs. More and more are being trained as part of police K-9 units these days!