



P I T B U L L

M Y T H S

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F A C T S



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P I T B U L L

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THE PIT BULL'S REPUTATION CONTINUES TO SUFFER FROM DISTORTED MEDIA HYPE AND THE PUBLIC'S PERPETUATION OF COMMON INACCURATE MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS.

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THE MYTHS VERSUS FACTS FLIP BOOK IS AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE FOR OUR FELLOW BREED AMBASSADORS. WE ENCOURAGE ALL PIT BULL LOVERS TO CLIP THIS GUIDE TO THEIR PURSE, TRAVEL GEAR OR DOG LEASH AND USE IT AS THEIR OWN SET OF "CLIFF NOTES" TO HELP SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

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# Myth.

The term “pit bull” refers to many different breeds of dogs.



# Fact.

Many people refer to any dog of muscular build, short coat and blocky head as a “pit bull.” Oftentimes, people lump the following breeds together and call them all “pit bulls”: American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Bull Terrier, American Bulldog and such mixes. It is our stance that the term “pit bull” is specific shorthand to mean “American Pit Bull Terrier” only, just like the “Yorkie” is short for “Yorkshire Terrier,” “Frenchie” is short for “French Bulldog” and “Lab” is short for “Labrador Retriever.”

# Did you know?

**It is estimated that only 1 out of every 600 pit bulls in American shelters will find a home.**



# Myth.

Dog aggression is the same as human aggression.



# Fact.

While some pit bulls are dog aggressive, most are not human aggressive. The two are very different. Historically, human aggression was purposefully bred out of pit bulls, so this type of aggression today is uncharacteristic of the breed (and should not be tolerated if present). Today's pit bull is a lover of all people, ready and willing to greet new friends and often extremely affectionate.

# How Does the Pit Bull Temperament Compare to Other Dog Breeds?

According to the American Temperament Test Society (ATTS), the American Pit Bull Terrier scores higher at temperament tests than the Golden Retriever, Beagle and Dalmatian. Pit bulls even score higher than the combined dog population.

Compare how other popular dog breeds score against the American Pit Bull Terrier:

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| American Pit Bull Terrier..... | 86.4% |
| Standard Poodle .....          | 86.3% |
| Golden Retriever .....         | 84.9% |
| German Shepherd .....          | 84.4% |
| Boxer .....                    | 83.7% |
| Yorkshire Terrier .....        | 82.5% |
| Dalmatian.....                 | 82.4% |
| Cocker Spaniel .....           | 81.9% |
| Australian Shepherd .....      | 81.6% |
| Border Collie.....             | 81.2% |
| Beagle .....                   | 80.6% |
| Weimaraner .....               | 80.5% |
| Shih Tzu .....                 | 78.0% |
| Pomeranian .....               | 75.8% |
| Chihuahua .....                | 71.1% |

The total combined dog population average is 83.0%. Visit [www.atts.org](http://www.atts.org) for more info.

# Myth.

Pit bulls are not good family dogs.



# Fact.

On the contrary, pit bulls were once known as “nanny dogs,” due to their love and loyalty towards their household’s children. Well-socialized and trained pit bulls make fabulous family dogs! They tolerate the rough-and-tumble antics of young children and share their live-in-the-moment attitudes. Some pits may not be the best match for children due to size and strength; as with all dogs, child and pit bull should be supervised at all times.

# Did you know?

**Pit bulls excel at service and therapy work due to their natural love and admiration of people.**





# Myth.

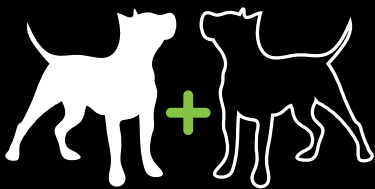
Pit bulls may “turn” on their owners.



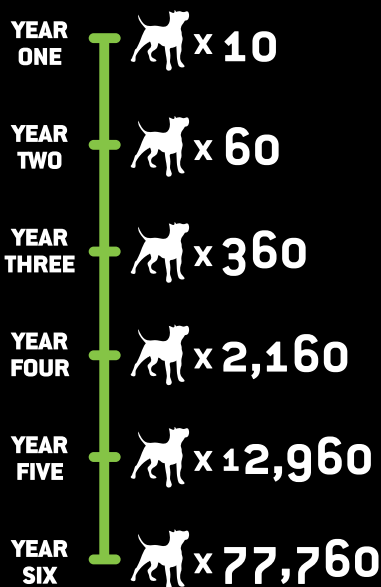
# Fact.

Dogs do not “turn” or act out unprovoked. Pit bulls are no exception. There are ALWAYS signs and actions that show your dog may be uncomfortable.

It is the dog owner’s responsibility to learn about dog behaviors. Most dogs react out of fear, poor socialization, improper training, or provocation. Bites occur only after a dog’s warning signs have been ignored or misinterpreted. An owner who is shocked by a dog’s behavior hasn’t been paying attention. Dogs may also act aggressively if they are injured or have an undetected medical issue. If your dog’s behavior suddenly changes, see your veterinarian.



A timeline revealing the rapid homeless pit bull overpopulation caused by an intact male, female, and their pups, in just six short years.



*Current projections reveal that **15 million** pit bull or pit bull mixes are euthanized at shelters each year due to overpopulation.*

# Myth.

Pit bulls have “lock jaw.”



# Fact.

This long-standing myth is completely false. Veterinary studies have been conducted comparing the skulls of various breeds, and no locking mechanisms or extra bones have ever been found in any dog, including pit bulls. “We found that the American Pit Bull Terriers did not have any unique mechanism that would allow these dogs to lock their jaws. There were no mechanical or morphological differences.”

Dr. I. Lehr Brisbin, University of Georgia

# Did you know?

**Pit bulls are the most neglected, abused and mistreated breed in America. Unfortunately, because of this, they are also the most feared, hated and regulated.**



# Myth.

All pit bulls are dog aggressive.



# Fact.

As part of the terrier family, pit bulls are predisposed to potential animal aggression. Because of this, it is important to properly train and socialize your pit bull.

All dogs fall somewhere on a spectrum of canine acceptance. This spectrum includes dogs that are Dog Social, Dog Tolerant, Dog Selective, Dog Reactive or Dog Aggressive.

# Dog Sociability Levels



**Dog Social Dogs** truly enjoy the company of other dogs and will often ignore rude behavior from another dog.



**Dog Tolerant Dogs** are typically non-reactive on leash and either indifferent or friendly to other dogs. They may be less tolerant when faced with rude dog behavior.



**Dog Selective Dogs** have dog friends but are more selective. They may not enjoy the company of certain types of dogs and may be easily offended by rude dog behavior.



**Dog Reactive Dogs** are reactive to dogs on leash or behind a barrier, but they fall somewhere else within the Dog Sociability Levels when introduced to other dogs properly on neutral territory.



**Dog Aggressive Dogs** have a very limited number of dog friends or might not have any at all. A Dog Aggressive dog does not tolerate rude dog behavior from others.

# Myth.

Pit bulls don't feel pain.



# Fact.

Pit bulls have the same nervous system of any other breed, and they can and do feel pain. Historically, some dogs were bred to tolerate or ignore discomfort or pain and finish the task they were required to perform. This trait of “gameness,” which so many breed fanciers speak of, may be defined as, “The desire to continue on and/or complete a task despite pain and discomfort.” This is the beauty and bane of this breed's temperament, as pit bulls will often pursue their owner's command despite pain and/or discomfort.

# Did you know?

**An intact female and male pit bull and their offspring can produce almost 13,000 dogs over 5 years. Reduce pet overpopulation by spaying and neutering.**





# Myth.

Pit bulls have 1800psi bite pressure.



# Fact.

Humans have a bite pressure of 120psi, wild dogs 310psi, white sharks 600psi, snapping turtles 1000psi, and crocodiles 2500psi. The Rottweiler, German Shepherd, and American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT) were all tested by Dr. Brady Barr of National Geographic using a bite sleeve equipped with a specialized computer instrument and the APBT registered the least amount of pressure of all three dogs. The highest pressure recorded from the APBT was 235psi, the GSD was 238psi, and the Rottweiler was 328psi.

PSI Definition: pounds per square inch.

# PSI Comparison

Dr. Brady Barr of National Geographic measured the PSI (pounds per square inch) bite forces of many different creatures. Listed below are his results.

HUMAN



120 PSI

AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIER



235 PSI

GERMAN SHEPHERD



238 PSI

ROTTWEILER



328 PSI

WHITE SHARK



600 PSI

SNAPPING TURTLE



1000 PSI

CROCODILE



2500 PSI

# Myth.

All pit bulls are aggressive and attack more than any other breed.



# Fact.

Many people wrongly believe that pit bulls are inherently aggressive toward people. Actually, pit bulls consistently place higher in temperament tests than many other breeds, including the Golden Retriever!

Originally, pit bulls were used to bait bulls, a practice that became illegal. In turn, people started a new form of dog exploitation: dog fighting. Because owners had to reach into the fighting pit without being bitten, human aggression in pit bulls was never tolerated.

The media plays a huge role in the perpetuation of “attack” misinformation, both through breed misidentification and also failure to point out that it’s the owner’s responsibility to forbid human aggression in pets.

# Did you know?

**Pit bulls are a resilient and forgiving breed. These characteristics, along with their intelligence and willingness to please, make them great candidates for an even chance at a normal life.**



# Myth.

Pit bulls have “swelling brains” and an extra skull bone, causing them to go crazy.



# Fact.

A popular rumor states that the pit bull suffers from an affliction of the brain where the skull is too small to accommodate it. This is often paired with another rumor that pit bulls have an extra bone in their head that punctures the swollen brain, causing the dog to go crazy. Both rumors are false and bizarre. Unfortunately, this same myth once haunted the Doberman breed prior to the pit bull’s popularity.



## **The AKC Canine Good Citizen Program**

**Started in 1989, the American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Program is designed to reward dogs who have good manners at home and in the community. The Canine Good Citizen Program is a two-part program that stresses responsible pet ownership for owners, and basic good manners for dogs. All dogs who pass the 10-step CGC test may receive a certificate from the American Kennel Club.**

**The test consists of 10 skills needed by all well-mannered dogs, with all exercises tested using a leash.**

- 01 Accepting a friendly stranger**
- 02 Sitting politely for petting**
- 03 Appearance and grooming**
- 04 Out for a walk (on a loose lead)**
- 05 Walking through a crowd**
- 06 Sit, down, and stay on command**
- 07 Coming when called**
- 08 Reaction to another dog on leash**
- 09 Reaction to distraction**
- 10 Supervised separation from owner**

# Myth.

Blue nose pit bulls are rare, worth more money and different than other pit bulls.



# Fact.

The term “blue” refers to a gray coat color. This color is created by breeding dogs with a recessive gene of dilute black. The term “blue-nose pit” refers to dogs with this gray coat color, not to a different breed. Breeders say this blue color is rare, justifying selling these dogs at an inflated price. But we can assure you that if blue pits were rare, we wouldn’t see so many of them at rescues and shelters.

# Did you know?

**75% of shelters nationwide  
euthanize all pit bulls without  
even trying to find them homes.**





# Myth.

Spring poles, flirt poles and treadmills are only used to condition dogs for fighting.



# Fact.

Pit bulls are very athletic dogs with a relatively high need for exercise. What better way to keep pit bulls active than providing exercise they naturally love, like tugging, jumping, and running? People use spring poles, flirt poles, and treadmills to keep their dogs in shape and happy. If you are a responsible owner who is dedicated to your dog's physical and mental well being, there is nothing wrong with using any of these tools.



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## What is BSL?

Breed specific legislation (BSL) targets specific dog breeds, such as pit bulls and pit-bull-type dogs because they are deemed inherently dangerous and therefore deserving of prejudicial rules and regulations. There are two types of BSL laws, those that “ban” and those that “regulate.” If the law is a “ban,” then it is illegal to own, house, harbor, import, train, or breed the specified breed. If the law is a “regulate,” the breed isn’t banned but is next to impossible to own. Regulatory requirements can consist of liability insurance, higher licensing costs, muzzling in public, etc.

## Our Stance on BSL.

Instead of discriminating against dog breeds, responsibility should be taken for dog ownership and management practices. A community approach with the help of animal care facilities and shelters, to prevent dog bites and improve the human-canine bond, is imperative to change. Regulating the ownership of dogs based on inaccurate information and appearance is expensive, ineffective and prejudiced.

# Myth.

Banning pit bulls will help reduce dog bites and fatal attacks.



# Fact.

There is no evidence that breed-specific laws (BSL), which are costly and difficult to enforce, make communities safer for people or companion animals. BSL comes with a host of negative and utterly unintended consequences. For example, irresponsible owners forgo licensing, micro-chipping and proper vet care for fear of having their dogs seized, all of which have implications for public safety and the health of the dogs. Instead, friendly, properly supervised and well-socialized pit bulls and their owners are punished. Such laws also convey a false sense of security because limited animal control resources are channeled into enforcing the ban rather than focusing on enforcement of non-breed-specific laws.

# Did you know?

**Spaying and neutering does not make your pet fat and lazy. Too much food and not enough exercise does.**



# Myth.

Pit bulls from an animal shelter or rescue are damaged goods.



# Fact.

Although it's always helpful to know the health and behavior history of a dog and its parents, there are wonderful dogs waiting to be adopted from shelters. And although a shelter dog's past is sometimes a mystery, more often than not dogs end up in shelters or rescues as victims of unfortunate circumstances, such as an owner's relocation from the area or job loss.

Responsible shelters or rescue groups assess the dogs in their care before they are placed in a new home. It's the adopter's responsibility to ask questions, so talk with the staff to learn if the dog has exhibited any undesirable behaviors or has substantial medical issues.

According to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a person is more likely to be killed...



by a family member



by a falling coconut



in a bedroom slipper-related accident



drowning in a 5-gallon bucket



getting struck by lightning



...than by a pit bull.

# Myth.

Pit bulls that have scars were used for fighting.



# Fact.

A dog's skin is very similar to people's skin. Some dogs are more prone to scarring, just as some people are more prone to scarring. Puppy play can often leave scars, as well as cat scratches, curiosity in the bushes, or even a mama dog's correction. It is important to understand that scars do not necessarily equate abuse.

# Did you know?

**The standard American Pit Bull Terrier is between 30-60 pounds.**







+ + + + + **OUR MISSION** + + + + +

**EVEN CHANCE STRIVES TO COUNTERACT MISINFORMATION ABOUT PIT BULLS WITH FACTUAL EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, AND RESOURCES FOR THE PUBLIC, PIT BULL OWNERS, AND POTENTIAL ADOPTERS. WE RESCUE TEMPERAMENTALLY SOUND DOGS FROM LOCAL SHELTERS, INCLUDING DOGS WITH MEDICAL NEEDS AND DOGS RESCUED FROM ORGANIZED FIGHTING RINGS OR OTHER INHUMANE SITUATIONS. WE PROVIDE FOSTER CARE FOR OUR RESCUED DOGS UNTIL THEY ARE PLACED IN SAFE AND LOVING FOREVER HOMES.**

+ + + + + **EVENCHANCE.ORG** + + + + +

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