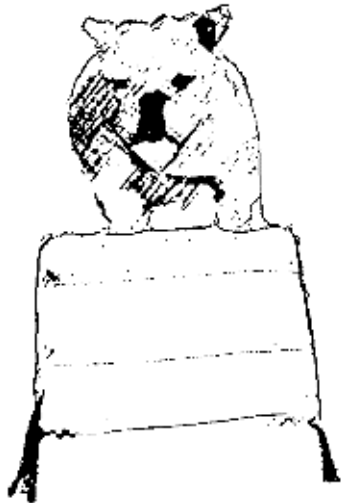


a pack member. A puppy that follows you for a moment then veers off to investigate their own interests or ignores you when you ask him to come is more independent and will be harder to train. Retrieval instinct is not often found in Bulldogs and it needs to be nurtured to advance in competition. Try throwing a small toy just a few feet to see if he will go out to it and pick it up. Retrieve instinct is not essential but it does make it easier to teach advanced retrieving skills.

Puppies with attitude and drive will require effort on your part to devise ways to channel their energy and curiosity but not stifle it.



### **CONFORMATION**

Conformation and soundness are necessary components of a working Bulldog. The working parts of his anatomy are very important. He need not be a show prospect but must have correct length of back, adequate shoulder and rear leg angulations and be balanced. Most importantly, he must be a good breather. He should have a properly arched neck to aid his breathing. Try to avoid pinched nostrils. Heavy bones show prospects can be equally successful in the performance arena if they are sound in body and breathing ability. The Bulldog is supposed to be a very athletic, strong dog and therefore is very capable of working.

### **TRAINING**

Once you have found your working Bulldog you must take advantage of his willingness and energy by channeling them in the right direction without discouraging him with negative responses. You cannot make a great performance dog out of a poor prospect but you can very easily ruin a potentially great dog by improper training methods.

Bulldogs, even very willing ones, do not have an intense need to please. They like to make us happy but if they don't succeed they seldom worry

about it! This type of a dog does not find repetition exciting nor is it productive. Repeating a portion of training 2-3 times then moving on usually is better than drilling over and over. Bulldogs are intelligent. When they don't do what we ask it is usually because they don't want to, not because they don't understand it! Our job is to convince them they want to perform the activities we want and that they are fun. Only then will our Bulldogs buy into our program and earn those performance titles. A working Bulldog cannot be made to do anything!

Rewards are the most important part of training a Bulldog. Petting, praise, food and fun are the type of rewards that appeal to most Bulldogs with food probably leading the list. Even when using food as a motivator, most Bulldogs will not readily respond to mundane rewards such as dog biscuits. Much better results are obtained by using liver cookies, not dogs, chicken, etc. Few Bulldogs work for minimum wage!



## **ATTENTION**

Attention is the key to successful training. Until your Bulldog will pay attention your training will have little success. Attention training will strengthen the bond between you and your Bulldog resulting in the focus needed to perform well, in spite of distractions. Dogs that do not pay attention to their owners are easily distracted in a performance venue. There are many books and videos on the market if attention training is not available in your area.

## **CONDITIONING**

Conditioning is the second necessity for a performance Bulldog. A dog cannot sit around all week and be expected to go out and perform a strenuous routine on the weekend.

He should have plenty of opportunity to run and play each day in order to earn to use his body efficiently and to build strong muscles and ligaments. If possible provide an area with varied levels. Let him play on hills or banks to improve strength and agility. Keep his weight down. Fat stresses the soft tissues and the respiratory system. Be cautious about training or performing in warm weather and always carry water, towels, spray bottles and cool pads.



Throughout your Bulldogs performance career it is important to make all performances and training sessions short, fun and rewarding. Training should never be boring or too repetitive.



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## **SELECTING YOUR PERFORMANCE BULLDOG**

Almost any sound, healthy Bulldog can compete at and attain entry-level performance titles in obedience, agility and tracking. Sometimes, though, the bug to really take a dog to the upper levels of performance bites you. What should you look for?

## **ATTITUDE**

The most important single trait that all performance animals share is attitude. It is the willingness to work hard, to succeed. It is the dog that finds performing exciting and fun. The dog with attitude has a desire to do the job and will earn titles at the higher levels.

Look for a dog that is inquisitive, bright and alert. Your working Bulldog should be curious about everything around him. He will have a higher than average energy level.

Test your bright puppy by asking him to follow you with a bit of food or a toy. Back away a few feet and see if he will readily come to you. The puppy that follows and wants to be with you has higher pack drives and will attempt to please you as