BULL TERRIER
RESCUE NETWORK

PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDE

Better photos. Faster adoptions.

The photo is the first impression. Most rescue dogs are scrolled past in under a second, not because no one wanted them, but because no one saw them. This guide changes that.

> **The best camera is the one you have with you.** Most great rescue photos are taken on a phone, and that is more than enough. This guide assumes that's what you're using.

QUICK TIPS

Three things that make the biggest difference.

BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT

What most rescue photos look like

- Cage bars frame the dog like a prisoner
- Concrete floor signals shelter, not home
- Dog looks stressed or shut down
- Adopters scroll past in under a second

What gets dogs adopted

- Dog reads as a pet, not a rescue case
- Background does not compete for attention
- Dog's personality has room to show
- Adopters can picture them at home

LIGHTING

Flash and harsh indoor light

- White coats go flat and featureless
- Flash causes red-eye or green-eye
- Harsh shadows under the chin and ears
- Dog looks washed out, not vibrant

Natural window light or open shade

- Coat texture and color come through clearly
- Eyes are clear and expressive
- Light wraps naturally around the face
- Dog looks warm and alive

ANGLE AND FRAMING

Shot from standing height

- Dog looks small and submissive
- Top of head dominates, face is hidden
- The egg-shaped head reads as strange
- No eye contact, no connection

Eye level, and know which angle you are going for

- Straight-on builds eye contact and connection
- Side profile shows the distinctive egg-shaped head. That silhouette is the breed.
- Both work. Decide what the photo is about first.
- Either way, get down to the dog's level.

SHOOT CHECKLIST

Pull this up before every shoot.

The setup takes five minutes. It is the difference between a dog that gets overlooked and one that gets a home.

BEFORE YOU SHOOT

- [ ] Find natural light: a window or a shaded outdoor area
- [ ] Clear the background of cages, clutter, and busy patterns
- [ ] Give the dog 5 minutes to settle and sniff around
- [ ] Have treats ready to direct their attention

CAMERA SETUP

- [ ] Wipe your phone lens. Smudges are the single biggest cause of soft, hazy rescue photos and it takes two seconds to fix.
- [ ] Turn flash off. It blows out white coats and causes red-eye.
- [ ] Use portrait mode if available
- [ ] Stick to the standard lens, not wide angle

DURING THE SHOOT

- [ ] Get down to the dog's eye level
- [ ] Wait for radar ears, not pinned back or flat against the head
- [ ] Decide your angle before you shoot. Straight-on for eye contact and connection, side profile to show the egg-shaped head. Both are right.
- [ ] Shoot 20 frames to get one great one
- [ ] Read the environment and let it support the photo. You are an editorial photographer capturing a moment, so look for whatever makes that moment true.

WHAT TO AVOID

- [ ] Leashes or hands visible in the frame
- [ ] Kennel bars or shelter signage in the background
- [ ] Direct flash in any situation
- [ ] Shooting from above the dog

Print this page and keep it with your gear. The checklist works best on paper, checked off box by box while the dog settles in.

BREED-SPECIFIC

Tips for bull terriers specifically.

White and light-colored dogs

White coats blow out fast in direct sun or with flash. Shoot in open shade or near a north-facing window. Slightly underexpose and recover detail in editing: it is easier to bring up shadow detail than to fix a blown-out coat.

Dark and brindle dogs

Dark coats absorb light and lose detail in low light. You need more light, not less. Overcast outdoor light is ideal. Avoid shooting against a dark background. The dog disappears into it and you lose the outline entirely.

High-energy dogs

You do not always have to wait them out. A 15-minute walk before the shoot helps, and burst mode lets you pick the sharpest frame. But high energy can work for you: switch to a wide lens and lean into the action. Some of the best rescue photos are dogs in motion, not sitting still.

Getting the head shape right

To show the bull terrier head shape, you are almost exclusively shooting from the side. The profile is where that distinctive egg shape lives. Get at eye level, shoot the side of the face, and let the silhouette speak for itself.

Foster home vs. shelter

Foster homes give you a head start: natural light, a couch, a yard. The dog looks like it already lives somewhere, and that reads immediately. But every photo in the gallery in the online guide was shot at a rescue. The environment is not the deciding factor. What matters is whether you are paying attention to the moment. Use what you have, control what you can, and focus on capturing something real. That comes through in any setting.

SEE IT IN PRACTICE

The full guide lives online.

Before and after examples, a photo gallery shot entirely at rescues, and an interactive version of this checklist: bullterrierrescuenetwork.com/guides/photography