

SO YOU THINK YOU WANT A BULL TERRIER?

Written by: Debra A. Gilpin on behalf of the Central Indiana Bull Terrier Club.

With a face like that what's not to love? Beneath that unique egg-shaped noggin lies a self-serving brain and behind those devilish eyes and Bully smile ☺ is quite frankly, a three year old child in a dog suit! The decision to bring a Bull Terrier into your life is not a decision to be taken lightly without plenty of thought and serious consideration.

Like any breed of purebred dog, Bull Terriers are not for everyone. The owner of this Breed must be a fully committed and responsible owner providing quality nutrition (preferably w/o wheat, corn or soy), veterinary care, basic obedience training and proper socialization with strangers, children and other animals. Training a Bull Terrier is not an option is it a must!

Do your homework in advance and research the breed. Visit the AKC website at AKC.org or the Bull Terrier Club of America at BTCA.com. Attend local dog shows in your area and get first hand advice straight from the exhibitors themselves. This is also a superb environment to meet with reputable breeders as well.

The Bull Terrier typically enjoys good health throughout its life expectancy of 10-12 years but can be predisposed to genetic disease which have afflicted the breed in the past. However with thorough health testing of breeding stock, and careful breeding practices, reputable breeders have been able to reduce the incidence of health related concerns including deafness in whites, luxating patellas (slipping knee caps), heart defects, kidney disease, skin disorders and allergies.

Bull Terriers are very social dogs who enjoy the company of their masters and family members. They do not tolerate heat or cold so they are right at home on the sofa watching TV with the rest of the family. Some are couch potatoes but others quite the opposite. Most Bull Terriers are quite active and busy and at times exhibiting short bursts of thunderous energy. A busy Bull Terrier is a happy BT!

A crate of adequate size is crucial, for Bull Terriers must be supervised at all times, indoors as well as outdoors. A four to six foot high fence is required for containment whenever outdoors. As with any breed of dog, never leave a Bull Terrier unsupervised in the presence of small children or other animals. This is a very strong and powerful breed that doesn't seem to realize its own strength and in gentle play could easily bowl a young child clean off its feet! Even though your pets may have always gotten along beautifully together in the past, that can change in an instant! A scrap could begin over a toy, or some other prized possession and could result in injury to one of your beloved pets or even death.

Some Bull Terriers may exhibit signs of obsessive compulsive disorders such as spinning (tail chasing) which sometimes may be improved by the use of prescribed medication but not always a successful remedy for the problem. The OCD can be so debilitating in some case that the affected dog must be euthanized!

Bull Terriers are somewhat "goat like" in nature as they tend to want to swallow foreign objects in turn causing an obstruction in the digestive tract requiring immediate emergency surgery and unfortunately the surgery is not always successful. Some commonly swallowed items can be batteries, bottle caps, coins, buttons, safety pins, socks, underwear, stuffed animals, just to name a few. They are also notorious for eating their bedding and blankets. Only durable chew toys designed specifically for powerful chewers may be offered under supervision and with caution.

Dog parks are out of the question. Why borrow trouble? Your Bull Terrier may be highly socialized but suppose another "off leash" dog present is not? Instead, take your dog to a family park and enjoy your walks together "on lead".

The rearing and ownership of a Bull Terrier is a tremendous undertaking involving an enormous amount of time and energy and commitment. Regional Clubs across the U.S. rescue countless Bull Terriers annually from very well intentioned owners who realized that they bit off more than they could chew.

If you still strongly believe that this is the breed for you and all members of your family then I am sure that you will find your decision to be one of your most rewarding and enjoyable decisions of a lifetime.

Upon obtaining a Bull Terrier, be sure to ask your Breeder for information regarding joining a Regional Club in your area in which Bull Terrier owners alike attend functions and fun activities and enjoy the company of fellow fanciers and their dogs.

As an owner of a Bull Terrier always strive to set a positive example and be a good Ambassador for the breed and put your best paw forward.

Some recommended reading materials include:

Bull Terriers Today – Author David Harris – Howell Book House

A New Owners Guide to Bull Terriers- Author: Betty Desmond - T. F. H. Publications, Inc.

Bull Terriers – Author: Martin Weil – T.F. H. Publications, Inc.

The New Bull Terrier – Author: John H. Remer Jr. – Howell Book House

A Kennel Club Book – Author: Bethany Gibson – Kennel Club Books

Bully Breeds – Popular Dogs Series – from the editors of Dog Fancy Magazine – Popular Dog Series

Training Secrets for Bully Breeds – from the editors of Dog Fancy Magazine - Popular Dog Series.

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