



Monster Myths

myth (mith) n. 1. an invented story, fictitious person, etc. 2. a belief or set of beliefs, often unproven or false, that have accrued around a person, phenomena or institution. *Illustration above: An Old World etching depicting the Werewolf mythology.*

Aren't Pit Bulls MEAN and VICIOUS?

No more vicious than golden retrievers, beagles or other popular dogs! In yearly tests of over 240 dog breeds by the American Temperament Testing Society (ATTS), pit bulls consistently achieve a passing rate that's as good or better than the other most popular breeds. How did your favorite breed do? Check here: [ATTS.org](http://www.atts.org) (<http://www.atts.org>)



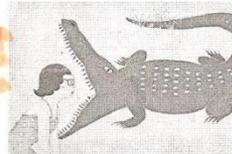
In the ATTS test, a dog is put through a series of confrontational situations. Any sign of panic or unprovoked aggression leads to failure of the test. The achievement of pit bulls in this study disproves once and for all the old tired belief that pit bulls are inherently aggressive to people. Like any breed of dog, a healthy pit bull that is properly raised will reflect the good care his owners have invested in him. Photo credit: Carol Guzy, Washington Post.

Don't Pit Bulls eventually TURN ON THEIR OWNERS?

No. Healthy pit bulls with stable temperaments are succeeding in countless homes across the continent. Dogs bite people are typically troubled individuals, set up to fail by irresponsible and/or reckless owners who've ignored the classic warning signs that come with nearly any dog bite. In general, biting dogs have been set off by improper handling, abuse and/or damaged genetics. Profiling dog breeds works against the goal of reducing dog bites. Bite prevention education resources such as these offered by the AVMA (http://www.avma.org/public_health/dogbite/) can help build safe, humane communities without resorting to the kind of ineffective paranoia that comes from targeting select breeds. For a well researched source of information on canine aggression, visit [The National Canine Research Council](http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/) (<http://www.nationalcanineresearchcouncil.com/>)

Don't Pit Bulls have LOCKING JAWS?

Don't be silly. A pit bull's ability to "lock on" with its jaws is one whopper of a myth that refuses to let go. There is no 'enzyme,' no special mechanism that would make a pitbull's jaws 'lock.' They're DOGS, not alligators. Need proof? After research, Dr. I. Lehr Brislin, University of Georgia concludes, "We found that the American Pit Bull Terriers did not have any unique mechanism that would allow these dogs to lock their jaws. There were no mechanical or morphological differences..." The same silliness shows up with myths about bite pressure.



Pit Bulls are in El Dorado City limits as reports show, but they are unsocialized which makes them more prone to acting in a way they shouldn't.

Don't buy into media hype: Jiffi steer wrong every time. Bite pressure fact checking, reported by The Nativ Canine Research Council (NCRC) <http://www.ncrc.org/ncrc/research/ncrc-research-report-10-2013-aggressive-pit-bulls>

Above: Art credit C.S. Neal <http://www.thedailies.com>

Don't Pit Bulls have to be TRAINED TO FIGHT?

NO. Pit bulls are tenacious, and terriers tend to be scrappy with other animals if unsocialized, poorly managed or otherwise left to their own devices. Just as farmers have used Jack Russell Terriers to do battle with badgers, and other animals, unscrupulous people have exploited the tenacious drive in pit bulls against other dogs for entertainment purposes. Like any breed of dog, pit bulls can run the gamut from very dog aggressive to exceptionally dog friendly and each dog shares some potential to fight other dogs if mismanaged. Avoiding dog fights involves understanding terrier traits and basic canine behavior in general. More info:

- Dog-Tolerance Levels: Dog/Dog pawpals.org
- Living well with Bull/Dogs pawpals.org
- Socializing your pit bull pawpals.org

A properly socialized, well managed pit bull should never find himself in a dogfight because he's accustomed to presence of other dogs and...IMPORTANT!...he has a smart and responsible owner willing to keep him safe if it occurs that could make the arbitrary possibility of a fight!

Aren't TREADMILLS for dog fighters?

Seriously? While it's true that many convicted dog fighters have been found with treadmills on their properties, automatically connecting treadmill use with fight conditioning has unfairly propped some of the most responsible owners out there. Many owners use mills to put their dogs in top shape, especially in places where extreme weather or dense urban neighborhoods prevent long, outdoor exercise. Apartment dwellers without yards love 'em. Because pit bulls are high energy animals with hardy, athletic builds, the responsible use of a treadmill can make for healthier, happier dogs.



Right: BADRAP's Star loves using her mill at the Rescue Barn. See our VIDEO <http://www.badraps.com/2012/12/08/star-loves-her-mill/> but don't about using a carpet mill with your dog.

Will a Pit Bull that shows aggression towards other animals go after PEOPLE NEXT?

No...just as hunters don't fear their coonhounds, experienced dog people understand that aggression towards animals and human-directed aggression are two totally different behaviors in canines. We've heard this frighten quite. The worst after a dog (or cat) and our kids might be "dead". The popular myth has generated a host of unnecessary and damaging anti-pit bull hysteria. Like any breed of dog that we see in family homes today, a properly raised, well socialized, responsibly owned pit bull should never be aggressive towards humans.

Don't SCARS or CROPPED EARS indicate a dog's been "fought" or used as "b

A pit bull can have scars for lots of different reasons so it's best to avoid assuming the worst. They're bold, act creatures and can find themselves in many misadventures if not properly cared for. A scarred dog may have to stray on the streets and scragged with other strays over food or territory without any prompting from an irresponsible owner. He may have started these fights, or tried like hell to avoid them, or anything in between. He may be an active dog that ran through brambles on a hike with his owner, sumitted with a cat or other dogs in his home, or in too close to a wild urban animal such as a raccoon, or cut himself while trying to dig out of a poorly secured, missing fur.



Bully cropped ears typically reflect an uneducated dog owner's attempt to mimic the professional crops that are popular with UKC and AKC show dogs.

LOL! Candy's face was badly scratched when we first met. Her story? She hated confinement and would hurt herself to get under fences. Her crop? Bad fashion. While we hate that there are people who still abuse animals, the term "bad dogs" is very overused by the well intentioned, but misinformed. Unless there are witnesses to the cause of injury, mysterious bite marks on a dog remain an unhappy mystery with an unknown perpetrator. To "shout" "bad dog" whenever a dog with bites appears keeps a popular myth alive and may actually be encouraging copycat crimes by offering animal abusers ideas we would rather they didn't have.

Should adopters look for puppies and avoid adults with UNKNOWN HISTORIE:

BAD RAP believes that all dogs, including pit bulls should be judged by their current personality, not by their unknown past or lack of pedigree. Most adoption programs evaluate dogs before they go up for adoption, score out those with unworkable behavior issues and promoting those that have desirable qualities. The most success adoption matches come from taking each dog's personality into account as well as the prospective adopter's fit and expectations. Puppies are fun, but are a LOT more work. It's also much harder to know what kind of person a pup is going to have as a mature adult. Really energetic or misrow? Dog aggressive or dog tolerant? Homes have a very specific mix but for a pit bull to find an adult dog whose known traits matches their criteria.

Is it better to get a PIT BULL MIX to "water down" the potential dog-dog aggression?

Not necessarily. Dogs are individuals with a wide range of dog tolerance levels. The amount of dog, misbehavior dog displays is a result of a combination of factors including genetics, upbringing, environment and management. Rescue groups and shelters that utilize play groups are good places to go to find dogs with known dog social.

Are pit bulls unpredictable around CHILDREN?

