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How to cope with & avoid and stop dog fights.

90% of APBT puppy's time is spent biting and probing at other puppies / littermates and those expose to growing up.

This is part of developing bite inhibition and because of APBT's natural gameness trait and high prey drive, in which young dogs learn how to control their jaws and agility during mock rolls and temperament.

The optimal time for dogs to develop bite inhibition are between two and four months of age while pups are kept together or exposed to other young or older dogs.

Puppy dogs need free play growing up with the mother dog and from 6 weeks as puppies with other puppies / littermates and older dogs to develop their bite inhibition and social skills.

During this time they will be busy, noisy and their activities will lead to various confrontations and will to destroy whatever they can get to.

You as owner should never allow any dog and the more so an APBT dog to achieve dominant status over you or any adult or child in your household.

Dogs always know their social ranking and should never be allowed to challenge people – APBT's usually are excellent family members. The dog eats when you finish eating or be fed in a dedicated area.

More mature dogs might growl and get over existed at younger or other dogs in an attempt to put youngsters in their place (normal behaviour) or to face a challenger.

Raising a young pup with an older dog is normally not a problem and it's easy in practice for an older dog (with the right temperament towards puppies – you will know) to raise a younger dog during 6 week to +- 8 months of age.

When older or bigger dogs growl at younger dogs, this leads to the development of active appeasement on the part of the lower-ranking or young dog.

The lower-ranking dog learns to show deference - respect – submission by lying down - yielding or turning belly up, which signals that he understands and respects the hierarchy.

So then, typically, the older/more dominant dog will let the youngster play and accept such a young dog as companion.

Playing – if that is the word - is more than having fun for the APBT dog – it is and will become a way to compete and fighting and a way to establish rank.

Every owner must continuously and purposefully socialize the young pup.

Keeping the pup nearby when you're home by tethering the pup to you with a leash.

Talk, touch, rub, inspect every part of the body and give ample attention.

Enforce **yes** and **no** (with voice tone) and set boundaries, by this establish leadership and Alpha status.

Praise the dog whenever the dog does well, and correct undesirable behaviour with no uncertain terms.

Most people ignore good behaviour. But it is important to praise and reward good behaviour (from a young age) in order to encourage the dog to repeat it.

Solicit and praise good behaviour, instead of punishing the bad.

It is important to be able to redirect your dog's attention when needed to you -- and thus away from the "other" dog, cat or house pet that may be engaging in challenging eye contact and aggressive or otherwise undesirable behaviours.

Timing is everything, and that it is crucial for you to develop the ability to redirect your dog's attention back to you.

If it does not click separate them and keep them separated.

If your dog was socialized from small and used to the leash, do not tense up with the leash or yell and shout during the approach of another dog.

That can make your dog associate the sight of another dog as your encouragement or with punishment – if that's the way - it might and will excite your dog even more to protect or fight.

Many male dogs have testosterone peaks between 10 months and one year of age, explaining why they seem more hyper and that normally when for no reason a fight will happen. Dogs can smell testosterone.

Any “real” game bred APBT, even well socialized most probably will present dominant body language, a definite no fear challenging attitude - pushing for a confrontation and stare other dogs right in the eyes, which are perceived as a direct challenge and with such a dog a fight will start in seconds.

It's a mistake to assume your APBT dog won't fight.

The issue isn't whether your APBT dog is or isn't nice – or not about your APBT being a fantastic family dog – or “socialized” with other animals from small - it's about gameness, dog aggression and prey drive and natural APBT behaviour.

It will be when your dog meets another unfamiliar dog of any breed, or another APBT in your yard and how dog to dog temperaments interrelate.

Some dogs aren't necessarily aggressive when they're off leash, but tend to lunge, bark and posture when they are on leash.

Dogs react fast, and sometimes get worked up and angry toward each other, just like people.

The difference is that dogs – especially the APBT - respond immediately then, typically, forget about it once the disagreement is resolved >until the next time – if there will be a next time.

Avoid scary conflicts by staying alert and keeping your APBT under a short leash and voice control at all times.

Stay away from conflict areas especially public areas.

Some owners take the additional step of not allowing their dog to look or sniff at another dog and some never allow opportunity and train or condition away from any possible conflict.

Teaching a dog early on that they can't "visit" with every canine they meet is one method some owner's try to prevent leash aggression – it might work it might not – you will know.

Teach the dog not to force pull on the leash at every dog along the way.

Basic obedience training and behaviour modification with positive reinforcement might and with some dogs can help prevent fights.

If the dog is looking at you and paying attention, they can't engage another dog.

Also to remember your dog might with no body signs explode into the other dog in a split second no matter what socializing or training you gave – after all we talking about the ultimate game bred fighting dog.

Along with leashing and good training, owners might and can avoid conflicts by keeping their dog from roaming, neutering young dogs before one year of age, and socializing those dogs during the critical puppyhood stage between six to eight weeks and longer of age.

Some fights occur with little warning, but often you can spot behaviours that signal trouble ahead, so use that opportunity to keep a fight from happening if you can.

Be aware of some definite behavioural signs before it is too late.

- * A hard, unwavering, targeted stare.
- * Dominance posturing, such as mounting- staging.
- * Stiff body movements.
- * Extreme body language:

Tail held stiffly up – everything speaks of predator readiness. If you walk your dog in a public place (and that might be your thing) - when facing an oncoming aggressive dog, you give a firm full authority "no! "Command to repel and a short strong leash control. If the dog continues to approach, drastic measures may be needed.

If pre exposed to a hand held stun gun, which you should aim into the air (for the noise it make)- the sound frequencies that dogs hear, might stop a dog from contemplating fighting or the other dog to flee.

Another technique is to be ready to spray cayenne pepper at the dog's nose and eyes (however, pepper spray can cause injury and further anger an aggressive dog).

Some prefers a harmless citronella spray repellent called Direct Stop.

If a fight ensues, keep in mind that some dogs tend to establish a social hierarchy soon after they meet – at young age one and usually the youngest one might submit – with older APBT this most probably will not happens and whilst in hold won't budge.

However, real with no uncertain terms fights can take place, in which your dog latches onto another dog and serious injures even death will result.

Intense APBT fights are mostly silent without power foreplay, growling, showing teeth and nothing natural will stop it. If you intervene, do not put your hands anywhere near the dogs' heads or get between them to avoid getting bitten yourself.

APBT game dogs are not human aggressive but you might be in the way and in the heat of the moment and can get seriously injured in moments.

{See breaking up a dogfight on this web page www.pitbullsa.co.za}

Prevention, of course, is the best approach > keeping your dog safe and providing good leadership -- is the most important job any APBT dog owner has.

Stay away from possible confrontations – from other dogs.

Be responsible -avoiding fights before they start.

Feed dogs in separate areas, kennels, rooms, chain space or in their own crates.

Do not toss treats out to dogs – if treats for reward is your thing. Instead train and play a grown APBT dog separate, have the dog obey a command during this sole training first, and give the treat right after the dog obeys – get the dog use to taking the treat from your fingers- softly without force.

If you have more than one dog make time for separate keeps, conditioning programs, play time, family time and separate feeding and separate safe accommodation.

If any chance dogs will fight over toys (APBT do), don't give the dogs toys unless they are in separate locations especially toys that fanatically excite them.

Get young dog used to all sorts of visual and noises - several times a day pop open and umbrella between your young dogs – drag a chain or empty drum pas them and visit them in a coat and or with a hat and or with children or unfamiliar people.

Always talk to the young dogs or whistle and give a scratch or a touch.

Get them used to a hose pipe sprouting water – bathing and rubbing all over, rattling of food buckets, opening their mouths touching the teeth giving mock medicine, rubbing their mussel, pinching the eyes, ears, toes, press between the toes and pulling the eye or tail and visit them at night with and without a light.

Make the dog used to all types of noises – workshop noises – lawn mower, sirens, traffic, children playing, music etc.

Don't permit tug-of-war or aggressive wrestling when natural game pups become 4 months old or older.

These games can quickly escalate into a fight.

Dogs are likely to fight over a meaty bone or cow hide bone – give separately and take away in an asset time period.

Get the young dog use to you taking it away.

The way the APBT game bred fighting dogs should be separated depends on the individual dogs as well as their typical breed and individual characteristics.

Get to know breaking sticks and how to uses them and also train someone (a second person) in the family or kennel yard when you have more than one APBT.

{See about this on this website.}

Always be aware that a dog embroiled in a fight might bite someone who grabs him or who comes between the fighting dogs.

Your dog should always be wearing a strong collar.