

Training Secrets for Bully Breeds

Discover the special training needs of bully breeds and assess whether one is right for you.

Arden Moore

Common Sense: 4 Bully Insights Dog trainer Mary Harwelik of Garwood, New Jersey, created the Real Pit Bull website with the goal of providing facts and debunking myths about the American Pit Bull Terrier (APBT). "If you are the type of person who likes to have a dog that will mingle peacefully with other dogs, visit the off-leash dog park or dog beach, then the APBT is not for you," Harwelik cautions. For those considering an APBT or another bully breed, Harwelik offers these insights: 1. An adult, fully matured dog-about 3 years old-is the best choice for your first bully breed dog because its personality and temperament have been fully developed and it is past the rowdy puppy stage. You know what you're getting. Consult reputable rescue groups that conduct temperament tests and provide health details. 2. Keep your bully under control at all times, whether on leash or in an escape-proof enclosure. Yes, these breeds are known for their escape artistry. 3. Accept the fact that bully breeds are naturally aggressive toward other dogs and heed the saying: "Never trust your bully not to fight." 4. Obedience train your bully. These breeds require a lot of formal training, exercise and plenty of socialization. "APBTs are great dogs in the right hands," Harwelik says. "APBTs are powerful, strong-willed animals that must be taught their proper place in the home and how to act around both people and other animals. Early socialization and lots of training are a must with this breed."