

Chapter 1

Welcome to Boston!

In This Chapter

- ▶ Exploring Boston Terriers' ancestors and canine appeal
 - ▶ Understanding a pup's basic needs
 - ▶ Realizing the importance of housetraining and obedience
 - ▶ Knowing how to care for his medical needs
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When you think of a Boston Terrier, what picture pops into your mind? Perhaps you think of his unmistakable pug nose and pointy ears, his one-of-a-kind black-and-white tuxedo of a coat, or his endearing snorts and wheezes that trumpet his approach. Bostons pack a lot of personality in their small 15-pound bodies. It's no wonder why you're interested in this dapper little breed!

Before you invite a Boston to share your life, however, you should know a little bit about what makes these dogs tick. In this chapter, I describe why Bostons make such fantastic pets. I also offer pointers for how to care for their basic needs, from food and water to shelter and wellness.

Lovers, Not Fighters

Boston Terriers earned the nickname “American Gentleman” for good reason: They're intelligent, affectionate, classy dogs who make excellent companions. With their amiable demeanor, it's hard to believe that their ancestors were originally bred to be fighters!

The early days

Bostons are a blend of English Bulldogs and white English Terriers (now extinct). The first of these dogs was named Hooper's Judge, owned by Robert C. Hooper of Boston, Massachusetts. He imported the bulldog-terrier blend from his native England around 1870.

Early breeders in the United States admired the dog's look, so they refined and stabilized the breed, selecting for a smaller size, a likeable personality, and large expressive eyes. Eventually, they produced the American original that we know today.

These dogs enjoyed extreme popularity in the early 1900s. Placing first or second on the American Kennel Club's (AKC) list of registered breeds from 1905 through 1934, Boston Terriers were all the rage among fanciers and socialites alike. Over the past century, they've held a prominent position among the AKC's most popular dogs, consistently ranking among the top 20.

Today, Boston Terriers have made themselves at home in a range of households, from small apartments to large farms and everything in between. Though they retain hints of their terrier and bulldog ancestry, Bostons are unique, well-mannered dogs who bring joy to just about any home. To read more about the origins and breed standard of Boston Terriers, flip to Chapter 2.

Personality plus

Ask any Boston owner to describe her dog, and you'll get nothing but praise. Boston owners love their dogs, and for good reason! They're highly intelligent, low maintenance, well-mannered, and ready for anything.

Here are some more reasons to love Bostons:

- ✔ **They're great with kids.** Most Bostons adore children. When children are taught how to behave around dogs, Bostons and kids become fast friends, with the dogs often enduring wrestling matches and playing dress-up without a hitch. Because they have such a solid constitution, these little dogs can handle just about anything that a child can dish out. Jump to Chapter 6 for details about how to introduce your child to a Boston.
- ✔ **They're great with adults.** Integrating well in any household, Bostons make attentive companions for adults and seniors, too. Some Bostons become good *therapy dogs*, well-behaved pups who travel to nursing homes and hospitals to bring joy to patients. Skip to Chapter 12 for details.
- ✔ **They're easy to care for.** A definite perk, Boston Terriers are simple to maintain. They have short coats that can be easily washed and brushed. (See Chapter 8 for more about grooming your Boston.) They don't require a great deal of energy-expending exercise. And they are very intelligent, taking to housetraining and obedience training quickly. (Hop to Chapter 9 and 11 for housetraining and obedience-training details.)

- ✔ **They're a relatively healthy breed.** Though they do have some difficulties stemming from their shortened snout, or being *brachycephalic*, Boston Terriers are healthy dogs. They often live 12 years, often reaching their 15th birthdays. (Chapter 15 describes some breed-specific ailments to watch for.)
- ✔ **They fit in just about any home.** Bostons are the perfect size for apartments, townhouses, or single-family homes. Because they don't require a large yard, they make wonderful house pets.
- ✔ **They get along well with other pets.** Being an easy-going breed, Bostons are happy to share their homes with other dogs, cats, or even a caged hamster or bearded dragon. As long as they are introduced slowly, they'll get along like siblings! (Chapter 6 covers introductions between four-legged friends.)
- ✔ **They're addictive.** Once you get one, you can't stop, or so many Boston owners attest. Prepare to add a second Boston to your menagerie shortly after you get your first!

Why go purebred?

With all the homeless animals crowding shelters, you may ask yourself, why should I get a purebred dog when I can rescue a mutt? Purebred dogs have their advantages, including:

- ✔ **You can learn all about the breed before you bring him home.** Unlike a mixed-breed dog, purebred dogs have books like this one dedicated to them. You can read all about Bostons and get an idea of what they're like.
- ✔ **With a purebred dog, you have a good idea of what you're getting.** After researching about Bostons, you'll know how large the dog will grow to be. You'll be prepared for his playful personality. You'll be aware of any unique medical conditions the breed faces.
- ✔ **If you adopt your dog from a breeder, you also know the dog's lineage and pedigree.** You can trace the dog's ancestors and learn about her predecessors. You may have a grand champion in your family!
- ✔ **You'll benefit from breed-specific clubs and organizations dedicated to Boston Terriers.** Often, these clubs offer a forum for discussing health and behavior issues. You can learn about obedience courses and agility trials. Plus, it's a great place to socialize with other Boston lovers!

If you feel strongly about adopting a puppy or adult rescue, consider opening your home to a rescued Boston. Organizations across the country continually look for loving homes for special-needs or abandoned Boston Terriers, including: the Boston Terrier Club of America (<http://bostonterrierclubofamerica.org/rescue.html>), Boston Terrier Rescue (www.btrescue.org), Boston Terrier Rescue Net (www.bostonrescue.net), and Nationwide Boston Terrier Rescue Inc. (www.nationwidebostonrescue.org).

Give Me Shelter — And Food!

Like any pet, Boston Terriers require food and water, shelter, stimulation, and lots of love to thrive. The following sections touch on your pet's basic needs and how you can fill them.

Feed me!

Because they're considered small dogs, Bostons don't require copious amounts of food, unlike their giant-breed cousins who can eat up to 5 cups of chow a day or more!

Bostons eat a lesser amount, so quality matters when feeding your dog. You need to provide a delicious diet that meets his nutritional needs, which include digestible protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Luckily, pet stores and veterinary offices offer more variety than ever before — from dry kibble and canned foods to holistic and prescription diets. You'll find a formula that you and your dog are happy with.

Chapter 7 gives you more-detailed nutrition know-how, but for now, here's a rundown of the different diets you can feed your Boston:

- ✔ **Dried kibble:** These crunchy little morsels are formulated to contain all the nutrition your Boston needs. They come in a wide range of flavors and formulas, and contain a variety of nutrition sources. Whatever you choose, make sure that it's a quality recipe that derives its protein, carbohydrates, and fats from easily digestible sources.
- ✔ **Semi-moist:** With a texture resembling moist clay, semi-moist foods also contain balanced nutrition. They contain higher water content than the dried kibble, but because of the higher sugar content, semi-moist foods can cause plaque and tartar buildup on a dog's teeth, which can lead to tooth decay. Semi-moist food is best served as a treat rather than daily.
- ✔ **Canned:** What dog doesn't love a meaty stew? Canned diets closely resemble "real" food. They're often packed with carrots, potatoes, chunks of meat, and lots of gravy. Canned diets provide complete nutrition, a good amount of water, and a tempting meal for finicky eaters.
- ✔ **Natural or organic:** Very popular diets to feed dogs, many natural formulas derive their ingredients from organic farms and often claim to contain "human-quality" ingredients. These foods can be excellent choices for your Boston, but only buy them from reputable sources.

- ✔ **Raw:** Raw diets are just that: raw meat to feed to your pet. The prepackaged meals can be found in your pet store's freezer case. If you choose to feed your Boston a raw diet, first consult with your veterinarian. These diets lack the vitamins and minerals found in plant-based foods, so you'll need to supplement your pup's meals to provide adequate nutrition.
- ✔ **Homemade:** Rather than purchase a premade dog food from the grocery store, some people prefer to make their dog's meals from scratch. There are quite a few dog food cookbooks on the market that contain mouth-watering recipes for your pup. To ensure your Boston is getting all of his nutritional requirements, however, consult with your veterinarian before offering this type of diet to your dog.
- ✔ **Prescription:** Purchased through veterinary offices, prescription diets are for dogs who may have allergies or special nutritional requirements. Your veterinarian can prescribe the best brand to ease your Boston's condition.

Besides offering your pup a quality diet, you also need to feed him the right amount of food. A 15- to 20-pound dog, like your Boston, typically eats about a ½ cup per meal, twice a day. If you feed him treats, you should decrease that amount to account for the extra calories. You don't want a bulging Boston!



Food is important, but clean water is even more so! All dogs require access to fresh clean water to keep their bodies functioning normally. Fill his bowl daily and put one wherever your Boston roams — including outside and near his food bowl.

A home of his own

Just like you, your Boston needs his own space — a safe, comfortable environment to call home. That home includes his own crate or kennel, and his larger home — yours!

Creating his own space

Dogs are *denning* animals, which means that they like to have a dark, enclosed cave where they can feel safe and secure. Their den is where they can sleep, take a nap, or just enjoy some private time with their favorite toy.

A crate or kennel makes a perfect den. Available at your local pet specialty retailer, crates or kennels are typically made from plastic, powder-coated metal, or durable canvas. No matter what type you choose, make sure that it's easy to clean and sized appropriately — not too big and not too small. Jump to Chapter 5 for more information about kennels.

Crates are also a tool to help you housetrain your Boston. When you *housetrain* your dog, you teach him to hold his bladder and bowels until he's in an approved bathroom area. Dogs rarely defecate in the same place they sleep, so when you confine him to his den, he'll learn to wait to go to the bathroom. Chapter 9 gives you step-by-step instructions for how to housetrain your Boston.

Adapting your space

Though he'll have his own den, he'll consider your home an extension of his domain. To keep him out of trouble, you need to dog-proof your home, just as you would childproof a home. Get on all fours — your hands and knees — and investigate each room from your dog's perspective:

- ✔ **Kitchen:** With all the smells to investigate and cabinets to explore, the kitchen is a tempting place for a Boston. Install childproof latches on all the cabinets and drawers, and keep a secure lid on the garbage can.
- ✔ **Bathroom:** The bathroom can be a dangerous place for your pup. Cosmetics, medications, razors, and dangling cords look like playthings to your Boston. Keep them out of his reach. Your dog could ingest a stray cotton swab or bar of soap — which could mean a trip to the emergency room!
- ✔ **Living room:** A busy area of the house, the living room contains a range of temptations, from houseplants and electronics to strewn shoes and books. Secure loose cords behind furniture, and keep houseplants and other important objects out of your Boston's reach.
- ✔ **Bedroom:** If an item of clothing smells like you, it's fair game for your dog! To protect your belongings, keep your clothing and shoes in a closed closet. Secure loose cords, position plants out of your Boston's reach, and keep the area tidy.
- ✔ **Garage:** Keep all those car fluids, yard tools, fertilizers, and poisons behind closed and locked cabinets. Antifreeze is a particular danger because it tastes sweet to animals, yet just a small amount can be toxic.
- ✔ **In the yard:** Rat poisons, snail bait, and fertilizer can be deadly to your dog, and gardening tools look like fun toys to a playful pup. While your Boston is in his exploring stages, avoid using poisons and put away your tools to prevent bumps, cuts, and other injuries. It's better to be safe than sorry!

Chapter 5 has more details about protecting your Boston from dangers in your home.

Time for fun!

Your Boston also needs some things to keep his little mind stimulated. From balls and toys to interactive games and playtime with you, you can offer your curious Boston all sorts of diversions.

Bostons in Toyland

Toys and games for your Boston include squeaky toys, plush animals, bouncy balls, and treat-dispensing Kongs. Your Boston will choose his favorite and adopt it as his own!

Pet stores stock a variety of toys. Choose those that are sized appropriately for your small Boston. Toys that are too small can be a choking risk; too large may mean your dog won't play with them.



To keep things interesting for your dog, rotate his toys. Instead of giving him a dozen new toys at once, pull them out sporadically or offer him a new one when the old one wears out. You'll want to buy him a fun new trinket every time you visit the pet store, but resist the temptation to give it to him right away.

Get out and play

With their ceaseless energy — especially when they're puppies — Bostons love to get out and explore. Here are some fun things you can do with your dog:

- ✓ **Take a walk.** Outfit your pup in a harness, attach a leash, grab some pickup bags and go for a walk. Your Boston will explore everything he comes into contact with! If you take your puppy on dusty trails, however, keep the journey short. His prominent eyes are prone to scratches and irritation. Stick to walks through a grassy park or around the neighborhood where he's less likely to irritate his eyes.
- ✓ **Visit your local dog park.** As pet popularity continues to skyrocket, more dog parks are opening up. These fenced-in areas allow you to let your Boston run free! Before you visit one of these places, however, make sure he's up to date on all his vaccinations.
- ✓ **Play a game of fetch.** A great way to expend pent-up energy, a rousing game of fetch challenges your Boston to retrieve and return a ball, disc, or any other quarry. Some dogs enjoy this fun for hours and hours!
- ✓ **Get involved in organized sports.** Enroll your Boston in competitive sports like agility, tracking, or flyball. *Agility* requires your dog to run through obstacles in a timed race, *tracking*

challenges him to follow a scent over a distance through various terrains, and *flyball* pits him against other dogs to jump over hurdles to catch a flying tennis ball. Organizers of these activities can be found through your local dog breed club. Chapter 12 describes these fun sports in detail.

- ✓ **Plan a party.** Who doesn't love a party? Gather your dog-owning friends and host a dog social. Make a cake — for the dogs, of course — plan games and activities for the dogs, and have a fun time! The dogs will love to interact and socialize, and you will enjoy spending time with other dog owners.

How to Be a Good Boy

Besides providing food, shelter, and toys for your dog, you also want to train him to be a well-behaved member of society. Here are some things to consider:

Socializing for life

Socializing your Boston is when you teach him how to interact with his world. When your Boston is a puppy, he needs to experience as many sights and sounds as possible. He needs to meet many different people and be introduced to many different situations. When you teach him these things, he'll be on track for becoming a well-mannered pooch.

Here are some milestones you should be aware of. (Chapter 10 contains additional pointers for bringing up a polite Boston.)

Part of the litter

From birth to about 6 weeks of age, puppies get their social stimuli from their mother and littermates. They learn how to interact with one another, begin to understand the social hierarchy, and start to develop their own personalities. Because your puppy will likely still be with his mother (and breeder) during these first formative weeks, you won't see too much of this developmental phase.

The human connection

Dogs begin to interact with humans when they reach 5 to 12 weeks of age. They learn — hopefully — that people bring positive things, like food, shelter, and lots of love. It's critical at this phase to introduce your Boston to as many people as possible. They should hold your dog, pet him, and handle him. They should let the puppy sniff them and get to know what humans are like.



At about 8 weeks old, puppies enter their first fear phase. At this age, he becomes aware of the world around him — and sometimes, it can be frightening! Most breeders won't let puppies go to their new homes until after they pass through this fear phase.

The wide, wild world

By the time your Boston reaches his 3-month birthday, he'll be ready to explore the world. From about 12 weeks to 20 weeks old, your Boston should experience as many different environments as possible. He'll want to inspect and sniff everything he sees. Take your dog with you wherever you go (if possible) to open his eyes to the world. The more things he experiences, the better.

Listening and obeying

Obedience is more than teaching your dog fun parlor tricks. *Obedience* is when your dog learns to obey commands like “come” or “stay” — edicts that may be very important if he is in a life-or-death situation, like running into oncoming traffic!



When you're teaching your Boston basic commands, always use positive reinforcement rather than negative correction techniques. *Positive reinforcement* recognizes the pup's positive behaviors, rewarding him with treats and praise for a job well done.

Puppy kindergarten is a great place to begin to teach your puppy obedience. Often offered through veterinary clinics, pet specialty stores, or humane societies, puppy kindergarten teaches you tools for training your Boston. You learn basic commands, including the following (which are also detailed in Chapter 11):

- ✔ **Settle:** This command puts your dog in a submissive position. Your pup is calm and relaxed, with soft eyes, ears back, belly up, and tail tucked. He is essentially relinquishing control.
- ✔ **Sit:** Sit is when you command your dog to stay in place, waiting for your instruction. The starting point for most other commands, Sit requires your pup to look to you for guidance.
- ✔ **Stay:** Paired with Sit, Stay is when your dog holds his position until you tell him otherwise. It's a posture that can save his life.
- ✔ **Come:** Another life-saving command, Come tells your dog to return immediately to you. It's one of the most important commands your dog will learn.
- ✔ **Heel:** When you walk with your Boston, you want him to walk beside you and not pull on the leash. This is especially important for Bostons because some can have narrow windpipes, which make it difficult to breathe.

Caring for Your Boston's Needs

To keep your Boston healthy and happy until his 12th or 15th birthday (or longer!), you need to care for his medical needs. That includes establishing a good relationship with a veterinarian, keeping a canine first-aid kit handy, and being aware of your dog's unique medical needs. Here are some things to consider:

- ✔ **Veterinary visits are fun!** Besides you and your family, your dog's veterinarian will be his best friend. Your vet will offer preventive advice, emergency service, annual checkups, and general advice about dog care. Teach your Boston early that visits to the veterinarian are something to look forward to! Chapter 14 describes qualities to look for in veterinarians and what to expect during your pup's vet visits.
- ✔ **Know your Boston's special medical needs.** Bostons are a *brachycephalic* breed, which means that their shortened snouts can create respiratory challenges. That snorting and wheezing may be endearing, but it can be a sign of a debilitating medical condition. See Chapter 15 for details.
- ✔ **Be prepared.** Gather canine first-aid supplies and keep them near your human first-aid kit. In case of emergency, those tools can help to stabilize your Boston until you can get him to an emergency clinic. The essentials are listed in Chapter 16.
- ✔ **Check him while grooming.** Your Boston can't tell you when something hurts, but you can watch his reactions when you inspect his body while grooming or petting him. Look for unusual lumps, bumps, or sore spots. If you see something new, consult with your veterinarian.
- ✔ **Ageing Bostons have special needs, too.** Elderly dogs have their own set of medical conditions, including age-related disorders and dietary changes, that warrant your attention. Chapter 17 goes through them in detail.