



## American Pit Bull Terrier Standard

Recognized by the AMA in 2017

**Background:** The American Pit Bull Terrier was developed in the early 1800's as a result of crosses between the renaissance period bulldogs of that time and game terriers. The renaissance period Bulldog which, when crossed with game terriers, produced the first "Bull and Terriers". The renaissance period Bulldog was a fierce, courageous animal used in the sport of bull-baiting. When the sport fell from public favor and was outlawed, their supporters turned to dog fighting and sought to create a sporting dog that, while retaining the legendary courage and ferocity of the Bulldog, would incorporate the greater agility of the terrier. The extraordinary vitality of this breed is a direct result of breeding for successful fighting dogs. Immigrants brought these bull and terrier crosses to the United States. This type of dog was instrumental in the success of farmers and settlers who developed this country. They were used for general farm work, hunting wild pigs, bears, and other large game, guarding the homestead, and general companionship. The American Pitbull Terrier of today excel in many various performance and working venues as well as conformation and as family companions.

**General Appearance:** The American Pitbull Terrier is a medium sized, heavy boned, short coated, muscular, soundly built canine. The American Pitbull Terrier is an all-around canine athlete. The body is built for speed, power, agility and stamina. They are sturdy, giving the impression of strength, not slight nor frail. They are a square dog with a solid front end with a light springy rear end. The American Pitbull Terrier exhibits great balance without exaggeration in order to have great functional ability.

Disqualifications: unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism

**Disposition:** The American Pitbull Terrier exhibits courage, determination and intelligence. They are confident, gentle, and loving toward people. They are a loyal affectionate family dog with a strong desire to please their master. Disqualifications: viciousness or extreme shyness

**Size:** Height and weight should be in proportion. The American Pit Bull Terrier is both powerful and agile. The correct proportion is more important than the overall size of the dog.

**Male:** A general height and weight guideline is 18-21 inches at the withers and 35-60lbs.

**Female:** A general height and weight guideline is 17-20 inches at the withers and 30-50lbs.

Serious faults: excessively large

**Head:** Medium in length, deep, with a broad/flat skull. The head when viewed from the front is shaped like a broad, blunt wedge. The head is 2/3 the width of the shoulders with very pronounced cheek muscles.

**Eyes:** Medium sized, elliptical and deep set. All colors are accepted except blue. Serious Faults: Bulging eyes, different colored eyes, blue eyes Disqualifications: crossed eyes, divergent strabismus (wall-eyed)

**Muzzle/Bite:** Broad, deep with a slight taper from the stop to the nose. The length from the nose to the stop should equal the length from the stop to the back of the head. The bridge of the muzzle is well developed. The topline of the muzzle should be is straight. The lower jaw is well developed, wide and deep. The lips are clean and tight. The fill in under the eyes should be wider than the head at the base of the ears for structural support of the upper canines. The correct bite is a scissor bite. Canines should be wide at the base and taper to the end, top canines

fitting tightly together behind the bottom canines. They have full dentition.

Serious faults: underdeveloped muzzle, missing canines, any bite other than scissor, snipey muzzle, weak lower jaw

Disqualifications: wry mouth, muzzle too short and blunt as to interfere with normal breathing

**Nose:** The nose is large with open, wide nares. The nose can be any color.  
Serious fault: pinched nares

**Ears:** Ears are high set and may be natural or cropped without preferences. Prick, or flat, wide ears are not desired.  
Disqualifications: unilateral or bilateral deafness

**Neck:** Heavily muscled, moderate in length, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to back of skull. No looseness of skin.  
Serious faults: thin or weak neck, short, thick neck that would interfere with functional ability

**Shoulders:** The shoulder blades are long, wide, and muscular. They are well laid back with the upper arm roughly equal in length to the shoulder blade and joins it at an apparent right angle.  
Serious faults: steep or loaded shoulders

**Chest, Back, Loin and Body:** The chest is deep, full, and moderately wide with sufficient room for the heart and lungs. The chest should never be wider than it is deep. The ribs are well-sprung from the spine, then flattening to form a deep body extending to the elbows. The elbows lay flat against the body. The back is strong and firm with a topline that slopes very slightly downward from the withers to a broad, muscular, level back. There is a moderate tuck up. The loin is muscular, broad, slightly arched to the top of the croup, and long enough to square the dog. The croup is slightly sloping downward.  
Serious Faults: overly massive body style that impedes working ability, barrel chest, narrow chest, out at the elbows

**Hindquarters:** The hindquarters are strong, muscular, and moderately broad. The thighs are well developed with thick muscles. When

viewed from the side, the hock joint is well bent and the rear pasterns are well let down and perpendicular to the ground. When viewed from the rear the rear pasterns are straight and parallel to one another.

Serious faults: straight stifle, cow hocked, sickled hocked, narrow hindquarters, bowed legs, straight or over angulated stifle joint

**Legs:** The forelegs are strong and muscular with pasterns that are short, powerful, straight, and flexible. When viewed from the side the pasterns are nearly erect. The hindquarters are let down at hocks, turning neither in nor out.  
Serious Faults: down at the pasterns, bowed legs, knuckling over, toeing in or out

**Feet:** Feet are small, tight, well arched, set high on pasterns. The pads are thick, hard and well built up.  
Serious faults: splayed feet, thin pads

**Tail:** Thick and the base and tapering to a fine point. When the dog is moving, the tail is carried level with the backline. The tail should reach the hock when relaxed.  
Serious faults: bobbed tail, kinked tail, any tail other than straight  
Disqualifications: screw tail

**Coat:** The coat is glossy and smooth, close, and moderately stiff to the touch.  
Serious faults: curly, wavy, or sparse coat  
Disqualification: long coat

**Color:** Any color, color pattern, or combination of colors is acceptable except merle.  
Disqualifications: merle, albinism

**Movement:** The American Pitbull Terrier's movement is untroubled and confident with good reach in front and drive in the rear. The gait is effortless, smooth, powerful, and well-coordinated. When moving the topline remains level with only a slight flexing to indicate mobility. Viewed from any position the legs turn neither in nor out, nor do feet cross or interfere with each other. As speed increases the feet converge toward center line of balance (Single Track).

**Disqualifications:**

- Unilateral or bilateral cryptorchidism
- Viciousness or extreme shyness
- Crossed eyes
- Divergent Strabismus (Wall-Eyed)
- Wry mouth
- Muzzle too short and blunt as to interfere with normal breathing
- Unilateral or bilateral deafness
- Screw tail
- Long coat
- Merle
- Albinism

**Fault Degrees:**

A cosmetic fault is one of a minor nature. A fault not specified as cosmetic has to do with structure as it relates to a dog that is able to compete in performance/working venues. In a show or other evaluation, the dog is to be penalized in direct proportion to the degree of the fault. Any fault, which is extreme, should be considered a serious fault and should be penalized appropriately.