

# *Bull Terrier Temperament*

Bull Terrier Temperament, Personality, Behavior, Traits, and Characteristics.....

The Bull Terrier is sweet-tempered, yet also rowdy and clownish, full of fire and determination.

This muscular, forceful, vigorous dog does best with active families, for he has a high energy level that comes in spurts and bursts.

They need frequent, brisk walks, occasional vigorous games of ball, and total immersion in the family, i.e. LOTS of companionship and interactive play sessions.

If ignored, Bull Terriers will become bored, and mischief will surely follow. Youngsters who are neglected can be especially rambunctious: happily devouring your furniture, excavating great caverns in your yard, and spinning in dizzy circles, chasing their tails obsessively.

Most Bullies greet strangers with enthusiastic bounding (often knocking the guest over) and face kissing. However, aggression and timidity are present in some lines, and early socialization is important to develop a stable attitude.

A Bull Terrier should not be kept with another dog of the same sex, and cats may or may not be safe. Bull Terriers can be very possessive of their food -- do not allow another pet or a child to approach a Bull Terrier when he is eating.

At some point, if you have not raised this breed with consistent leadership, he will likely challenge your ability to control his actions. Such dominance attempts must be met with calm assertiveness. Keep training sessions brief, and use food as motivation.

Some Bull Terriers are enthusiastic "talkers" who grunt and mumble to themselves.

**If I was considering a Bull Terrier, I would be most concerned about...**

1. **Providing enough exercise and mental stimulation.** Bull Terriers and Bull Terrier Miniatures, are very active dogs who **MUST** have regular opportunities to vent their high energy and to use their busy minds to do interesting things. Otherwise they will become rambunctious and bored -- which they usually express by destructive chewing. Bored Bull Terriers are famous for chewing through drywall, ripping the stuffing out of sofas, and turning your yard into a moonscape of giant craters.
2. **Bounciness.** Young Bull Terriers (up to about three years old) can be bulls in a china shop. When they romp and jump, they do so with great vigor, and things can go flying, including people.

If you have small children, or if you or anyone who lives with you is elderly or infirm, Unless you are an experienced owner, I do not recommend Bull Terrier puppies. The temptation to play roughly is simply too strong in young Bullies.

3. **Providing enough socialization.** Many Bull Terriers love everyone, but some have protective instincts toward strangers. All Bull Terriers need extensive exposure to friendly people so they learn to recognize the normal behaviors of "good guys." Then they can recognize the difference when someone acts abnormally. Without careful socialization, they may be suspicious of everyone, which could lead to biting. Some Bull Terriers go in the opposite direction -- without enough socialization, they become fearful of strangers, which can lead to **defensive** biting.
4. **Animal aggression.** Many Bull Terriers will not tolerate another dog of the same sex. Some won't tolerate the opposite sex, either. Many Bull Terriers, both Standard and Miniature, have strong instincts to chase and seize cats and other fleeing creatures. If anything goes wrong in the breeding, socializing, training, handling, or management

of these breeds, they are capable of seriously injuring or killing other animals.

5. **The strong temperament.** Bull Terriers are not Golden Retrievers. They have an independent mind of their own and are not pushovers to raise and train. They can be manipulative, and many are willful, obstinate, and dominant (they want to be the boss) and will make you prove that you can make them do things. You must show them, through absolute consistency that you mean what you say.
6. **Shedding.** Bull Terriers shed much more than you might think. Their short, coarse hairs come off on your hands when you pet them, and stick tenaciously to your carpeting, upholstery, and clothing. In addition, people with sensitive skin may react adversely to the "pokes" of the harsh hairs.
7. **Health problems.** Buy from a registered breeder who knows what is in their lines and tests where possible.
8. **Legal liabilities.** Bull Terriers are not the same breed as PIT Bull Terriers, but they are often lumped together by public officials and the media as potentially dangerous dogs. Thus, Bull Terriers may be targeted for future "banning" in certain areas, or refusal of homeowner insurance policies. In this day and age, the legal liabilities of owning any breed that looks intimidating and has a fighting heritage should be seriously considered. People are quicker to sue if such a dog does anything even remotely questionable.

Frankly, most Bull Terriers and Bull Terrier Miniature, are "too much dog" for the average household. Very few people really have the knowledge or skills necessary to manage these fiery, high-energy breeds, or to provide the activities that keep them satisfied. A dominant, confident personality is recommended and breeders may not sell you a pup if they can see you don't have the skills to handle one.