



# Pit bull Adoption

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Most pit bulls are intelligent, social with people, fast learners, hardy shelter residents, and wonderful family pets. Unfortunately, uncontrolled breeding and irresponsible owners have put a damper on the pit bull's reputation. Undeserved stigmas give way to challenges for even the best intentioned pit bull guardians. If you find yourself drawn to adopting one of our wonderful pit bulls, it is important to educate yourself and be prepared for the challenges (and the joys that outweigh them) of sharing your life with this loving and loyal breed.



## BEBHS Adoption Program

Pit bulls in the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society (BEBHS)'s adoption program are selected for excellent temperaments and sociability towards people, and are trained and socialized daily. A pit bull showing any signs of aggression towards humans is not a good candidate for adoption and will not be made available in the BEBHS program.

## Bully Basics

**Pit bulls are very social animals.** They love to be part of a family unit and to go out and socialize with people. Despite the popular portrayal of the breed in television and movies, the friendly nature of the pit bull generally makes him/her a lousy guard dog.

**Pit bulls form strong bonds with their guardians and require a good deal of attention.** Like most bored or isolated dogs, a pit bull who is not given sufficient stimulation is likely to push boundaries and exhibit problem behaviors such as destructive chewing and escape artistry.

**Same goes for physical stimulation – pit bulls are active, athletic dogs who require daily exercise!** Fortunately, most pit bulls love to walk, jog, run alongside bikes, swim, fetch, tug and play. These are excellent outlets for bully energy, and wonderful ways to enjoy your dog.

**Pit bulls are terriers,** which means they can be tenacious and pushy when given the opportunity (ie, when training and/or structure in the home is lacking). Luckily, pit bulls are usually quite intelligent and are excellent students when it comes time for obedience training. Six weeks of training classes are included in your BEBHS adoption fee, but it is up to you to work with your new pit bull at home and establish and enforce boundaries.

**Varying levels of dog intolerance or aggression are not uncommon to the breed.** Many pit bulls have canine playmates and some are outright dog social, but dog parks are not the best venue for socialization. When pit bulls play, they tend to go for rougher styles of play and wrestling, which can make unknown dogs feel nervous or defensive. It is very important to introduce pit bulls to other well-matched dogs slowly and under supervision. Most importantly, pit bulls who do not get along with other dogs deserve responsible guardians who will not put them in situations where they can get into trouble.

**Some people don't like pit bulls.** Because you will undoubtedly love your dog, this can be a very hard pill to swallow. Most pit bull guardians will, at some point, encounter some rude looks or comments about their dogs from neighbors, friends, and family members. Some landlords, home owners associations and insurance policies prohibit pit bulls on the basis of their breed alone, as do select airlines, parks, veterinary practices, and communities. As a responsible pit bull

guardian, it's up to you to develop a thick skin, seek out pit-friendly places, and give your dog tools s/he needs to prove people wrong about pit bulls.

**A good pit bull is one of the best dogs you could share your life with.** In temperament testing of several breeds by the American Temperament Testing Society (ATTS), pit bulls achieved a passing rate of 83.9% - which is better than Beagles (78.2%) and Golden Retrievers (83.2%). They have been the favorite family pets of thousands of Americans, including well-known figures such as Helen Keller, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Fred Astaire.

### Pit bull Links

We encourage interested pit bull adopters to research the breed extensively before adopting. For more pit-friendly resources and information on responsible pit bull guardianship, please visit the following websites:

BAD RAP (Bay Area Doglovers Responsible About Pit bulls) - [www.badrap.org](http://www.badrap.org)

Animal Farm Foundation - [www.animalfarmfoundation.org](http://www.animalfarmfoundation.org)

Pit bull Rescue Central - [www.pbrc.net](http://www.pbrc.net)

Real Pit bull - [www.realpitbull.com](http://www.realpitbull.com)