



Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Your new Staffordshire Bull Terrier

Thank you for choosing a Staffordshire Bull Terrier to be your new companion. You will find that you are taking home one of the most family orientated dogs. This is a brief guide designed to give you some basic advice to help you and your new dog live a happy life together. At the end you will find a list of recommended books for further reading.

Staffordshire Bull Terriers (also known as Staffords) are the modern show and pet descendants of the 'bull and terriers' originally bred in many parts of the UK well into the nineteenth century as fighting, rat catching and badger baiting dogs. Since he was first registered as a show breed in 1935, the Staffordshire Bull Terriers' courage and affinity with people, especially children, has enabled him to become popular in many corners of the world and has established the breed's well-earned nickname of the 'nanny dog'.

How much exercise will he require and what kind?

This breed is remarkably flexible when it comes to the amount of exercise needed. Naturally any dog needs the stimulation of new and varied environments so sitting at home waiting for your return from work must be followed by some form of exercise. Some Staffordshire Bull Terriers will be content with a walk around the block whilst others will happily cope with a 10 mile run. Whatever suits you will almost certainly be fine for your Staffordshire Bull Terrier but try to be consistent. A dog that walks long distances day after day can be frustrated on odd days when no such exercise is forthcoming.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier are extremely strong and pulling games or chasing a ball or other strong toy for a short period will provide the hard exercise that they really enjoy. Ensure that you are in control of the game. If you tell the dog to "leave" he must do so in order to maintain your higher position in the 'pack'. Ensure that the dog understands that nipping a human, even accidentally in the hullabaloo of the game, is just not allowed.

Health and physical care

Staffordshire Bull Terriers need very little grooming indeed. An occasional brush with a stiff bristle brush to remove loose, dead hair, and an occasional bath, is all that is generally required. Staffordshire Bull Terriers' coats can be made especially shiny with an occasional treat of oily fish e.g. a can of pilchards, sardines or a cod-liver oil capsule. Stroking and fussing also bring up a good shine on the coat. Bathing them too often removes the natural oils, but it may be refreshing to have a very occasional bath if they become smelly. Use baby shampoo or a good dog shampoo. Beware of getting soap in the dog's eyes and always make sure you dry him well – especially the underside of his belly which is virtually hairless. This part of the body should also be dried thoroughly when your Staffordshire Bull Terrier has been out in the rain.

Ears do not normally cause many problems for the Staffordshire Bull Terriers because the shape of their ears allows plenty of air to circulate. If wax or mites do build up they will give off an unpleasant smell. Do not be tempted to pour anything into the dog's ear, or to use a cotton bud. Your vet can supply excellent ointment and the debris that floats to the top can then be cleared away from the entrance to the ear.

Staffordshire Bull Terriers are generally considered very healthy dogs. As we can see from their past history, it really has been the survival of the fittest and toughest and responsible breeder attempt to maintain this high standard. However, the breed is not immune to disease and will need trips to the vet for annual boosters for the usual canine diseases, and a regular worming regime. Being somewhat headstrong, young Staffordshire Bull Terriers are rather accident prone and you should consider taking out an insurance policy to cover vet bills.



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Feeding

Most dogs do not drop to one meal a day until around eighteen months to two years of age, and indeed some people continue to feed their dog a small 'breakfast' and a reduced evening meal throughout the dog's life. The amount and type of food varies with the individual dog and his owner's lifestyle. No two animals are the same and a diet that suits one will not necessarily suit another. It is a matter of getting to know your dog.

An adult Staffordshire Bull Terrier should have a basic meat and biscuit diet. The meat can be raw or cooked. Tripe is a favourite with many dog breeders and, although it smells unpleasant, raw green tripe will set any dog's mouth watering. However, it is not advisable to feed tripe to any animal less than six months of age. Meat in sausage form – rabbit, chicken, beef and lamb flavoured – is easy to keep fresh but many people prefer canned foods for ease of storage and serving. There is a multitude of canned foods available including supermarket own brands.

Meat, in whatever form, should always be accompanied by a biscuit. Some of the more expensive varieties of canned food are very rich and if your dog cannot cope with these try the cheaper types which he may find easier to digest.

Finally there is a large range of complete dry foods. Unfortunately, because they do not look like protein, there is a tendency for some people to use them like a biscuit and add them to meat. In fact, they are usually very high in protein and should be fed strictly according to the instructions. Remember when feeding either canned or dry foods that ample water must be available to the dog at all times.

Dogs vary and while one Staffordshire Bull Terrier may thrive on this type of food, another may flourish on canned food. The proof of the pudding is in the condition of your dog – does his coat shine, his eyes look bright, and are his motions firm?

One last point: if you spoil him by providing him with human food "as a treat", it will be difficult to encourage him to eat his proper food again.

Chewing

Staffordshire Bull Terriers have very powerful jaws and strong teeth and need to chew in order to keep these healthy. Young Staffordshire Bull Terriers need to chew to help jaw development and adults to keep teeth clean and as an outlet for stress.

To avoid expensive damage to your belongings it is important to provide your dog with appropriate objects that he can chew. There is a huge variety available in pet shops. Avoid natural bones that can be broken causing small sharp pieces that can be swallowed – nylon bones are probably the best. Regular cleaning with a toothbrush and dog toothpaste is a good idea if you can get him used to the experience at a young age!

Dog training classes

It is recommended that anyone planning to attend a dog training class makes sure that the class has been approved by the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT).

Before registering with any training class make sure you watch a class in progress to ensure that you agree with their methods.

A list of recommended dog training classes in your area can be obtained from the APDT by phoning 01428 707620 or online at www.apdt.co.uk

Written by David Ley and Claire Lee

Factsheet

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References and recommended reading

Pet owner's guide to the Staffordshire Bull Terrier

by Clare Lee, Ringpress Books

Ain't Misbehavin'

by David Appleby, Broadcast Books

Why does my dog?

by John Fisher, Bantam Books

For further advice, contact:

Locate your local Staffordshire Bull Terrier Breed Club via the Breed Council web site:

www.staffords.co.uk/breedcouncil/contact.htm

Please note that Breed clubs are not just for show dogs and their owners – most club members are pet owners who do not show their dogs.

Useful contacts

Battersea's Behaviour Advice Line

0905 020 0222 (calls cost 25p per minute)

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

4 Battersea Park Road
London
SW8 4AA

Telephone 020 7622 3626
Fax 020 7622 6451

Old Windsor

Priest Hill
Old Windsor
Berkshire
SL4 2JN

Telephone 01784 432929
Fax 01784 471538

Brands Hatch

Crowhurst Lane
Ash
Kent
TN15 7HH

Telephone 01474 874994
Fax 01474 872855

www.dogshome.org