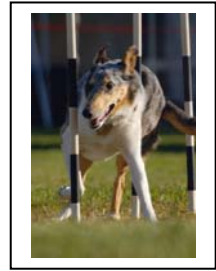


Dog Agility Pre-School

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Dog Agility Pre-School – Basic Concepts “Go on” drills

In agility, a dog has to work away from the handler, at least he does for you to take advantage of many handling opportunities to run a complex course smoothly and safely. One basic skill is having your dog move out ahead of you, with you directing your dog from behind. Actually, most pet manners training discourages a dog moving out ahead of his person, but in agility a dog learns to do this on cue while waiting for further cues (verbal or body language) from the handler. Dogs have great peripheral vision, so they can see the handler from behind, and herding breed dogs in particular are naturally skilled at being able to run ahead while their heads are partially turned back to watch the handler.

We'll employ a number of drills to teach our dogs to drive ahead with speed and confidence on cue. There are two categories of send-away drills:

1. Send aways toward a stationary visual target:

- 1-pole & 2 wide pole (barrel) drills
- Alley-oop, nose touch targets
- Table
- Pre-placed toy or tug-n-treat

We'll first teach the go on/send-away cue with a visual target, as it makes more sense to a dog to move forward to something, as opposed to nothing.

2. Go on: with no target visible with the cue, but a reward is thrown ahead after the dog moves out.

- • Food/toy bowling: On your walk, or around the house, find opportunities to send your dog ahead. When the dog moves forward toss food or a toy ahead of your dog, aiming for the food to appear magically in front of the dog as a reward for moving ahead. You can use a clicker to mark the moving ahead behavior but reward quickly so the dog doesn't look back at you for the reward.
- 1-2-3 game: one of the progressions is for the dog to move out and then you click and reward. This progression is after your dog understands the fundamental part of the game, which is to control anticipation and drive. You then use that drive to allow the dog to move ahead on your release cue and you reward with a tossed toy or tug'n'treat.

In agility, we'll always be sending our dog away to a visual stationary target but on a complex agility course, there will be many options. You'll need to tell your dog to move on out ahead of you first and then tell your dog the destination, either with a verbal cue for the obstacle or a directional verbal or body language cue.

Examples of when you need a dog to move ahead of you include when you or your dog needs to

- do a rear cross;
- do an independent 180° or 270° jump sequence;
- finish the course quickly on straight-aways that judges include on the last 3 or 4 obstacles to test your distance handling skills;
- do a gamble or FAST test of your dog's ability to work away from you.