

# *Info shared by Pitbull SA.*

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## *How to break up an APBT dog fight.*

Breaking stick.



A breaking stick is a device (can be homemade and can be made of wood, plastic or any solid strong material – (not steel or metal – not a plyers or screwdriver).

If inserted into the mouth of a fighting dog (behind the molars) this is tool to facilitate the release of its grip on the "other" dog.

**APBT's do not have a special jaw mechanism or enzyme that allows them to "lock" their jaw, they** do they possess a higher than average "bite pressure."

They simply have the determination of a terrier and use typical normal canine attributes during fighting – typical dog behaviour but as game dog gameness will propel any dogfight ...

and the APBT will stop fighting when the challenge (the other dog) is no longer able to fight back.

**It may be** that not all APBT are right-out aggressive toward other dogs – you do find some with less dog to dog aggression – each dog is after all an individual and socializing also have to do with behaviour.

But because the APBT breed, as fighting dog has a higher tendency for dog aggression (sometime plainly dog aggressive), breaking sticks are useful tools to have and use (knowledge about use will be important) in any household having an APBT.

Then very important for a responsible APBT owners to have a breaking stick.

Canines in the wild are usually pack animals, fights are possible in any multi-dog household because of various reasons, no matter what breed of dog you own.

A responsible owner should take measures to prevent such fights, but also be prepared for the worst.

The goal of any dog owner should be to break up a fight quickly and efficiently if it happens.

The majority of breeds will snap erratically at their opponent, biting and releasing repeatedly.

As terriers the APBT will usually bite, hold and shake.

Contrary to popular myth, this is not some kind of special APBT only behaviour - it is merely natural terrier dog's behaviour.

As its name suggests, a breaking stick is designed to break this determined terrier hold.

This is the safest, easiest, and most effective way to stop a fight.

American Pit Bull terrier fights can be tough to break up.

Your goal is to break up the dog fight without getting hurt.

Breaking up a dog fight can go bad in a heartbeat.

This is serious business.

So **know your limitations** and don't get into the middle of something you can't physically deal with. In the worst case, let them fight.

It may result in death or severe injury to one or both of the dogs, but it's not worth the damage it could cause to you or one of your unskilled or uninformed family if you they make mistakes trying to end the fight.

**Good advice – don't evert keep 2 APBT together** *thinking they will live in peace forever.*

If you have 2 APBT dogs that you are trying to get to live together it's best to make them wear muzzles **all the time**, this is affordable and very effective for this kind of situation.

Walking an APBT dog **in public places** (outside your property (your fenced in property – escape proof property) is not a not a good decision then if / when a dog fight happens it will be the other dog that needs protection.

If you do walk your dog out there realise leashed or loose running (off leash) dogs out there will challenge – for these you can use a solid cattle prodder and most of the time the noise it make alone will deter the other dog – or play it safe also use a strong comfy properly fitting secure muzzle on your dog and it is also a good idea to have your dog wear 200mm draglines.

When in this park or street situation and the other dog even acts like it is going to challenge you need to instantly get after that dog.

You are your dog's pack leader and pack leaders are the one who determine when to fight or be aggressive.

**Common breaking up dog fight methods used - some fact and some myths.**

Hosepipe / water.

This method sometimes works on 'non-terrier' dogs that don't have a natural tendency to fight.

It's not efficient especially with a serious APBT dogfight – **it never works** one shouldn't waste time with this method.

Finger or object in the anus (up the bum).

A very good myth indeed, that's if you can get your finger in a fighting APBT dogs butt.

This myth has definitely **no effect on a dog whatsoever.**

APBT's and other fighting dog breeds are known to have a very high pain threshold during a fight.

If they can fight with broken legs ... they'll fight with your finger up their arse.

Praying to God.

Depending on if your faith - **might** result in wonders – miracles might ask for more. My prayers **never worked.**

Hitting, kicking and shouting.

Unless you want to aggravate the situation go ahead.

This method **never works**... so don't waste your time.

Foam spray.

Foam spray **does 'not' work.**

Pepper spray.

Provided there is over 10% capsicum, it **might** work if applied **directly** into the dog's nose and mouth area.

Stun gun, cattle prodders or electric collars.

Stun guns and prodders which deliver a low or relative harmless electrical voltage charge (but painful to say the least) **can be used** with **moderate success** (many times this **is not going to work**) which could cause a dog's muscles to weaken and lose their strength and thereby loose it bite grip.

The electric cattle prod or electric collar **most probably will only put the APBT dog into higher fight drive.**

**When they are shocked they will turn and bite the prod,** or when they are shocked they will think the other dog is causing the pain and they will fight harder.

An electric collar is best used in conditioning training, **but not during an actual dogfight.**

This is known to be a very safe and quick method to stop a multiple dogfight **but can** and probable also will provoke a strong dog to more aggressively retaliate thinking it's the other dog dishing out the pain.

The **sound / snap of the stun gun** might also cause a dog to discontinue the hold – **might**.

You just go ahead and try this - muzzle 2 of your dogs and let them go at it to see if this works.

I will be surprised if it works on 2 really strong dog aggressive APBT dogs going after each other.

Frizzy drinks - vinegar or ice cold water.

This **can be** an effective method and it works more effectively if it's cold.

Then always be prepared for a dog fight (any APBT owner should be prepared and ready at all times) - take an empty bottle that has a squirt nozzle e.g. a sunlight liquid bottle, fill it up with either water or vinegar & keep it in the fridge (not frozen but just cold).

When a fight should occur take the cold bottle of water or vinegar, open the spout and place it at the dog's nostril and squirt the liquid with full force into the nostril.

99% of the time they release immediately due to the intense cold or burning sensation from the vinegar or cold water – then separate.

Fizzy mixes like above - made with a frizz cool drink machine cause a tingling sensation in the nose.

### **Choker chain / leashes.**

All dogs should be wearing either a strong collar or choker chain as well as the ordinary collar at all times especially the APBT.

A dog without either of the two cannot be controlled and is a hazard waiting to happen.

Dog fights are a very dangerous thing to try and break up alone even if you have help and more so if you are not experienced in breaking up dog fights.

You should never rush in and try and grab the dogs to pull them apart.

They are in high "fight drive" and are not thinking clearly when fighting not minding you or whoever helps.

If someone grabs them they will bite without even thinking about who or what they are biting.

This is how your loving pet can dog bite the living crap out of you in about a second and a half.

In reality it probably doesn't even know it's biting you.  
Compare this to a bar fight.

If a person comes up behind 2 guys fighting and just reaches out and grabs the shoulder of one of the combatants most of the time the fighter is going to turn and throw a punch without even looking at who or what he is hitting.

This is because his adrenaline is pumping and he is in "fight drive".  
Breaking stick a well proven method.

With APBT and historical notorious dog aggression and high prey drive a device known as a "break stick" was developed which is used specifically for and in APBT fights to ease breaking up a dog fight.

What is a breaking stick or "Parting / separation stick?"

It is a very strong and hard piece of wood or some other material suitable for the purpose of spreading a dog's jaws apart.

It is usually about 200 mm + in length, wedge shaped and contoured to prevent injury to the dog's lips.

Its width is about 25- 35mm.

*{See attached video clip on this website.}*

Looking at one person or two persons handling dogs that fight.

There comes a time in the life of every dog - be it a small terrier or big dog or APBT dog, when it will get into some sort of a scrap.

Even on dog shows for the APBT dogs you will or might have witnessed dogs getting loose and starting a fight.

*Your goal is to break up the dog fight without getting hurt – stay calm.*

For one person with one breaking stick ....; it might help but that is if only one aggressive dog is involved.

With two dogs involved, a breaking stick with just one person is not going to be of much help at all **unless** you can first fix one dog with a rope or chain (around the back loin) to a fix point and work against the stretch.

**This - while the dogs is in hold.**

Dog ion a dogfight – especially 2 APBT's fighting dogs are almost always locked onto one another.

Walk up and loop the leash around the back loin of the dog by either threading the leash through the handle or use the clip. The thread method is best.

Two experienced people both equipped with breaking sticks will be able to separate serious dogs that **are not human aggressive**- and then under control relocate first the one and then the other in separate safe holding pens on kennels or different rooms.

**Method** - if you have help to stop the dog fight.

When a serious dogfight (involving the APBT) is in progress and there is more than one person (that is very familiar with breaking up an APBT fight) then each person must grab a dog at its collar and hold firmly.

Do not try and pull the dogs apart as this can cause more damage to the dogs.

If a person uses one of the effective methods above the dogs **will release** – but a second person will be needed to handle **the other dog** and take it away for safety while you do the same with your dog.

With no breaking sticks and no means of getting the dogs apart, then each person must choke the dog handled by him - by pulling or winding the collar or choker up (strangling) - tight enough to cut off the dogs air supply.

This method should only be used if it's an absolute emergency as this method can be fatal for the dog if not done by experienced handlers. Not only does it cut off the air supply but also cuts off the blood supply to the dogs brain.

The minute the dog's release, immediately separate them and loosen the collar instantly so that the dog can regain its consciousness and breath, failing to do so might be fatal.

Method if you are alone.

Keep your cool you have a job to do.

Do not waste time screaming at the dogs. It hardly ever works.

Your goal is still the same; you must break up the fight without getting hurt.

Go get a strong leash or rope or chain which is not more than 2 metres in length (allow the fight to continue while you do this).

Proceed with utmost caution. Fasten or clip the leash or rope or chain onto one of the dog's collars or choke chain (preferably onto the dog that is being bitten).

Pull – drag both the dogs by this rope/chain/leash to the closest solid anchor point you can find – washing line pole / gate steel window security door or fence post - any fixed object - where you can tie the leash / rope or chain onto.

Then pull the other dog by the collar away from the fixed dog until the rope or leash is taught, and then you could use any of the above effective methods on the dog that has the hold on the other – when separated slowly back away **controlling the dog** and put away in a safe place – see *collar control and pick up method*.

The other dog is safely fixed or chained while this is happening.

Go back and take the dog off the fence and put this dog into a different dog kennel or safe area.

Sit down and have a stiff drink (or two).

Collar control and pick up method.

After the separation and then still with the firm grip on the back of neck or collar – controlled grip is important, pick up the dog up with the other hand under the back loins walk away – realize the dog is still in supped up prey drive and want to get back at the adversary – control the collar and keep the dog's head away from your face and body – best to have the picked up dog still to see the other dog in the removing process otherwise the head will turn anyway and the dog might bite just to get out of your grip.

Put the separated dog away immediately in a kennel or room and never put these dogs together again and prevent accidental fighting.

It often happens that once the dogs have had a bad fight, they cannot **ever** be reintroduced **at all**.

*See this action on "Schoolboy's clip demonstrated".*

Looking at the actual fight.

Well, each dog will bite the other, take hold and start to shake its head punishing the opposition.

It can be so serious that in most cases nothing you do will cause the dog to give up that precious hold.

Nothing - Choking, shocking, etc...It just doesn't matter when these dogs are in hold.

Dealing with the dog fight.

A typical APBT may very well fight back lustily if bothered by another dog – this is part of the makeup and should be expected. If you really know the APBT breed you will also know this is not a breed for the "dog park set" - for a stroll down the street – APBT's is not everybody's cup of tea.

Referring to above methods and myths - As real dog men you will then have a breaking stick.

It is best with APBT's to keep a few of these handy at all-time and also take them with to places outside your kennel yard and or to APBT shows – be ready.

Sadly many dog owners are not responsible and the majority do not know how to break up a fight if it happens, which gives good APBT dog owners a bad name and injure dogs.

Knowing how to safely and humanely break up a dog fight is something that you, as the owner of an American Pit Bull terrier, should know.

**Step 1).** Calmly walk over to the dogs and as simultaneous as possible step over, straddle and then lock your legs around one of the dog's hips just in front of the hind quarters this while facing the behind of the dog's head. Make sure your legs are locked securely **around the dog.**

**Step 2).** Calmly then with your free hand grab a handful of skin from the back/nap / of the neck or the collar or choker and pull upward - strong grip in doing this is needed here.

You then are accomplishing two things, one is to neutralize the mobility of the dog by locking your legs around its hips and the other is to neutralize mobility of the front torso by way of a neck hold on the back of the dog's neck.

Looking and understanding what just happened – not wanting to let go, the dogs are still holding on to each other and each handler has his dog in a tight leg squeeze just in front of the stifle/hind quarters while at the same time holding the dogs front

section by way of grip on the back of the dog's neck – in so also having control of the dogs neck and head and locking the dogs behind.

When looking in your dog's mouth notice a gap where the teeth do not meet.

This 'pre molar' area is the place the breaking stick will be sided in to break hold.

Once you do this, the dog can be pulled away and safely be controlled and put away.

*{See this action on "Schoolboy's clip demonstrated".}*

Step 3). Each handler inserts his breaking stick in the pre molar area where the gap is found.

Sometimes you need to work the stick just a bit if the dog is biting real hard or when the dog does not have a mouthful hold.

The stick should be inserted from 20 – 80mm into the dog's mouth.

Step 4). Now, as if you're twisting the throttle of a motor cycle, so too you must twist the breaking stick.

This is the action that spreads the dog's jaws far enough apart so that you can now pull back with the other hand still with the breaking stick in the dog's mouth.

Viola, the dog is off. It is that simple.

### **What now – if the dogs are apart?**

Once the dog in bite is separated and the dogs pulled apart it is critical that you do not release the dogs - or the dog fight will begin again.

Circling method – discussion - not every dog man will agree.

Each person grabs from behind the back feet of one of the dogs and lifts the legs like a wheelbarrow.

With the back legs up, both dogs are then pulled away from the other dog.

As you step backward, move around in a slow circle - turning (moving) in a circle, or slowly swinging the dogs in a circle while you back away from the other dog.

This way the dog has to side-step with his front legs reducing the chance of the dog turning around to bite or it will fall on its chin. As long as you slowly continue to back and circle, the dog cannot do any damage to you.

To insure that the fight will not begin all over again when you release the dogs, one of the dogs needs to be dragged into an enclosure (i.e. a kennel, the garage, another room) – do the same with the other dog.

If only a fence will protect one from another the fight can and will continue if you kennel the one dog and release the other to get to that fence.

Both dogs need to be **safely** kennelled away from each other.

If you do not do this, the dogs will often charge back and start fighting again or if you release the dog to quickly the dog might turn and attack the person who had his feet.

### **Looking at and understanding the mechanics of a dog fight.**

All dogs use their hind quarters for both leverage and mobility and it is the most important place to start when stopping a fight.

Once you remove the back end from the equation you've stopped 75% of a fight.

You will find most of the time the dogs to quit shaking and moving as soon as they feel their hind quarters locked by your legs.

They almost freeze.

Once their movement is under control it's super easy to grab the neck and insert the breaking stick.

Holding the neck with your free hand helps to control the head towards any direction, prevent a dog from biting you while stopping the fight.

Practice working the breaking stick with your APBT at home while the dog is fighting the hide rope or tire – in hold.

This will come easy – within 5 seconds.

Straddle/grab/break and you're finished.

No unnecessary damage due to pulling, beating or whatever else methods one might employ.

The next time you're playing with your APBT dog, open the mouth and you'll see the "gap" mentioned.

Then use your breaking stick while playing tug-o-war or have the dog grab something and try your breaking stick.

Straddle/grab/break and you're finished.