

American Pit Bull Terrier Weight Pulling

Weight pulling exercises keep American Pit Bull Terriers at peak condition but is not a popular activity among many owners.

A form of exercise that can be recommended for the Pit Bull is really something that only a small segment of the Pit-Bull-owning population will be interested in, but perhaps the reader is part of that small segment. This form of exercise is weight pulling. Just as many people lift weights to keep themselves not just in good condition, but in peak condition, many Pit Bull owners like to keep their dogs in peak condition. Such owners may be interested in involving their dogs in regular weight-pulling exercises.

Before discussing weight pulling exercises for your dog, you should understand a few things. The first is that the Pit Bull breed is not and has never been a weight-pulling dog. This is to say that weight pulling was never an activity for which this breed was selectively bred. Other breeds were and continue to be selectively bred for their ability to pull weights, the sled dogs being the best example of such breeds.

Nonetheless, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with involving your Pit Bull in weight pulls for fun, sport and exercise. The reader should be aware that due to the association of the Pit Bull breed with the activity of dog fighting, other dog fanciers may misinterpret or resent your interest in this activity. This can lead to an awkward situation such as the one that occurred in the following anecdote.

To make a long story short, there was a man who owned a very large, blocky and powerful Pit Bull. A weightlifter himself, he began to involve his dog in weight pulling. The dog loved it so much that, one evening, the man decided to show a friend just how much the dog enjoyed pulling. In order to do this, he harnessed the dog to a small car, let up the car's emergency brake, stood about 20 feet in front of the dog and began to yell words of encouragement to the dog, who had never pulled a car and was, at first, not sure what to do. Shortly after the man began yelling to the dog and the dog began to pull, a woman began screaming out of the window of a nearby apartment building that she was going to call the police to report cruelty to the dog! Within minutes, the police arrived, and they watched in amazement as the dog pulled the car. After watching for a while, one of the police officers declared that he was going to buy himself a Pit Bull and they drove away. Still, it is best to avoid making the negative impression that was undoubtedly made upon this woman, for the sake of the breed.

Should you decide to begin training your Pit Bull for weight pulling, you will need a few things. First, you will probably want an indoor location, so as to avoid the kind of conflict just described. Second, you will need some carpeting so the dog won't hurt his paws while pulling. A carpet that is not very plush is best for this; indoor/outdoor carpeting is ideal. Third, you will need a cart with wheels and a low flat top. Such a cart can be built easily enough. It should not be very wide and the wheels should be 6 inches in diameter or so. Larger wheels will make for an easier pull. If you want to get serious about weight-pulling competitions, find whatever local club sponsors weight-pulling events for dogs and be sure to construct a cart that meets the club's standards for competition.

Fourth, you will need weights. Bricks or cinder blocks are fine, but the kind of weightlifting plates that people use are best. If the dog owner is a weightlifter himself, this will not require the purchase of additional weights; if not, the weights can be obtained easily enough from a sportinggoods store.

Finally, you will need a harness to attach the cart to the dog. Such harnesses are often available through magazines that cater to Pit Bull owners, but a comfortable leather harness can also be made by a leather worker who deals with horses. If you intend to have a harness made just for weight pulling, start the dog off with wearing the harness before you introduce the animal to actually pulling weights. Allow the dog time to associate the harness with positive events like a hort walk. Once the dog is comfortable with the harness, or with one like it, you can begin to use the harness for cart pulling.

It's best to have two people present during weight-pulling exercises. Begin by harnessing the dog to the cart with no weights on the cart. Have a friend (one who knows the dog and with whom the dog is familiar) hold the harnessed dog on the carpet while you, the dog's owner, take a position a few yards in front of the dog. Simultaneously release the dog and begin to encourage him to come to you. If the dog looks confused and does not move, encourage him more. If the dog refuses to come, end the session and try again another day. You might also try sitting in your position, acting casual and waiting for the dog to come to you. Often a little gentle encouragement is easier to comprehend than an overwhelming onslaught of encouragement.

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Activities for You and Your American Pit Bull Terrier

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