



**WE L♥VE  
AMERICAN  
BULLDOGS**

## **HANDBOOK ON AMERICAN BULLDOGS**



**We never looked back...**

We pride ourselves in providing a loving, caring environment for these beautiful creatures. We have raised and bred these great bulldogs for over 22 years. When we do have puppies for sale, we only sell our dogs to loving families with adequate space and lots of love for this large breed. **WE BEEN VOTED #1 AMERICAN BULLDOG BREEDER** by our fans that have bought our pups for years... we thank you! Our dogs and pups start their day roaming and play around our property. Our high quality blood lines are 100% American Bulldogs and they are registered with ABRA and the ARF the original J.D. Johnson bloodline registry, as pure bred American Bulldog. We have enjoyed and love the process of being American Bulldog breeders, we have a passion for this breed. We bought our first one 24 years ago and never looked back.

**Davette Fournier**



This handbook is for all our new parents of We Love American Bulldogs and Bulldog Stronger and our years past American Bulldogs owners.

I came across this American Bulldog Handbook written by another long time breeder and judge of American Bulldogs who has since retired.

I felt it a good read. I paid to download it and put it in our new newsletter I wanted to start this year. So hopefully you'll take the time to read it and learn more about your bulldog.

# AMERICAN BULLDOG HANDBOOK

You've got questions? We've got answers.

What are the first steps in getting an American Bulldog? Chances are that you are reading this because you are thinking about getting an American Bulldog, or maybe you already have one.



Either way, you are looking for answers to your questions about American Bulldogs or any bully breed for the matter. You are not the only one, we get about ten phone calls a day from people like you who have questions about this breed.

There are many things you need to know before you bring an American Bulldog home. The most important one is whether you will make a good American Bulldog owner. By learning about the American Bulldog's temperament and needs now, you will avoid surprises later.

## **What is the normal temperament of an American Bulldog?**

American Bulldogs are great companions, they love people and children, but it is important to train any dog properly. We have included training tips that will help you to make sure that your bully will be a good citizen.

## **Is there an appearance standard for the American Bulldog?**

While some dog breeds seem to produce nearly identical dogs, the American Bulldog is more variable. You will see some bullies with a

very short snout, and others with a longer snout. Some of them are big and muscular, while others are smaller and more agile. It is enough to make you wonder what an American Bulldog should look like.

The American Bulldog Association issues the American Bulldog Breed Standard. This breed standard recognizes two major types of American Bulldogs,

"Johnson-type" and "Standard-type". We have included the ABA breed standard to help you understand how a bully should look.

### **Does it matter where I purchase an American Bulldog?**

Did you ever go into a pet store and fall madly in love with a puppy? Did you want to get out your wallet and spend ever penny you had on that PERFECT dog? If you have ever been tempted to do that, there are many reasons that you should have resisted that temptation.

Pet stores buy their puppies from PUPPY MILLS, which is a term used for large commercial kennels that couldn't care less about a dog's health and well being. All they do care about is the dollars you wanted to spend on that cute puppy behind the glass in the pet store That's what I shouldn't do, what should I do?

Learn how to choose a good breeder and a sound puppy. Proper dog breeding is focused on the improvement of the breed. Dog shows help serious breeders to check on the development of their kennels. They show some of their bullies and encourage the owners of the best bullies that they sold to show theirs as well. The dog show judges are unbiased and can help a serious breeder understand how to improve their kennel.

Puppies offered for sale should have been checked by the breeder's veterinarian. It is still very important to have a puppy you want to buy checked by your own veterinarian before the sale is final. That is your best assurance that the puppy is sound. That being said, let's begin.

### **History of the American Bulldog**



American Bulldogs are a unique breed, that is often treated as a "new" breed. In fact, the American Bulldog breed is very old,

and this breed was generally called the Bulldog from 1850 onwards.

Bulldogs were bred as a cattle catching dog. From their origins in bull baiting in the 13th century, bulldogs were bred for this sport. The price of the puppies kept increasing, especially they are now in the top 3 desired breeds that people want to own, due how well round of a breed they are.

## ***Breed Standard***

and Bulldogs became more desirable, not only for butchers but also for general public. Bulldogs were strong enough to fight bulls and other large animals, and they were known for their high pain tolerance. When bull baiting was outlawed in the 19th century, fanciers began breeding the dogs for exhibition instead of breeding for their working ability. By the mid-19th century bulldogs were bred to be shorter, and had developed larger heads through crossing with the pug.

By the end of 19th century, the bulldog was what the English Bulldog is today. With all the conformation changes, the temperament of these dogs changed as well.

Bulldogs were now much more gentle and changed from a farm dog to a family and show dog. Since then the number of dog registries rose significantly, and the bulldog title was awarded to this new, show-temperament bulldog. The original working bulldog that did not fit in with the show dogs was forgotten in England. This breed would probably have disappeared for good, if not for the people who immigrated to the colonies, taking their dogs with them. These dogs were kept for their working ability and usefulness on the ranch. These dogs were named American bulldogs, to distinguish them from English bulldogs.

### **General Appearance:**

The American Bulldog is a well balanced, short-coated, muscular and athletic animal. American Bulldogs display great strength, endurance, and agility. Males are characteristically larger, heavier boned and more masculine than the females. **Temperament:**

American Bulldogs should be alert, outgoing and confident. Aloofness with strangers is acceptable.

Some assertiveness toward other dogs is not considered a fault Note: Puppies should not be faulted severely here. With maturity and socialization confidence should increase.

### **Size:**

Standard Type: Ideal standard males should measure between 23 to 27 inches at the withers and weigh from 75 to 115 pounds. Females; 21 to 25 inches, 60 to 85 pounds.

### **Bully Type**

Ideal bully males should measure between 23 to 27 inches at the withers and weigh 80 to 125 pounds. Females; 22-26 inches 60 to 105 pounds. Note: The overall proportion of the dog is of utmost importance when evaluating weight.

### **Head:**

The head should be broad, flat on top squared appearance with a well defined stop. It should also be medium in length with pronounced muscular cheeks.

Standard Type: A box or wedge shape is preferred.

Bully Type: A larger rounder shape is ideal.

### **Muzzle:**

The muzzle should be broad with wide-open nostrils. The muzzle should be wider at the base and taper to the nose. The lips should be full with black pigmentation; some pink allowed. The chin is well defined and must not overlap the upper lip nor covered it. Standard Type: Muzzle should be medium in length 2 to 4 inches. It should also be 35% to 45% of the overall length of the head.

Bully Type: Muzzle should be broad 2 to 3 inches in length and should be 25% to 35% of the overall length of head.

**Nose:** Preferred nose color is Black.

Teeth should be medium to large and should not be visible when mouth is closed. Lips are moderately thick; black pigment lining the lips is preferred; with some pink allowed. Standard Type: A tight undershot (reverse scissors) preferred. Undershot up to 1/2 inch acceptable, plus or minus 1/8 inch is acceptable with no visible teeth. Bully Type: 1/4 - 1/2 inch "Undershot" depending on size of dog and shape of skull. Plus or minus 1/8 inch is acceptable with no visible teeth.

Note: American Bulldogs are a working breed and should not be penalized for broken or missing teeth.

**Eyes:**

Almond-shaped to round, medium-sized. Color: Brown eye color is preferred.

**Ears:**

The ears should be set high on the head; medium in size may be drop, semi-prick, or rose.

**Neck:**

Slightly arched, very muscular, and of moderate length, tapering from shoulders to head. Bully Type: Neck is almost equal to the head in size.

**Body:**

Wide, deep chest; fairly compact, straight and well balanced. The chest should not be narrow or excessively wide, nor should the elbows be angled out or pulled in. The back should be broad and moderately short, showing great strength.

Also Note: These are all appearance of a full grow bulldog for show. These are things you'll not be able to always notice on a puppy who is still growing and their features are constantly transforming.

**Forequarters:**

The chest should be deep and moderately wide giving the appearance of power and athletic ability. The front, overall, should be straight and well balanced. The chest should not be narrow or excessively wide.

**Hindquarters:**

Broad, well muscled with muscles tapering well to the leg to manifest speed and strength, but not quite as large as at the shoulders. There should not be an excess or lack of angulations in the rear legs.

**Legs:**

The legs should be strong and straight with moderate to heavy bone. Front legs should not set too close together or too far apart. Pasterns should be strong, straight and upright. The rear legs should be moderately angulated and parallel.

**Tail:**

Strong at the root tapering to the hocks, in a relaxed position, the tail can be carried back when excited. A "pump handle" tail is preferred but any tail carried from upright, when the dog is excited, to relaxed between the hocks is acceptable. The tail should not end in a complete circle.

**Gait:**

The gait should be "balanced and smooth", showing great speed, agility and power. The dog should not travel excessively wide, and as speed increases the feet move toward the centerline of the body to maintain balance. The top line remains firm and level, parallel to the line of motion.

**Coat:**

Short and smooth.

**Color:**

Solid white, or any color pattern including black, red, brown, fawn and all shades of brindle

***Choosing Bulldog Pups*****Do they suit your lifestyle?**

Do not buy on an impulse. Do your research, and collect information on all the breeds that you are interested in, not just Bulldogs. Finally, pick the one that suits your lifestyle. American Bulldogs require a lot of love and attention, as well as exercise. They are large dogs—usually between 80-110lbs. They are average shedders. They

need training as puppies, and professional training is recommended starting from 13 weeks.

**Pay attention to...** Pay close attention to the behavior of the parents of your puppy – chances are that your pup will have a similar temperament to its parents.

## **Where to buy pups**

Never buy puppies from pet stores—pet stores get their animal stock from puppy mills. Puppy mills are commercial kennels that breed purebred puppies in large amounts. In itself this is not a problem, but the primary goal of these kennels is to make money, so the care for animals is minimal. Dogs are kept in cages and bred over and over again, until they get too old—then they are killed. These dogs are often sick and have minimal veterinary care.

They are not fed properly. They do not have human contact. Puppies and dogs are kept in unclean conditions, and many of them die. The documented problems of puppy mills include over-breeding, inbreeding, minimal veterinary care, poor quality of food and shelter, lack of socialization with humans, overcrowded cages, and

the killing of unwanted animals. When you buy from these places, directly or indirectly, you encourage this trade. You also get a much lower quality dog, which can have health problems and temperament problems, and even be dangerous.

If you want to buy a pure bred puppy, find responsible breeder or adopt. Visit the kennel if you can, and meet the parents. Talk to the breeder and ask questions. Look around and check what conditions the

dogs live in, how they look and what they eat. Ask if they are cared for by the vet and whether their vaccinations are up to date.

When you pick a pup make sure that their eyes are wide open, clear and shiny. Also make sure that your puppy is clean and

happy. Make sure the dog you are buying is at least 7-8 weeks old.

Puppies shouldn't be taken away from their mother before they are this age. A healthy puppy is active, alert, and playful. They have all their hair and their coat is shiny. Healthy puppies shouldn't be skinny. Check if the pup has a good appetite.



If you want a show-quality dog and you do not have experience, study the breed standard carefully and ask questions. Still, remember that nobody can predict how your puppy will develop with 100% accuracy, so you will be always taking a risk unless you buy an

There are 5 major registries of American Bulldogs:

**ARF** - the oldest American Bulldog registry started in 1947

**NKC** - National Kennel Club started in 1964

**ABA** - American Bulldog registry started in 1989

**ABRA** - American Bulldog Registry & Archives started in 1999

And now recently excepted by the

**AKC** - American Kennel Club started in 1884

Many AKC, UKC, NKC, NALC, NSDR, ASCA and ABCA recognized canines exist only as a result of the labor and that of the ARF Certified Breeders



### ***Preparing for your new puppy***

Before your puppy arrives home, you should prepare your house and yourself. You should find out how your puppy was cared for. For example, what kind of food is the breeder feeding and commending? How many times a day was it fed? Sudden changes in food may cause upset stomachs, so if you have to make changes to your puppy's diet, make them gradually. Make sure that you have a

proper sized crate for your puppy. The crate is especially important, because it is a safe place for the pup when you cannot supervise it. It is also recommended that your puppy sleeps in the crate. This is because dogs are 'den' animals - they live in caves in the wild, so the confines of a crate give them a sense of security. Crates are also a useful tool for housebreaking. You will need to buy chew toys, water and food dishes, a collar and a leash. Make sure toys are large and sturdy so they are not a choking hazard. Make sure that your house is safe for your new pup. Get covers for kitchen and bathroom garbage cans. Most dogs find it hard to resist the aroma and taste of garbage, however, dogs can get food poisoning when the trash contains moldy or spoiled food. In addition, some molds can cause tremors in dogs. Store household chemicals in a place where your puppy cannot get to them. Keep electric cords away from your puppy - they love to chew on them! Keep your puppy away from alcohol - dogs and alcohol don't mix. Although the effects in dogs and people are similar, it takes less alcohol to affect a dog. When a dog is "under the influence", symptoms may include the odor of alcohol on the dog's breath, staggering, excitement, lethargy, increased urination, and a slowed respiratory rate.

For those who have home breweries, hops (a plant used to flavor beer), should be kept away from dogs. Some breeds, including Greyhounds, are more sensitive to hops. Even small amounts of hops can be deadly to dogs, even after the hops have been used in brewing. Symptoms include muscular rigidity and fever.

Also, keep your baking supplies away from your dog - large amounts of baking soda or baking powder can affect electrolyte levels (lowering potassium and calcium, and/or increasing sodium). The effects include muscle spasms and congestive heart failure.

## **Keep these things away from your puppy**

What you would keep away from a two year old child you should keep away from your puppy: The list includes:

- 13 · cigarette butts
- 14 · medications



- 15 · dental floss
- 16 · razor blades.
- 17 · rat poison
- 18 · antifreeze
- 19 · boricacid
- 20 ·handsoap
- 21 · detergent
- 22 · mothballs
- 23 · bleach
- 24 · deicers
- 25 · paint and varnish removers.
- 8 · paper clips
- 9 · erasers
- 10 · staples
- 11 · coins
- 12 · small plastic toys



## **Plants that are toxic to dogs**

- 1· plastic bags
- 2· string
- 3· holiday ornaments
- 4· sewing supplies
- 5· rubber bands
- 6· ribbons
- 7· twist ties

It is a good idea to remove these plants from your home and yard before you bring your dog home:

- philodendron · mistletoe · poinsettia · lily · azalea · daffodil · tomato · foxglove · yew · hydrangea · ivy
- cyclamen · rhododendrons · tulip bulbs · wisteria · delphinium · foxglove · peach and cherry trees.

## ***Pet Insurance***

No-one plans for their puppy to get sick or have an accident. With pet insurance you can have peace of mind that if something does happen, your dog will get all the help that it needs. Pet insurance allows you to provide your pet with the best possible care, without breaking your bank. Decisions regarding treatment are no longer complicated by the financial restrictions. When you insure your pets before they develop health problems, you are completely covered if they develop anything in the future.

## ***Identification***

It is good to identify your puppy with a tattoo or microchip. In case they are ever lost or stolen, tattoos and chips provide easy ways to find it. The microchip is a computer chip that is injected under the dog's skin. The dog can be screened for microchips, so that if it is found it can be identified as yours.

Responsible pet owners rarely lose their dogs. They do not allow their pets off the leash because it may be harmful for the pet or the environment. Even if you have a fenced in yard, be aware of places where dogs can dig under or jump over the fence.

## **What to do when your pet is missing:**

1. Notify your neighbors, and put up flyers with their photo, breed and identification numbers. Offer a reward and state that the dog
2. Check shelters daily. Go there in person. Make sure you check out-of-town shelters as well.
3. Notify veterinarians, put up flyers with pictures in vet offices.
4. Phone your breeder.
5. Contact the American Bulldog rescue group.
6. Advertise in newspapers.
7. Do not give up.

## **The first day and night**

Try to bring your puppy home in the morning on a weekend is best- this way it will have the whole day to get familiar with you and its new home. Let your puppy explore its new environment without stress and fear. If you have other pets, make sure that they are properly introduced. On the first night your puppy will probably be scared, and miss its Mom and siblings. Some people place a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel where your puppy sleeps, to simulate warmth of its mother. Other people place a ticking clock there as well to simulate a heartbeat. You can let them sleep with you then first week then start transitioning to where you like them to sleep. Either way, prepare the place where you keep your puppy before it arrives home. Enclose it securely. Be very patient with your new puppy, and remember that the dog *wants* to please you. First though, you have to teach it what is right and what is wrong.

## ***Vaccinations***

An important part of preparing for your new dog is finding a good veterinarian to do routine check-ups and vaccinations, as well as assisting in emergency situations. Find out if your puppy was vaccinated and examined by a veterinarian before you buy them. Make sure that you get all health certificates and vaccination certificates – this information will be invaluable for your new vet.

**Vaccinations prevent disease before it starts. Vaccines contain small amounts of disease-causing viruses, that have been modified so they do not cause actual sickness. When your dog is injected with them, its immune system creates antibodies to fight those viruses. Later, if your pet is infected with this virus its immune system will**

**be able to destroy it. Annual re- vaccination at the same time as their check-up is recommended.**

You should vaccinate your puppy against the following life threatening diseases.

### **Distemper**

This virus is widespread among dogs. This disease can be lethal to unprotected dogs, especially puppies. A dog with this disease may have diarrhea, fever, respiratory disease, seizures, muscular twitches and a watery discharge from eyes and nose.

### **Rabies**

All warm blooded animals can be infected with the rabies virus - it is also a threat to humans. The rabies virus attacks the nervous system. This disease develops slowly; it can take from 10 days to

several months to run its course. This is a deadly disease, and once an animal shows symptoms, death is inevitable and usually soon.

There are two forms of rabies:

*Dumb* rabies – the lower jaw drops, excessive drooling occurs and the animal avoids contact with humans.

*Furious* rabies - animals become unnaturally aggressive.

### ***Food for Thought – and Puppies!***

The best diet for a dog is natural diet. It is the best to feed your dog meat, bones, vegetables and fruits.

Owners usually do not have the time or lifestyle to home-prepare their dog's food. The next best thing is to buy a frozen, raw diet - available from many sources. There may be a source in your area, or you could locate one that sends frozen product via UPS or FedEx. You can feed some commercial dry food as part of a good diet. It is important that raw or fresh food be included at least three times per week to give your dog the opportunity for the best health possible. If you chose to feed raw food make sure that it is properly stored in the refrigerator. It is better if everything is graded - this will prevent intestine blockage. The symptoms of intestine blockage might be: fever, loose stool, constipation, vomiting, poor appetite, bad breath. Make sure that you contact your vet immediately.

Commercial food producers want us to believe that they use human- grade meat to produce the food; however in most cases they use "meat" which is not even fit for animal consumption. Pet food factories purchase meat that is unfit for human

consumption, including meat contaminated with hair, feathers, cancerous parts and rotten parts. This meat can contain high doses of hormones and chemicals. When meat for other food products is cooked and its grease raises to the top, this is removed and is where fat for dog food comes from. Then the moisture is removed and what is left is meat and bone meal. A lot of preservatives have to be added to make sure that the food will have long shelf-life, as well as vitamins and minerals.

Before you bring your pup home ask the breeder what kind of food it was given and

stay with this diet for awhile. If you have to change make sure you do it gradually with the 10 day method. Dogs do not tolerate sudden diet changes very well - gradual changes will prevent an upset stomach.

You must make sure that your puppy gains weight steadily. If it eats a lot and there is no weight gain, it may have worms.

### **Feeding times and amounts**

Do not be too precise with their feeding schedule. Animals in the wild do not eat at the exactly same time every day. If you keep the same schedule

every day, your dog will expect food at the same time. Then if something comes up and you cannot feed it, your dog will be upset. If you free feed your puppy/dogs there will be no problem in case you cannot be there and feed your dog at the regular time plus your puppy/dog will never have food aggressiveness problems and fight for it's food or bite a child that may be play around it's food because there will always be food available for them to graze at anytime much like they do in the wild. Plus it will eat according to it's activity level. active dogs need to eat more.

### **Food composition**

Your dog needs proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. *Proteins* are made from amino acids, and they are the building blocks of most living

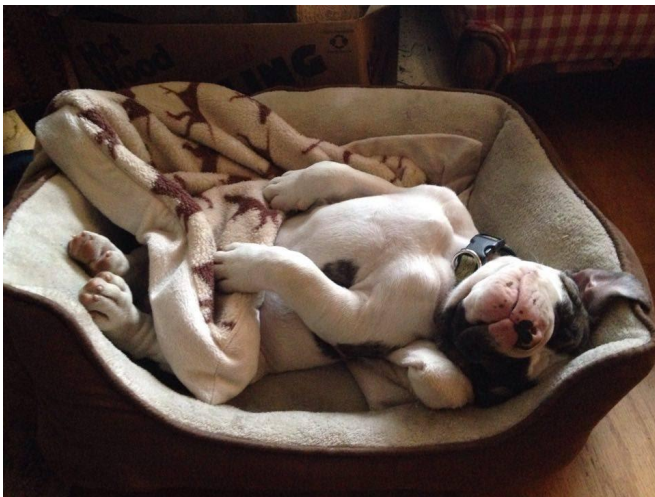
organisms. The richest sources of protein are: fish, meat, milk, eggs, yogurt and some vegetables like corn, soy and beans.

You can feed all of the above to your dog. The meat can be raw or cooked. Bulldogs like corn and you can give them cobs to chew at. Raw chicken or turkey necks, and chicken wings, can be fed to all dogs. All parts of a raw chicken can be fed to medium and large dogs. Make sure that you store the meat in the fridge in clean condition to prevent disease.

*Fats* provide the main source of energy and they help with the transport of vitamins like A and E. The healthier sources of fat are: meat, fish, butter, milk, vegetable oils, and fish oils that contain Omega-3 fatty acids.

### ***A Place to Rest a Weary, Furry Head***

*Vitamins* help in many ways to maintain bodily functions. Great sources of



vitamins are: the livers of most animals, fruits and vegetables. American bulldogs like watermelons especially, and you can give

them watermelon skin to chew on. They also like carrots and apples. Do not feed grapes to your dog because it can result in

kidney failure.

Although we don't believe in crate training for many reasons most people keep their dogs inside. It is good to own a crate and place your puppy there when you cannot supervise it for very short amounts of time and for an American bulldog it should be an extra large crate. The crate should be a 'happy' place. Do not lock your dog in there as a punishment.

The crate also comes in handy when you have to



transport your pet. When choosing a crate for your dog, select one in which the dog can stand up and move around inside freely. When the dog sits, its head shouldn't be touching the top of the crate.

You should buy a doggy bed for your pet. Do not allow your puppy on the couch or bed - not even once! This is because after the first time you have created a precedent, it will be very hard to keep your dog off the couch and bed. You may choose to keep your dog outside. If you do, you need to build a proper dog house or kennel. Any good plan for building a dog house should begin by making sure the house is big enough to

accommodate your dog's ultimate grown-up size. You would not like to live in a house where the ceiling was below your head height-- neither would your dog. Most humans like about 2 feet of air above themselves in a room in order to live without feelings of claustrophobia! That comfort zone is about 1/3 of the average person's standing height. Allow your pet the same buffer zone. Figure out around how tall it will stand when it is mature, and make sure the ceiling of the dog house is 1/3 again taller. Raise the house a few inches off the ground to allow air and water to flow beneath.

## **Grooming**

The American Bulldog is an average shedder with a short, harsh coat. This breed is easy to groom, and a firm bristle brush should be used. A bath should be given only when necessary. If you are exhibiting your Bulldog he needs a bath before he goes to the show.

Where do you bathe a Bulldog? Any place you want to and can! You need a place where you can control the dog, where you can easily control the water supply and where you can rinse the dog thoroughly. Gather up all the things you will need before you start. You will need: shampoo, any rinses you plan to use, cotton balls, Q-tips, mineral oil, Vaseline, wash cloth and towels. You will want a mild, no tears shampoo. Most Bulldoggers use a dog shampoo such as Lambert Kay or Groom-Rite. Some use a baby shampoo such as Johnson & Johnson No Tears or Avon Tearless. Most use a special whitening shampoo for white dogs (Lambert Kay Snowy-Coat, Bio Groom Super White, etc.). Many use a special shampoo for red dogs (Ring S Burnished Bronze, etc.). You may on occasion need to use a flea shampoo but since these

are quite harsh, don't use one unless you really need to. Put a couple of drops of mineral oil or a bit of eye ointment in the eyes and place a cotton ball securely in each ear before you wet the dog. Wet the dog thoroughly from just behind the ears to the tips of the toes on his hind feet. Be sure his underside is wet, too, not just the top and sides. Apply the shampoo starting at his neck and working back. Work the shampoo in to be sure you get all the way through his hair to the skin. Pay special attention to his paws (wash between the toes), his tail (clean all around the base), and the genital area. On a bitch, be especially careful to clean the vulva. Wet the wash cloth and use it to dampen the dog's face and ears. Put some shampoo on the washcloth and wash the dog's face. Wash the wrinkles over the nose, on the forehead, around the nose and under the eyes. Wash his nose. Wash his ears, inside and out. Now rinse. Rinse until you are sure every bit of the dog, especially in the wrinkles and tight places, is thoroughly rinsed and there is no shampoo any place. If you are applying a rinse, do it now, following the instructions. mixture over him and work in with your fingertips. Do not rinse.

Conditioner .

Dry the dog with towels. Rub a dab of Vaseline onto his nose to help

keep it soft. You can then let him air dry or use a hair dryer to finish the drying. It's best to keep the dog inside until it is completely dry – about two hours.

## **Dog psychology**



Dogs evolved from wolves, which live in social groups and have a social structure where each dog is a dominant or subordinate to every other. The leader is the one who has an access to all the resources, like food, a good resting place, mates, territory and favored possessions. When the dog has free access to those resources it may assume that it is in dominant position. All humans in the household should make sure that they are the master. This is usually accomplished with simple tasks such as teaching your dog to raise its

paw for a handshake; kissing your hand; or rolling over on command to show submission.

There is no need for extreme measures to prove you are the boss. Obedience training should be both fun and rewarding for you and your dog

Make sure your dog always eats *after* you do. This is one of the easiest ways to show your dog who is the boss. This is especially important if you share your food with your dog, because if you let them eat while you are, they could develop the habit of taking food right off your - or someone else's - plate. You may need to train your family to follow this rule too... and that could be harder than training the dog!

Make sure that you walk through the door first, wherever you go. Do not let your puppy control you with biting, barking or bad behavior. Correct unwanted behavior as soon as it starts. Do not punish the dog for not responding because punishment may result in aggression, and will teach your dog to be afraid of you. Your dog *wants* to please you, but it has to *know what to do* to please you. It is your job to teach your dog to behave in the proper way.

You should teach puppies that allowing people to handle their food and toys results in good things. When your puppy is eating, approach it and place good treats in its bowl from time to time. You should be able to take the bowl away from your pup without a negative reaction from

your dog. Approach the dog, calmly take their bowl or toy, then give a reward and return the bowl or toy. This will prevent food-guarding and toy-guarding aggression that is hard to eliminate when the dog is older .

You should teach your puppy the "drop it" command, to make sure it doesn't take objects that it is not supposed to have. This is usually done with a "low value" object to the dog, and with high value rewards - like tasty treats. While the dog is holding the item he is offered a reward and when the dog opens it's mouth to get to the food you say " drop it".

Repeat this several times so they can learn the behavior. Later, only give the food to the dog *after* it has listened to the "drop

it" command. Gradually use items that are more interesting to the dog, like his toys.

You should make sure that different people often come to visit your house, and that the dog is exposed to them and taught proper behavior around them. The dog needs to know that when people come, something positive

will happen. You should teach your dog to sit when visitors come in, and it should receive a reward for good behavior.

You should also teach your dog to quiet down on command. This will make yours and your neighbors' lives easier. When the dog starts barking, for example at a door bell, place a tasty treat in front of them. The dog will stop barking to sniff the treat. Then say the command quite or silent. Numerous repetitions are needed. Never reward barking with any kind of attention. Yelling does not work.

It is suggested that you take your American Bulldog for training classes when it is a puppy. American Bulldogs can be strong-headed dogs and they might want to challenge their owners. You have to remember to always be the alpha-figure in your dog's life.

## **Tear stains**

A sizable number of Bulldogs have 'tear stains' of varying degrees of color. If the stain is bad, in addition to cleaning you may want to try to remove the stain. There are many treatments - you may have to try several before you find one that works for you. Some of the commercial products used are Showes 'Pretty Eyes' Stain remover, Bio-Groom cream (to prevent re-staining) and Diamond Eye. Alternatively, you can make a paste of 1 Tbs. Hydrogen Peroxide and enough corn starch to make a thin paste (some Bulldoggers add 1 Tbs. Milk of Magnesia to the hydrogen peroxide and mix the cornstarch into that mixture). Apply to the stain, let dry and then brush off the excess. Apply on a daily basis until the stain is gone, then weekly to keep stain from returning. Another method is to rub the stain with a cotton ball soaked in Boric Acid daily until the stain is gone, then weekly. Or use NM Boric Acid ointment (10%) which can be purchased at Payless or most drug stores. Another remedy is rubbing a dab of Desitin into the stain to help dry it. You can also mix tomato paste into your dogs food. This works really well in removing stains in some American bulldogs.

## **House training**

House training is the first step in training your puppy. It is very important to teach the dog good behavior from the beginning. Observe your puppy and learn the signs that he is about to relieve himself. Common signs include: crouching and straining after play, eating and drinking, and waking up. The

right thing to do is to get your puppy outdoors as soon as possible. Praising afterwards with a small treat or petting will help build a positive behavior path. You should use the same command every time you take your dog outside like "go potty" If the dog relieves himself when you are around, give a firm shake on the nape of their neck accompanied by "out" command and immediate removal outside. This should help. Plan where your dog will be permitted before bringing them home. Keep your dog away from carpeting, because accidents happen and it is difficult to remove stains and smell from carpets. Take your puppy out side after its meals, naps and play times. Reward them for eliminating outside. Paper training is not recommended, because it can further confuse your puppy by teaching two steps: eliminating o the paper, and *then* eliminating outside. They only need to learn that they have to go outside.

### **Leash training**

Get your puppy used to the leash before you take it for the long walk outside. Train walking on the leash inside. Please remember that training takes time and patience and persistence are most important.

### **"Come" command**

The first, and most important command is "come". To teach your dog to come, put them on a long leash and let it wander off. Then call him to come to you. If it comes right away, reward with a treat or praise. If it doesn't come when you call just pull the leash. When it gets to you, praise him anyway. A good way to introduce the "come" command is call your dog for its meal. Once the dog knows this command, remember to praise it for obedience. Use the same command over time, do not change it, or even use variations of the same command because this will just confuse your dog. Do not punish your dog for not coming because as the result it will learn that coming to you is associated with negative results. If you are patient and persistent your dog will learn that it is better to come when it is called.

### **Why do dogs bark?**

Barking can serve as a territorial warning signal to other dogs and pack members. Dogs may also vocalize when separated from their pack or family members. Barking occurs during times of indecision, anxiety, frustration or medical problems.

How can barking problems be prevented? Socialization and habituation - get puppies used to as many new people, animals, situations and noises as possible. This will minimize the amount and intensity of alarm barking. Effective crate training should decrease a dog's anxiety when it is left alone. If you have two dogs, they provide company for each other and this may reduce distress vocalization.

Attention-seeking barking can be problematic and is often reinforced

by owners giving in to their dog's demands. Allowing the barking dog indoors, letting it out of the crate, feeding it, patting it, praising it, playing with it, giving it a toy or a treat (other than as a training aid), or even going to the barking dog to try to quiet it down can all serve to encourage the barking. Never reward barking with any attention, even occasionally, because it usually makes the barking more likely to continue. Get a few chew toys to give your dog something to do. How can I train my dog to quiet down on command? Training the dog to be quiet on command is an invaluable aid for controlling undesirable barking. Most owners accept their dog's barking as normal and even acceptable. However, the barking becomes problematic

when it is too loud, too frequent, or will not stop on command. Another way to teach the dog to stop barking on command is to teach him to bark on command. Use a stimulus that will cause the dog to bark and pair it with a 'bark' or 'speak' command. Dogs that bark on command can be taught to stop barking on command as well. 'Turn off' the barking by removing the stimulus that

causes the barking to start, and pair that with the command silent or hush, then praise the dog when it stops barking.

### **How can I train my dog to be quiet without constantly telling him?**

The key is to reward the behavior that we want (quiet and settled) rather than constantly paying attention to the behavior that we don't want (barking). Each time you attend to a barking dog to quiet him down you actually inadvertently reward the barking by giving your dog attention or treats to quiet down. Alternatively you may aggravate the problem with yelling and punishment which can make the dog more anxious and more likely to bark. Citronella anti-bark collar

A Citronella anti-bark collar is the effective way to stop dog barking, and the kindest.

When your dog barks, the collar sprays a mist of citronella scent in front of his nose. Dogs don't like this. The hissing noise startles them

and they dislike the citronella smell. Most dogs figure things out very quickly and stop barking. University studies have shown that citronella anti-bark collars are twice as effective as shock collars. We can't guarantee that the Gentle Spray citronella anti-bark collar will work for your dog.

## Exercise

Once your dog has all their vaccination you should start walking him. A minimum of three times a day is advised. Big dogs especially need a lot of exercise. Find a place where your dog can safely run and play. You could try leash-free parks, and parks where dogs can socialize with other dogs and people. There should be one near the humane society or animal protection organization in your area.

When walking hold only the end of the leash, giving your dog free rein, and start forward. Remember that this is walking on a loose leash, not heeling! As soon as your dog puts even slight tension on the leash, use a quick, clear verbal reprimand such as "Stop!" Do not shout or try to communicate anger to your dog, and don't use a word you use in other situations, such as "no".

When you walk your dog make sure it is not pulling you. It is easier to teach your *puppy* to walk beside you then to teach an adult dog to stop pulling. A moment after giving the "Stop!" command, give one quick, hard jerk on the leash and start walking in the opposite direction. This will put the dog behind you. When he catches up to your side, praise him and reward him for not pulling on the leash. Continue to praise him and offer treats as long as he refrains from pulling.



When the dog puts tension on the leash again, use the "Stop!" command, follow it with a jerk on the leash and about-turn. Then praise and reward the correct behavior.

Your "Stop!" command serves as a warning and helps your dog figure out why he is being corrected. After repeating this routine a few times, you may find that he immediately slackens the leash when you give the command. If this happens, praise your dog, give him treats, and do not correct him! He has just learned what the unwanted behavior is, and how to stop doing it.

However, every time you use the "Stop!" command follow with a quick correction if the leash is not *immediately* slackened. Before long, your dog should be walking on a loose leash, and you will find that often the verbal command will be all that is required to stop any pulling in its tracks.

## **Distemper**

This virus is widespread among dogs. This disease can be lethal to unprotected dogs, especially puppies. A dog with this disease may have diarrhea, fever, respiratory disease, seizures, muscular twitches and a watery discharge from eyes and nose.

## **Hepatitis**

This disease is fatal to puppies. It is spread by infected urine. Affected dogs will develop fever, respiratory disease, diarrhea, liver and eye damage and changes in the blood.

## **Leptospirosis**

This is caused by bacteria and can affect dogs of any age, damaging their liver, kidneys and other major organs. The signs of this disease are weakness, vomiting and yellowish discoloration of the jaws, teeth

and tongue caused by inflammation of the kidneys Other dogs and humans can pick up the bacteria from an infected dog's infected urine.

## **Parvovirus**

This virus attacks intestinal tract, white blood cells and heart muscle. It spreads through dog to dog contact and contact with faeces of infected dogs. Parvovirus can exist in the environment for many months under different conditions. It can be transmitted from place to place on the feet of infected dogs as well as people.



## **Lyme Disease**

It is transmitted by ticks infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Common signs include rash beginning where the dog was bitten, chills, fever, lack of balance, lethargy, stiffness, swelling, pain, heart problems, weak limbs and facial paralysis.

## **Parainfluenza**

This disease is highly contagious. It affects the upper respiratory system and spreads through direct and indirect contact. This condition is self-limiting, usually lasting two to four weeks.

## ***Parasite Prevention***

You should also prevent your pets from getting parasites. A parasite is an organism that lives on another organism of a different species (known as a host), without contributing to the wellbeing of the host. Prevention of harmful parasites is easier than treatment, and ensures that pets don't suffer from infestations and side effects.

## **EXTERNAL PARASITES: Fleas**

These are easily passed from one animal to the other. They are more uncomfortable than dangerous, but they can make you uncomfortable too!

## **Heartworm**

Transmitted by mosquitoes, heartworm is a potentially fatal parasite for your pets.

## **Ear mites**

This highly contagious parasite can cause secondary infections in the ear canal and inner ear.

## **Mange Mites**

They are transmitted through direct contact with wild animals like raccoons, skunks or coyotes. They affect your pet's fur.

There is two kinds of mange: sarcoptic mange and demodectic mange.

Sarcoptic mange is contagious. The motion of the mite in and on the skin is extremely itchy. Further, the presence of mites and their eggs generates a massive allergic response in the skin which is even more itchy.

Demodetic mange is not contagious. Puppies get them from their mothers during first few days of life. Although all dogs carry this mite on their skin only a few will ever have a problem. If dog's immune system is suppressed mange is not kept under control. It is common disease in puppies and it may be triggered by stress an environmental problems. There is two kinds of this disease – localized an generalized. Localized Demodex occurs when only few spots are affected and generalized demodex occurs where larger part of the body or the whole dog is affected. This disease is not itchy in itself but secondary skin infections might be itchy. Often dogs will grow out of this problem but it is recommended to treat it as soon as possible and prevent the spreading of the disease to major area of the dog's body.

## **Ticks**

Ticks often inhabit undeveloped land. Ticks are potentially fatal - if they are left long enough to work their way into the bloodstream, they can cause aneurysms, strokes and heart attacks. Internal parasites are a problem for your dog right from birth. Most puppies are born with round worms.

Your pet should be de-wormed regularly to get rid of roundworms, hookworms, whipworms and tapeworms. If your dog has diarrhea, the cause is often dog worms, and you should make an appointment with your vet as soon as possible. To determine if dog worms are the problem, you will need to take a stool sample to your vet. In some cases however, dog worms can occur even when your dog has normal stools. A yearly stool exam is needed to make sure your dog doesn't have worms. Puppies should be checked more often.

There are several types of worms. Your vet can test for all kinds, and give the appropriate treatment.

**Roundworms** Are the most common, and are usually found in newborn puppies. Older dogs usually don't have problems with roundworms.

**Hookworms** Are also common. This worm lodges in the small intestine of your dog. When your dog has hookworms, he will often have vomiting and diarrhea. In young puppies this can cause anemia and other complications.

**Whipworms** Live in the junction where the large and small intestines meet. These worms cause inflammation in the lower part of the gastro-intestinal tract, and the symptoms resemble those of colitis.

Whipworms are difficult to diagnose, but your vet will usually treat your dog according to the clinical signs.

Some dog worms need a host in order to be transmitted. This type includes **tapeworms**. Fleas often serve as the host for these worms, and spread them between animals.

The flea ingests the eggs and acts as host for the larvae. The dog contracts the tapeworm by swallowing the flea. Often dogs with tapeworms do not show clinical signs. With no obvious symptoms, this makes it hard to diagnose the problem. However, if you often see your dog rubbing his bottom along the ground or on the floor, he may have an infestation of tapeworms.

### ***Emergency, Emergency***

It is important to know how to behave in emergency situations. The most important thing is not to panic - remain as calm as possible. You should keep the first aid kit handy for your family and for your pet as well.

Your kit should contain: medicated powder, gauze bandages, adhesive tape, hydrogen peroxide, cotton application swabs and a pair of tweezers at the minimum.

It is important to take the dog's temperature at the first sign of illness. You should use a rectal

thermometer. Their normal temperature should be between 101<sup>0</sup> and 102<sup>0</sup>  
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### **Artificial Respiration**

Brain damage will result if your dog ceases breathing for more than 5- 6 minutes. You have to be fast. Lay your dog on its side, extend their head and pull out the tongue using a cloth. Remove any foreign matter or mucus in the throat using your finger, wrapped in the clean piece of cloth or gauze. Begin artificial respiration by pushing down gently but

firmly on the chest, behind the elbow. Press for few seconds and then release for few seconds. Continue until the dog starts breathing again. You may even have to blow gently into your dog's nose to help get oxygen to its lungs. Close their mouth and cover the nose with a thin cloth. Place your

mouth over this area and blow very gently to expand the lungs. Do not push on the chest at this time. Blow gently, 6-8 times a minute.

This will help to circulate the oxygenated blood through the dog's body. When your dog begins breathing, keep pressure on the chest – not too much, just a slight pressure. Elevate your pet's back legs and hips and keep it warm. Call your veterinarian.

The End

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