

Be a Responsible Pit Bull Guardian!

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- **Know Your Breed:** The more you know about Pit Bulls—their history, proper temperament, behavior, current legal and social issues surrounding the breed—the better a guardian you'll be! You can find lots of information on the breed at realpitbull.com including history, care, training, resources and more!
- **Hit Those Books on Dog Behavior & Training:** Pit Bulls require so much more than casual guardianship. They require a guardian who is not only Pit Bull-savvy, but dog-savvy as well. See the Behavior & Training page on realpitbull.com for some good information and book suggestions: <http://www.realpitbull.com/training.html>.
- **Spay/Neuter Your Pit Bull:** There are innumerable Pit Bulls in shelters and rescues across the country in need of homes. Few will find caring homes; most will be destroyed. There is no good reason to keep an intact companion dog! Pit Bulls that have been spayed or neutered are easier to handle, train, and manage. Early spaying/neutering may help curb dog-directed aggression. And spayed females won't cause trouble during heat cycles by leaving messes or driving male dogs in the neighborhood crazy! There are health benefits as well! Talk to your veterinarian today, or visit spayusa.org!
- **Train Your Pit Bull:** A trained Pit Bulldog is a happy Pit Bulldog! Pit Bulls are rambunctious, bossy, and always sticking their noses where they don't belong! Do yourself a favor and enroll in a positive training class with your dog! Visit www.trulydogfriendly.com to find a trainer near you!
- **Socialize & Exercise Your Pit Bull Daily:** Pit Bulls are athletic, social butterflies. They need a lot of attention, as well as physical and mental stimulation. Get that Pit Bull out on the town and meeting many different people, as well as other dogs and animals in a controlled setting; go for walks, hikes, and car rides regularly.
- **Always Keep Your Pit Bull On A Leash:** Your Pit Bull should always be under control, on leash. Most areas have leash laws, and for good reason! Loose dogs can get into fights with other dogs; may harass people and other animals; can run off and become lost; may dart into the road and get hit by a car, etc. And since Pit Bulls are prone to getting into scuffles, it's safer for everyone if they are always kept on leash. Even if they don't start a fight, they'll finish it for sure! The Pit Bull will always end up being "the bad guy" and more bad publicity (and possible breed specific legislation) may be the end result. It's not worth it! Keep that Pit Bull on a leash!
- **Do Not Allow A Child To Walk A Pit Bull Alone:** Pit Bulls are very powerful dogs, and may even be too strong for some adults. Children should never be allowed to take the family Pit Bull for a walk unattended by a capable adult.
- **Never Visit Off Leash Dog Parks, Even If You Keep Your Pit Bull On A Leash:** Stay away from dog parks and other areas where off leash dogs are likely to be encountered. Even dogs that are generally friendly with other dogs should be kept away from unknown, off leash dogs. Fights can break out in the blink of an eye,

and you could quickly find yourself in the middle of an unwelcome legal battle. It's not worth risking your dog, the safety of other dogs, and the welfare of your bank account! Avoid free-for-all situations in which unfamiliar dogs are loose and mingling.

- **Know Your Dog:** Watch for precursors to aggressive behavior when your Pit Bull is mingling with other dogs. Allow interaction with other dogs in small, controlled groups only. Know the other dogs and people. Realize that many, many Pit Bulls do not do well in "play groups" nor are they very social with other dogs. Your Pit Bull is more content spending quality time with you and doesn't need to have hangout sessions with the neighborhood dogs.

- **Be A Polite Pit Bull Guardian:** Always clean up after your dog (carry baggies in your purse, glove box, or pocket so they will always be handy). Respect the public's fear of the breed and never impose your Pit Bull on anyone. Move off sidewalks and paths, do not allow your dog to invade anyone's personal space, and try to be empathetic: most people have never been around Pit Bulls and only know the "bad stuff" they hear on the evening news and read in the papers.

- **Seek Help For Behavior Problems As Soon As They Start:** Don't wait for serious problems to develop before you look to employ professional help. Contact a qualified trainer at the first sign of behavior problems. Aggression towards other dogs and aggression towards people are two red flag behavior issues for which you should always seek help. (Consult "A Guide To Pit Bull Temperament" also presented by realpitbull.com for more information).

- **Own A Break Stick And Know How To Use One:** An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, but accidents can still happen. Know what a break stick is, how to use it, and the best way to break up a dogfight (See www.realpitbull.com/breakstick.html).

- **Keep Your Pit Bull Safely Confined Indoors:** As a member of your family, your Pit Bull should be stationed in the center of your home. Pit Bulls aren't meant to languish in yards, on the end of chains, or in kennel runs.

- **Never Leave Your Pit Bull Unattended Out Of Doors:** Pit Bulls are easily stolen. And besides, they are great escape artists! Make sure you know where your dog is at ALL TIMES. Never leave a Pit Bull in a yard unsupervised.

- **Make Sure Your Pit Bull Is Safely Confined:** Pit Bulls are known to be Houdinis. Even if you think your yard is secure, double check all latches, patrol the perimeter, and inspect the fence itself on a regular basis. Never let your Pit Bull out of the house without a leash or loose in an unfenced yard (invisible fences don't count as fencing). Pit Bulls should be kept behind privacy fencing that is no less than 6 feet high (remember, always supervise).

- **Never Leave Your Pit Bull Unattended with Other Animals:** Pit Bulls can be aggressive towards other dogs and have high prey drive towards small animals. Because of their strength and fighting ability, they can easily do a lot of damage in a short period of time. Even Pit Bulls that have always been good with other animals can potentially engage in fighting behavior when least expected – that's true of all dogs, of any breed. This is

an important concept to grasp. Never take chances. Separate your Pit Bull from other animals when you are not able to give 100% attention to the situation.

- **Become A Spokesperson For The Breed:** As a Pit Bull guardian, you are sure to be on the receiving end of some rude remarks and will probably encounter a lot of breed prejudice. As a responsible guardian dedicated to the breed, it'll be up to you to always present yourself and your dog in a positive light. Be considerate and polite. Bite your tongue and ignore rude comments, or better yet try to engage the misinformed in friendly conversation and shed some light on the breed.

- **Understand That Pit Bull Guardianship Is a Lifestyle, Not Just a Part-time Interest:** Pit Bulls require lots of dedication. The care and training they require, not to mention a guardian's need to deal with anti-Pit Bull legislation, insurance problems, and public perception of the breed, demands dedication that exceeds that of other breed guardians. But the responsible Pit Bull guardian takes on all of these issues with a smile, never wavering in the performance of their duties. The breed gives nothing less than 100% every day, and deserves the same from its humans. The love, silliness, fun, and joy Pit Bulls bring to our lives are worth the little bit of hassle!



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