

A Guide To Pit Bull Temperament

Presented by realpitbull.com

This guide is intended to help guardians, rescuers, breeders, and others understand & identify normal, “temperament correct” Pit Bulls. Dogs that deviate from the following descriptions of a temperament correct Pit Bull should be considered abnormal and incorrect. Rescuers should avoid placing such incorrect dogs, and guardians who find themselves sharing their homes with incorrect dogs should seek professional guidance. Dogs that do not exhibit correct temperament should never be bred, and puppies from such parents should be considered future risks.

It should be noted that Pit Bulls are considered fully matured temperamentally and physically at approximately 3 years of age. Dogs under 3 years of age are still developing. The full scope of a specific dog’s temperament may not be knowable until maturity is reached, but can generally be assessed fairly accurately by 12 months of age.

The temperament correct Pit Bull....

...towards people: Is a friendly, happy, outgoing dog, never shy or fearful. Is a dog that demonstrates mental soundness (no growling, snapping, biting, aggressing, or fearful behavior, etc.) at all times, even under stressful circumstances (such as while under veterinary examination, when injured, during visits to new locations/environments, while meeting new and different types of people, etc.). Is accepting of and friendly towards all adults and children inside and outside the home. Greets new people as if they were long lost friends.

...Is easy to handle, allows and even enjoys extensive touch and examination; is biddable and deferential, and even submissive; seeks out human attention, and presents good eye contact with a soft gaze. Is willing to connect with people during points of high arousal/stress (never redirecting aggression towards people), is safely handled during points of high arousal/stress, and lowers level of arousal quickly upon being removed from a stressful or exciting situation. Is accepting of reasonable confinement such as is necessary during kenneling at shelters; adjusts to new settings easily.

...Is never wary of strangers; never snaps or growls at adults or children, nor is aggressive in any way towards adults or children; does not demonstrate predatory behavior such as stalking, staring down, or aggressive chasing of people/children. Is not a guardian or protection breed, and does not demonstrate “protective” behaviors such as growling/snapping/aggressing at people welcomed into the home, nor wariness of strangers, lunging towards strangers, etc.

Key Points: The Pit Bull is a friendly, stable dog that in essence “loves everyone”. It is never shy or fearful. Aggression towards humans (adults or children) is never acceptable, and the Pit Bull should demonstrate soundness in temperament regardless of circumstances or environment. The Pit Bull is not a guard or protection breed and should never act as such, although the breed has been known to come to the aid of its humans only under real and true (never perceived or misinterpreted) threat.

....**towards other dogs:** May begin to demonstrate aggression towards other dogs (“dog-directed aggression”) at approximately 6 months to a year of age (or at onset of maturity as is normal for all dogs), but aggression towards other dogs may show up at any point during the Pit Bull’s life. *(Dog-directed aggression is normal, natural dog behavior, and as such, may be seen in Pit Bulls just as it may be seen in all dogs, of all breeds.)* May be aggressive towards other dogs in the home and outside of the home, even towards dogs to which it has been previously introduced or raised with. May be friendly and outgoing towards other dogs the majority of the time but infrequently aggress towards them. May be dominantly aggressive towards other dogs, but dominance will not necessarily be the driving force behind aggression. Should be considered, as a rule, a breed that is prone to developing dog-directed aggression. Can be raised/trained to tolerate the presence of other dogs under controlled settings such as while on leash at parks, at dog shows and trials, etc, or when carefully monitored in the home.

....Dog aggression levels and tolerance towards other dogs can vary from dog to dog, but the average Pit Bull usually falls somewhere in the middle: is tolerant or even affable with most dogs in controlled settings while being carefully monitored or while on leash, but may aggress under certain circumstances.

....Pit Bulls also tend to have a high level of prey drive and as such may not do well around small animals such as cats.

Key Points: The Pit Bull is a breed that is prone to developing dog-directed aggressive behaviors, to varying individual degrees. Some Pit Bulls may do wonderfully with other dogs and animals, while others will not show the same level of affability. It should be capable of being trained to tolerate and behave around other dogs when in controlled/carefully managed settings. It is not necessarily a dog that is capable of mingling or interacting peacefully with a wide variety of dogs and should not be expected to do so. But the correct Pit Bull should be able to learn to be well-behaved in controlled settings. Pit Bulls may also not do well with other animals because of their high prey drive. Guardians need to take precautions (use a leash, keep dogs behind secure fencing, separate from other dogs/animals when not supervised, etc.) to prevent harm to other dogs/animals.

