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## Pitbull ear cropping guide

Pitbull ear cropping is an old and painful practice that many consider inhumane. Some people are of the view that ear cropping is required for dogs who are involved in fights. They hold the erroneous belief that the dog will fight better because of improved hearing. But this is far from the truth and has been disproven. When a Pitbull's ears are cropped, they have the tendency to look more aggressive and ferocious which gives them a bad reputation as a violently aggressive breed. Unfortunately, Pitbulls are not the only breeds that are subject to the cruel practice of ear cropping. Dog breeds such as Great Danes, Dobermans, Schnauzers, Cane Corsos, and Boxers are also made to undergo this painful procedure. At What Age Can You Crop Your Pitbull's Ears It is a myth that a Pitbull's ears will only stand up if they are cropped as a puppy. Sadly this myth is still believed by many to this day. The truth is that it doesn't matter at what age you crop your Pitbull's ears because it will still stand up. You can have your Pitbull's ears cropped at any age if you really would like to, but the practice is more traumatic and painful when your dog is older. This is why many people have the procedure done before 12 weeks of age. Most vets recommend having it done between 7 and 12 weeks of age. Even though there is no age limit to having the procedure performed, most vets will actually refuse to do an ear cropping procedure, after your pit bull has turned a certain age. They usually use a timeframe of about 12 - 16 weeks with some of them instead of using a cut-off weight of about 15 - 20 pounds. That said, some veterinarians follow no such rules and will perform the surgery on your dog at any age or weight. What Do Pitbull's Ears Look Like Similar to Greyhounds and Labradors, Pitbulls have drop ears which are rosebuds in shape. Their ears have an upward curl known as the cartilage. The cartilage is a little lifted around the folded flap, which gives them an inquisitive appearance. As puppies, their ears are a bit oversized, but this soon changes, As the Pitbull grows from a puppy to an adult. These slightly larger ears become more proportional to the rest of their body. They have a little curl at the top and form a more erect position. It should go without saying that the shape of your Pitbulls ear may be slightly different from another Pitbull. Some Pitbull's ears may be a little floppier while others are more firm. But they all have the cartilage flap covered by smooth skin. When the ear is cropped, the pinna is removed to make the cartilage look more erect. The Reasons Why People Crop Pitbull's Ears Some of the many reasons and myths that have led to this ongoing and cruel practice are as follows: For Protection During Dog Fights Since the ears are seen as easy targets for the dog's opponent during dog fights, some dog owners would use Pitbull ear cropping to minimize the risk of injury to the ears during fights. They also used it for dogs who went hunting. It is not easily understood why the practice is still prevalent because dogfighting is illegal in most parts of the world. Some Dog Shows Require It To 'meet standards' and improve their chances of winning, many pet owners who wish to compete in dog shows and competitions are forced to get ear-cropping done on their Pitbull. Because many mixed-breed or All-American dogs take part in dog shows, this trend is gradually changing. Until recently, if their ears weren't cropped, certain breeds like the Pitbull were not allowed to participate or had little to no chances of winning. For Specific Breeds, It is Standard One of the primary reasons for this surgery is breed Standards. Aesthetics often take precedence over health and medical reasons since appealing to humans seem to be more important than functionality. Generally, many people still believe that breeds should look a certain way to meet our expectations, which is why ear cropping has become a standard for specific breeds. To Avoid Infections There is also the common misconception that cropping ears could limit the chances of infections in some breeds. Many held the false belief, and still do, that dogs with floppy ears have a greater chance of infection because they retain more moisture. But studies have shown that the ear is in no way a contributing factor to infection. To Improve Hearing People also thought that ear cropping improves hearing, but there is very little evidence to prove this. And even if there was any truth to this, the minor improvement in hearing would be insignificant. Is It Cruel To Crop Pitbull's Ears? Many people believe it is an inhumane practice, while others don't. The following are the harmful and long-lasting effects on your Pitbull: Life-Long Trauma - It can be a traumatic experience for many dogs to go through such pain for weeks. Just like humans, animals, process trauma in different ways. Because of this traumatic experience, your Pitbull can become more aggressive or reclusive. Increases the Risk of Infections - Though the opposite is believed to be true, cropping a Pitbull's ears can actually cause him to be more vulnerable to infections, not less. The ear remains prone to infection because it takes weeks and sometimes even months for the ear to totally heal. Sensitivity - Pitbulls in particular have many nerve endings in their cartilage. These nerve endings become even more sensitive when the ears are cropped. The puppy is kept on painkillers for days and this procedure is so painful that even slight touch or bump could trigger pain to their nerve endings. What is even worse, is that the sensitivity may never heal in many puppies causing them to live in continuous pain and discomfort throughout their lives. Cropped Ears Are Seen as More Aggressive and Dangerous - Ear cropped Pitbulls are often seen as dangerous and aggressive. This is because it was a sign of a dog that had trained for fighting. Dogs Use Their Tails and Ears to Communicate - Dogs need to use their ears to communicate with their owners as well as other dogs. For example, when they are becoming alert or edgy, dogs move their ears slightly forward. Also, letting their ears down is a sign of acceptance and submission. Ear cropping robs them of their full ability to communicate. The Ear Cropping Procedure The ear cropping surgery is also known as cosmetic otoplasty. It is an almost 30 to 40-minute surgery that requires full anesthesia along with a recovery process of a few weeks. The ears are sutured and bandaged at the edges after surgery. The ears are then taped to make them appear more upright. Because Pitbulls have a lot of nerve endings in their ears, they become very sensitive to the touch after surgery. It is alarming that veterinary schools do not teach this procedure, forcing vets to learn about this on the job, before it can be performed. This only increases the risks associated with carrying out this surgery. Ear cropping should always be performed with full anesthesia and must be done by a licensed veterinarian that has experience with this procedure. The pinnas are cut to a certain length, and after the surgery, bandages are wrapped around the ears. This can last for days or months, depending on how fast healing occurs. Medicines are given to assist with the reduction of soreness and prevention of infection. When the procedure is done, your vet may need to keep your dog overnight, but in some cases, you may be able to take them home the same day. They also usually give you pain medication for your Pitbull. Ensure that you ask because some of them might forget. Pitbull Ear Cropping Styles The Battle Crop - This type of crop allows the ear to sit very close to the head and is the shortest of the styles. Because it creates an aggressive look to the already tough breed, it's a favorite for American Bully and Pitbull fans. But this ear cut style makes the dog more prone to infections and there's also a chance that the ear will lay flat as opposed to standing erect. The Short Crop - This type of cut is the cross between the show crop and battle crop. It is where a tiny amount of ear pokes out on the dog's head. Because the ear cut style goes well with the wide head of the breed, the short crop is the chosen cut for most American Bully owners. The Show Crop - This is seen as a favorite among Pitbull owners because it has one of the best chances of producing erect ears. The Long Crop - The long crop leaves a large section of the ears intact. However, it is shaped to create an elongated design. It gives a good balance between the dog's face and the ears if done right. How To Find A Good Vet That Can Crop Your Pitbull's Ears After you've decided that ear cropping is the direction you would like to take when it comes to your Pitbull, you need to find the best vet to perform the procedure. You can start by conducting research on the best vet with prior experience with ear cropping. The next step is to take your dog in for a visit to the vet to make sure that your puppy can handle the anesthesia. Some vets will do a blood test at this point. It's also a good idea to take along a few pictures of ear crops style that you would like. You can show them to the vet to verify that they can crop your Pitbull's ears in that style. It's important to ensure that they can offer the style you want because some vets will only a certain type of ear crop style. Additionally, you can talk to your vet about what you need to do the night before the surgery. Most likely you may receive instructions to abstain from dog food the night before the procedure and abstain from water the morning of. You must pay attention and follow the vet's instructions. When all is said and done this procedure is going to determine the way your dog looks for the rest of his life, so ensure that you do your research properly and source a good vet for his sake. Can Your Crop Older Pitbull's Ears? The short answer is yes! There's nothing about a Pitbull's that would prevent his ears from being cropped. Many people don't know that the procedure can be done on the animal at any age. However, to prevent excessive pain and trauma, the surgery is recommended to be performed as a puppy. This is because the younger the Pitbull, the softer their ear cartilage is, therefore they will have less pain from the surgery than an older dog with harder cartilage. Even though there is no age limit to having the procedure performed, most vets will actually refuse an ear cropping procedure after your pit bull has turned a certain age. They usually use a timeframe of about 12 - 16 weeks and some of them use a cut-off weight of about 15 - 20 pounds. Despite this, some veterinarians follow no such rules and will perform the surgery on your dog at any age or weight. Ear Cropping & Legal Aspect Ear cropping is becoming less and less common, because of the exposure and many voices speaking out with concerns against it. Steps have been taken to eliminate this practice by more and more organizations, pet owners, lawmakers, and vets, but a lot still needs to be done. The American Kennel Club (AKC) and the Canadian Kennel Clubs still allow the practice with the AKC citing that it is an 'acceptable practice integral to defining and preserving breed character and enhancing good health'. But their support comes with a lot of backlash from animal rights organizations. The American Veterinary Medical Association vehemently opposes this practice but other organizations, like the American Humane Association, are undecided on the matter. They oppose ear cropping unless it is required for medical reasons and performed by a licensed veterinarian. Ear cropping is prohibited in most parts of Europe as well as Australia. Many states in the US have been met with strong opposition when they attempted to ban ear-cropping. However, in Canada, some provinces have outlawed the practice, while in others, it is still legal under strict guidelines. Pitbull Without Cropped Ears The practice of ear cropping has proven to be a lot of unnecessary pain and trauma for the dog with no real reason or benefit. Not only that but they need their ears for communication and natural ears are less intimidating. Additionally, the softer edges of the ear look great on a Pitbull, which has such a distorted reputation for being aggressive and mean. At the end of the day, whether a dog's ears should be cropped causes people to have conflicting opinions. Many people believe that it is the owner's choice to crop their dog's ears if they wish, while others will fight to make it illegal across the globe. Pitbull Ear Cropping Prices & Recovery Time You will probably pay anything from \$150 to over \$800 on average for this procedure. Remember that, you won't automatically get a better crop just because you paid more. A reasonable price that you should expect to pay for a good crop is around \$250. This price should include everything, including the procedure itself, medications, and any follow-up visit. It will take approximately 10-14 days for the cut ears to heal especially as it is cartilage but sometimes, it may take a longer period. The Pitbull will need to wear an ear rack or tape to help keep the ears upright and erect in place while healing. Pitbull Ear Cleaning & Health Pitbulls build up wax and debris faster than we do because dogs' ear canals are much longer than ours. Avoid ear infections by cleaning your Pitbull's ears with a proper ear cleaner regularly. Simply put a few drops of a dog ear cleaning solution and use a soft, clean cloth or a cotton ball with cleaning solution to remove any debris or wax. You must never use a cotton swab or other foreign object in your dog's ears. Pitbulls tend to develop several aural issues. Chronic ear infections have been known to damage hearing function and can be very painful. A clear sign is if your dog shakes their head or scratches their ears too much. This is dangerous because, it can lead to burst blood vessels in the ear flap, causing a blood bruise and ultimately more pain for your dog. Final Words The benefits of cropping a Pitbull's ears have been debunked by science. Therefore, it is just a matter of getting the word out against this painful practice. Any danger during combat is an unnecessary argument since dogfighting is illegal in most places. Pitbull ear cropping is a needless, hurtful and inhumane procedure. There are no benefits for the dog, and it can hurt them. When it comes to surgery, there are alarming risks that come with complications from anesthesia or infection afterward during the long recovery time.

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