

Activities for You and Your American Pit Bull Terrier

There are many games and activities for your American Pit Bull Terrier that will be fun and provide great learning experience.

Teaching the dog to help out around the home, in the garden or on the farm provides great satisfaction to both dog and owner. In addition, the dog's help makes life a little easier for his owner and raises his stature as a valued companion to his family. It helps give the dog a purpose; it helps to keep his mind occupied and provides an outlet for his energy.

If you are interested in participating in organized competition with your Pit Bull, there are other activities other than obedience in which you and your dog can become involved. Agility is a popular and fun sport in which dogs run through an obstacle course that includes various jumps, tunnels and other exercises to test the dog's speed and coordination. The owners often run through the course beside their dogs to give commands and to guide them through the course. Although competitive, the focus is on fun—it's fun to do and fun to watch, as well as great exercise.

Walking Your American Pit Bull Terrier

The first form of exercise that the average Pit Bull owner should consider is simply walking the dog on a very regular basis. What constitutes a walk? Well, the ideal dog-walking scenario is one in which both owner and dog take a brisk walk on a hard surface. The ideal surface is simple concrete such as that of the average sidewalk. Concrete is good for the dog because in addition to taking a healthy walk, the dog is also being groomed. As the dog walks, his nails are being worn down as if they were being filed. In fact, a good rule of thumb is that if you ever need to file or clip your dog's nails, you know the dog is not being walked enough.

A good healthy walk for an adult Pit Bull would be a brisk three-mile walk. A longer walk would be even better for both the dog and the walker. Such walks should occur at least four times a week and, if possible, daily (weather permitting). The best time of the day for such a walk is early evening, after the sun has gone down. Walks on very hot days should either be avoided or the person walking with the dog should be ever aware of the effect of the heat on the dog. If the weather is warm and the dog begins to appear uncomfortable, the walk should be called off. If the weather is cold and dry, a brisk walk should be fine for the dog. While the Pit Bull is not the kind of dog that you should maintain outdoors all year in colder climates, short-term exposure to the cold, especially during a brisk walk, will not adversely affect the dog. Also, if you feel comfortably cool during a long walk with your dog but the dog begins to look uncomfortably warm, stop walking and allow the dog to rest. Bear firmly in mind that the dog's natural pace is much faster than a human's, and such abnormally slow walks can lead to a dog's exhaustion more quickly than you might expect. Remember, the Pit Bull is not a breed that should be allowed to roam free! During all walks with the dog, the dog should be leashed.

When we see a Pit Bull harnessed to a treadmill, the underground activity of dog fighting generally leaps to mind. It is true that dog fighters often employ the treadmill to keep their fighting dogs fit, but it is also true that many Pit Bulls love to use treadmills for exercise purposes, just as a pet hamster enjoys running in its exercise wheel for no apparent reason. Dog treadmills come in two forms. The first is the lesser seen circular treadmill. Such treadmills are not generally practical for the average pet dog owner because they take up a great deal of space. In order to envision this type of treadmill, imagine a large record-player-type circular plate on rollers with a pole jutting through the center of the plate. The dog is leashed to the pole and it runs on the wheel for pure enjoyment. It will amaze you just how much a dog will enjoy this activity, in fact.

The second type is the rectangular treadmill. These mills are much like the treadmills that are commonly used by people. The dog is leashed to the top of the mill. The mill is often slanted slightly upward. The dog runs for pleasure. If the mill is inclined, the leash should be sufficiently long for the dog to get off the mill should he desire to do so. Again, just as we are often surprised at how much time our pet hamster will spend running in its exercise wheel, you may be surprised at how enjoyable your Pit Bull will find using his treadmill. Such treadmills can often be found in dog-supply shops that cater to Pit Bull owners.

Bicycle Riding with Your Pit Bull

Bicycle riding with your Pit Bull is an activity I suggest with great reservation. While a dog's natural pace is closer to a person's casual bike-riding speed than it is to a person's natural walking pace, the dog must always remain leashed. It's fairly easy to take an embarrassing spill while trying to ride a bicycle while leashed to a dog, and such spills can be more than just embarrassing, they can be dangerous. And don't underestimate the strength of a Pit Bull—if you're concentrating on riding and the dog suddenly decides that he doesn't want to go in that direction or that he doesn't want to go anywhere at all, you're going to have a problem. Bike riding with a dog must be undertaken with the utmost caution, so it's not an activity that comes highly recommended.

Playtime with Other Dogs

Another good form of occasional exercise for the Pit Bull is a little friendly play with another dog. It cannot be emphasized enough that the other dog chosen to participate in playtime with your Pit Bull must be one that is well known to your dog, one that is not too small, one that is always friendly to your dog and one to which your dog is always friendly. Even under these conditions, play between the Pit Bull and another dog should always be carefully supervised and the owners of both dogs should always be present. Play between the Pit Bull and more than one other dog at a time is discouraged.

Next page >

American Pit Bull Terrier Weight Pulling

Excerpt from Comprehensive Owner's Guide: American Pit Bull Terrier