



**ADOPTING A PIT BULL:
ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE JOB?**

*Anyone adopting a pet needs to ask themselves whether or not they are **ready, willing and able** to take on the responsibility of a pet. For those considering the adoption of a pit bull or other “stigmatized” breed, ask yourself these questions:*

Are you an experienced dog person? Have you shared life as an adult with a dog? Have you never had a dog? Did you always have dogs as a child, but haven't had one since you grew up and left home? Have you had to house train a dog? Have you worked at correcting problem behaviors such as chewing, digging, barking...? Do you feel able to handle a challenge?

Have you done your homework? Have you researched the breed? Have you considered its breed history, personality traits, activity level? Have you considered the individual dog's temperament?

Is everyone in the house in agreement with the adoption of a pit bull? Is everyone on the same page? Adopting a pet and including it in the family will affect everyone, and everyone should agree to bring a pet into the home, and everyone should agree on the particular pet.

Do you have the finances to cover health care and training costs? Of course, we all think about routine medical care, but have you given thought to emergency care? How about an extended illness – can you cover it? Have you considered training costs? Any dog should be given basic obedience – and an obedience class is great for working on basic manners as well as socialization. Some diligent pit owners will refresh their dog's “education”, or progress to more advanced classes.

Do you have the time to devote to a pit bull? Pit bulls are energetic. Can you offer adequate time for exercise and play? Do you have time to devote to obedience class and doing the “homework”. Do you have the time to make sure your pit bull has social interaction?

Are you knowledgeable about current dog laws? Are you willing to learn and keep updated?

Are you equipped/willing to face ignorance and breed discrimination? As a pit person, you will undoubtedly run across people who take as gospel, the word of sensational journalists. No doubt you will run into someone who will turn up their nose at your pit bull. Are you able to handle discrimination in a way which will educate the misguided, and promote the positive aspects of the breed?

Do you really understand the responsibility you are assuming? Do you understand that you, as owner, are ultimately responsible for the actions of your dog? Do you understand there will

be things you will do differently with your pit bull (than you would have to do with a dog of another breed) – just because it's a pit bull? Can you handle that? Are you willing to bear this responsibility for up to 12-14 years (the average lifespan of a pit bull)?

If you answered NO to any of the above questions, you are not ready to adopt a pit bull. Perhaps you aren't ready to adopt a dog at all. Adopting a dog of any breed (or mix of breeds) should not be taken lightly, or be a spontaneous decision. When you sign the adoption papers, you are making a commitment to be responsible to, and for, your dog – for the rest of its life. This is especially important if you have fallen in love with a pit bull. If you fall short of your responsibilities, and your dog does wrong, the blame will fall squarely on your pit bull's muscular shoulders, probably not on yours. The headlines in the newspaper won't read: Irresponsible ownership the cause of another pit bull attack. The tease-line for the 11 o'clock news won't say: Yet another pit bull owner found guilty of stupidity – film at 11.

Go back and read the questions again. If you can honestly answer YES to all of them, congratulations! You are ready to share your life with a pit bull!

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