



# Agility For Fun

*The things your dog needs to know to have a blast in agility class*

*Agility is about having fun with you dog and working as a team*

## Introduction To Equipment



In foundations class, we learned movements which were designed to help our dog move safely on our equipment so now it's time to actually use the equipment.

When introducing our dogs to new equipment, we must remember that it may be scary or intimidating so please

**Go Slowly**

**WE WANT YOUR DOG TO VIEW AGILITY AS A FUN AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE**

Let your dog wander about the agility equipment without any pressure to do anything other than sniff around. Reward your dog with treats as they sniff. Take times to play games like tug when you are in the presence of the equipment so your dog associates it all with fun!



**We will be introducing your dog to:**

Pause Box, Weave poles, Agility Ladder, Teeter, A-Frame, Tunnels, Single Jump, Triple Jump, Tire Jump and High Walk

**As well as:**

Learning agility drills, positioning, continuing safety, and course work



# Agility Ladder

**The agility ladder helps your dog become more aware of their paw placement, managing their balance and builds muscle.**

When starting the use of the agility ladder, lay it flat on the ground to get your dog used to the feel of the round bars under their paws.

**Slowly guide your dog to place their paws over the ladder's bars so that their two front paws are placed in the space in between. Have your dog approach the ladder from the side instead of approaching from the end.**

Don't approach from this direction at first



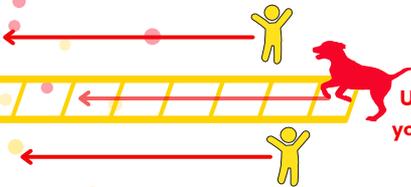
Approach from this direction

As your dog becomes more comfortable with stepping over the ladder, then we can have them approach from the end.



Now that your dog can step over the ladder, we can start having some fun!

Use the agility ladder to help your dog learn to lift their feet higher so they don't drag them on the equipment.



**Begin with the agility ladder flat on the ground.**

**Use the "follow me" game from foundations class to lead your dog through the ladder the full length at a slow pace.**

**MAKE SURE YOU PRACTICE THIS BEHAVIOR ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LADDER**



Once your dog is comfortable with the slow pace, see if your dog can do the same thing at a jog.

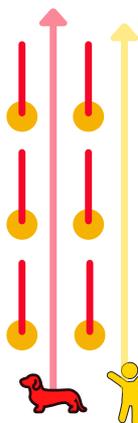
When you can move swiftly over the ladder, you can add some height to the ladder to increase the challenge.

**THE LADDER PROVIDES YOUR DOG THE AWARENESS OF WHERE THEY PLACE THEIR PAWS, WHICH WILL BE USEFUL WHEN THEY WORK ON THE A-FRAME, TEETER AND THE HIGH WALK.**

# Weave Poles



When starting with weave poles, we place them in two separate lines so your dog can grow comfortable with being in a forest of tall poles.



## Weave

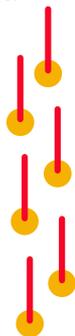


Reach your left hand out and use the "follow me" we learned in foundations class to guide your dog straight through the weave poles.

**SWITCH SIDES TO THE RIGHT AND PRACTICE ON BOTH SIDES AND BOTH DIRECTIONS**

When your dog is comfortable moving through the poles as they are spaced out, begin scooting them closer together and guiding your dog through them

Don't use the verbal cue "Weave" until your dog can actually weave through the poles



**USING A TOUCH STICK CAN HELP YOUR DOG LEARN TO WEAVE THROUGH THE POLES ONCE THEY ARE LINED UP IN A ROW**

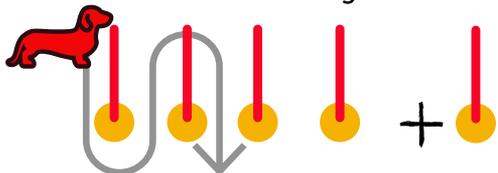
Reward heavily the first few times your dog manages to weave through all the poles



Space the poles out widely when learning



If your dog is having difficulty weaving through all 12 poles, start smaller with 4 and slowly add more as they get comfortable



**Don't rush your dog, keep agility fun!**



Dogs under one year old should not do weave poles





# Teeter

The teeter can be very scary for dogs since we are introducing them to an unstable ground surface which is something that dogs do not encounter in their everyday life.

If you don't have a teeter at home, you can make one by using a plank of wood with a block of 4x4 attached in the middle, on the bottom

In foundations class, we used a plank on the ground to get our dogs used to moving over the teeter. Now, we will be working with them to gain confidence on an unstable surface.



1

Start with the teeter at the lowest level setting. Place treats on the lowest edge of the teeter and allow your dog to explore while getting good treats.

2

Keeping the teeter anchored down so it won't move, begin placing the treats slightly higher onto the teeter, up the yellow portion of the contacts.

3

Lift the teeter a couple of inches off of the ground, allow your dog to place their paws on the elevated teeter without it dropping down. Use treats liberally and **be very patient!**

4

SLOWLY LIFT THE TEETER'S HEIGHT AS YOUR DOG BECOMES MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE SENSATION UNDER THEIR FEET. CONTINUE USING TREATS UP THE HEIGHT OF THE TEETER SO THAT YOUR DOG REACHES THE PIVOT POINT. **MAKE SURE YOU CONTROL THE SPEED OF THE TEETER AS IT TIPS TO THE OTHER SIDE.**

5

Soften the impact. Hold the teeter so you can allow it to hit the ground quietly when your dog continues moving. Often the sound of it hitting can be very scary for our dogs.

Go slowly, make sure you are moving at your dog's pace. The teeter will not be mastered in just one session. Be persistent and make sure you are both having fun!

# Tunnel



Before introducing your dog to the long tunnel, we begin with the beginner version. Our beginner version helps dogs feel comfortable moving under something while not feeling trapped. Your dog needs to trust that the tunnel is going to be safe for them which will require patience.

1

We begin with a short tunnel. You'll need two people to get your dog started. One person at one end, holding the dog, while the other person stands on the opposite end. Make sure that you make eye contact with your dog so they are aware that you are on the other side.

2

Once you know your dog is aware of you, call their name. It is okay to gently tap on the ground or the bottom of the tunnel to get your dog to understand that it is safe to move through. If your dog is hesitant, you can toss a few treats into the tunnel as encouragement.

3

When your dog is comfortable moving through the tunnel, you can begin making it longer. Repeat the steps above until your dog is comfortable with each new length.

4

You can begin to shape the tunnel into a curve once your dog is completely comfortable with the tunnel fully extended in a straight line. Add the curve slowly, just like you did as you extended the length of the tunnel.



Practice in both directions so your dog doesn't get used to approaching the tunnel from the same entrance



# A-Frame



The agility A-Frame is one of the most iconic pieces of equipment. People always want to try it out when they see one, but is also one of the more dangerous aspects of agility if used incorrectly.



**The A-Frame, Teeter and High Walk are the reasons why we learned about contacts and foot placement**

Lower the A-frame so that it is only 2-3 feet in height to start.

Lure and guide your dog over the frame slowly, rewarding heavily.

Pace yourself so your dog begins by walking so they paw touch the contacts on both sides.

As your dog becomes comfortable with the lower setting, you can slowly begin raising the height of the A-Frame. If your dog gets scared, go lower and build their confidence.



**Practice your 2 on / 2 off contacts with the A-frame by encouraging your dog to place their hind legs on the lower area of the frame, where the contact color is**

Never start your dog at a sit. Always begin the A-Frame at a walk/jog from at least 10 feet away. Dogs need the momentum to get over the top!



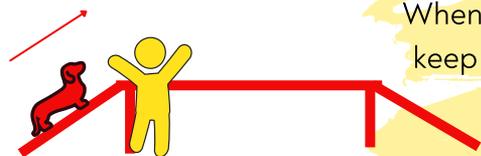
**At home, use the plank we used in foundations class and prop it up at an angle so your dog can practice their front leg & back leg contacts at the angle**

# THE HIGH WALK



Also known as the Dog Walk, this is a piece of equipment which provides it's own unique challenges to you and your dog.

The high walk combines the sloping angles of the A-Frame with height that can be daunting to many dogs and humans. This piece of equipment is not seen on every agility course.



When training the High Walk it is important to keep your dog steady with a tight hold on his leash.

It is best to have another person on the other side, to keep your dog from falling off. It will also help your dog feel more safe.

If you can lower the height, this is also ideal. Use your hand (and the treat) to keep your dog's focus on the board in front of them.



Your friend can help pat the board a foot or so ahead, to encourage your dog to walk ahead, and give your dog encouragement along the way.



**At the bottom, make sure your dog does not jump off the side too early, but walks all the way down, touching the yellow contact zones.**

# Jumps

We've been working with the frames of our jumps, but now it's time to add some height and have some fun!



**DOGS UNDER ONE YEAR OLD SHOULD NOT ADD HEIGHT TO THEIR JUMPS BECAUSE THEIR GROWTH PLATES ARE STILL MATURING AND IT CAN CAUSE JOINT OR SKELETAL DAMAGE.**



There are several styles of Jumps which your dog may encounter:

## SINGLE JUMPS

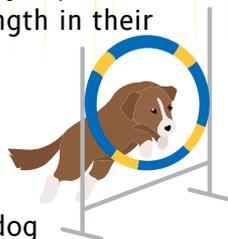
Single jumps are the most recognizable style of dog jump. Named after the single bar which the dog must jump over.

## TRIPLE JUMPS

These are a challenge, as they have three bars which make the jump wider, causing the dog to remain in the air longer and use more strength in their jump.

## TIRE JUMPS

This jump has a tire or hoop suspended in the center of the frame that the dog must aim to move through. This can be intimidating for dogs as they can be bulky and requires your dog to move through something instead of over it.



## WING JUMPS

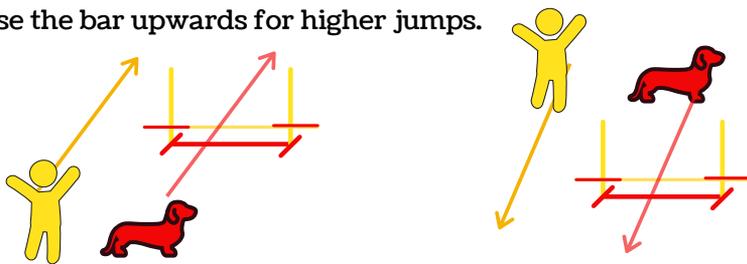
A single jump style which has large panels on the sides of the jump which create the illusion of walls.

**1** Begin with the jump bar on the lowest setting and walk your dog up to it. Allow your dog to inspect the added jump bar.



**2** Once your dog is comfortable, move to your starting position and move towards the jump at a walk using the "follow me" cue. Reward after your dog moves over the jump

**3** As your dog continues to be comfortable on the lower setting, you can raise the bar upwards for higher jumps.

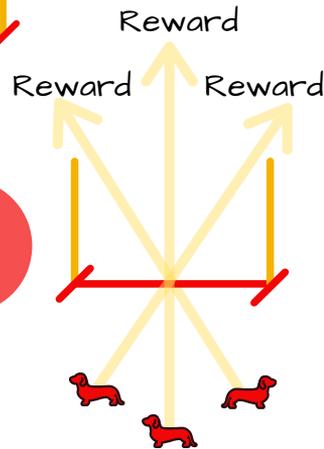
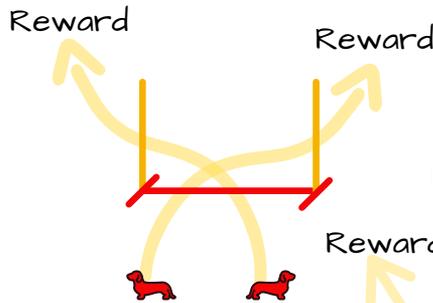
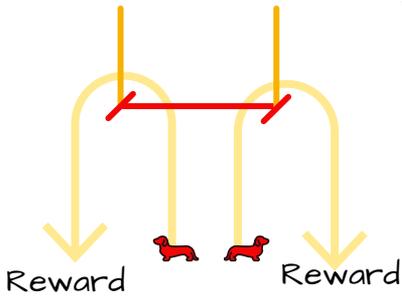


We will be starting by continuing with drills we learned in foundations class, which are now using jump frames

## Ground Bar Drills

## Send

This is the same skill set as done with the two cones, but now with a jump with the bar on the ground. Its not about teaching a dog to "jump" right now, that is a whole separate skill in its self, right now we are connecting as a team and learning to steer together on the move. Until you can do that we will not ask the dog to control jumping skills.



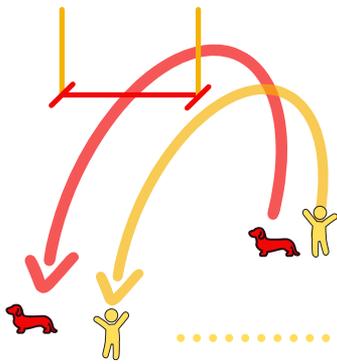
Working with your dog to "Go On" towards the reward teaches distance and obstacle independence.

**1** Have your dog sit/stay while you place the reward, return to your dog and verbal release

**2** Your arm/hand/foot closest to your dog should be coming forward towards the obstacle as you are using the verbal release

**Work your dog from the Left, the Right and the Middle**

Start with small distances and increase distance as your dog improves with success and understanding



Send your dog to the jump

Turn away when your dog is committed to the jump

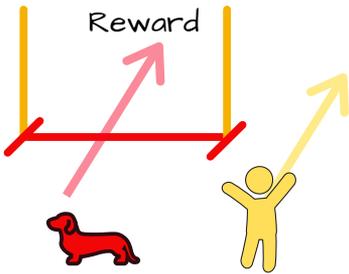
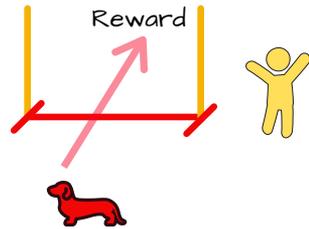
**CLICK!**  
**Reward!**

Walk at first, then increase your speed

Increase distance from the jump

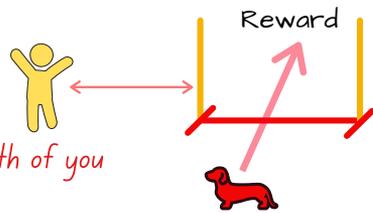
Have your dog sit/stay when you place the reward then move to a side jump position

With this drill, you will stand beside the jump, and be standing a little ahead of your dog when you use the verbal release



Start with you standing still near the jump

Try mixing it up and moving with your dog



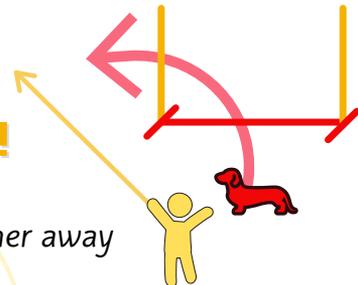
Build on working distance for both of you

**Remember** Work both directions of the jump

Have your dog sit/stay while you place the reward then move next to your dog

Give your dog the verbal release

**CLICK!**  
**Reward!**



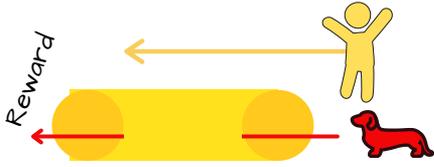
TRY:

- Standing next to your dog
- Standing near to your dog but slightly further away
- Standing stationary
- Moving with your dog



# Tunnel Send

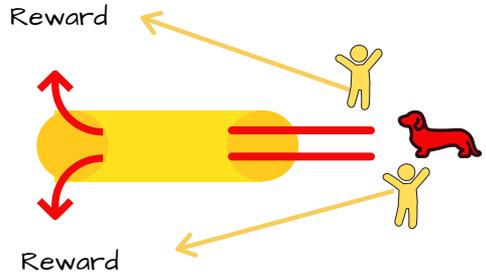
*JUST LIKE THE GROUND BAR DRILLS, YOU CAN USE YOUR "GO ON" CUE TO SEND YOUR DOG THROUGH THE TUNNEL.*



Have the tunnel straight and short when you first begin practicing the tunnel send.

*Keep it simple and move with your dog so that you can reward and praise when they come out of the tunnel*

Once your dog is comfortable moving through the tunnel, begin moving at an angle away from the tunnel's exit point and having your dog join you further away before they are rewarded.



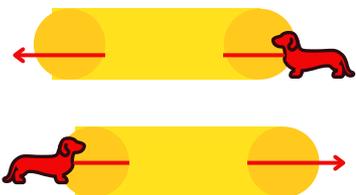
Adding a curve to your tunnel can create confusion for your dog since they will be unable to see anybody as they move through it. Start with a simple curve and

**CLICK!**  
**Reward!**

as your dog comes out the other end



*Make sure you are using your hand as a guide, like you did when you learned the "follow me" game in foundations class*



Dogs must be comfortable going through the tunnel in both ends, so make sure they can approach and turn in all all directions.

# A-Frame Practice



Since safety is so important when working with the A-Frame, we will be working some drills to ensure your dog is touching the contacts on their approach and their dismount.



We want to start off slow so your dog doesn't jump off of the A-Frame too early and injure themselves.

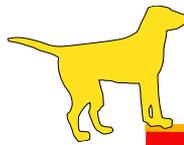
This is what we want the dismount to look like!



**Before your dog gets up over the A-Frame, we're going to have foot placement drills. These include the front feet and the back feet.**

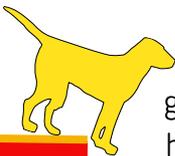
Begin with your dog standing next to a plank on the ground. Walk them towards the plank and pause once their front feet step onto it.

Reward and use your release word.



**CLICK!**  
**Reward!**

Continue walking up to the plank and rewarding as your dog touches the yellow contacts over and over.



Begin with your dog standing next to a plank on the ground. Walk them across the plank and stop when their hind legs are on the plank and their front legs are on the ground.

**CLICK!**  
**Reward!**



# A-Frame Drills



Begin your dog in their start position (on their pause box or using the hula hoop). Make sure there is at least 10 feet between the start and the A-Frame with the frame set low (2-3 feet high max)

Move to the A-Frame at a pace your dog is comfortable with.

Lure your dog up and over and make sure your dog is having fun with the activity.

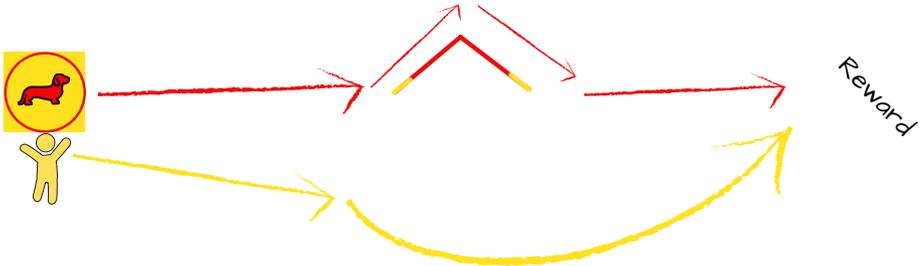
**CLICK!**

**Reward!**

As soon as your dog touches the ground on the other side



Now we will use our send to get our dog over the A-Frame instead of luring them and walking beside them.



Add your distance slowly, so your dog is confident with going over the frame alone

**Remember:**



DOGS NEED MOMENTUM TO GET OVER THE A-FRAME

# Adding Turns

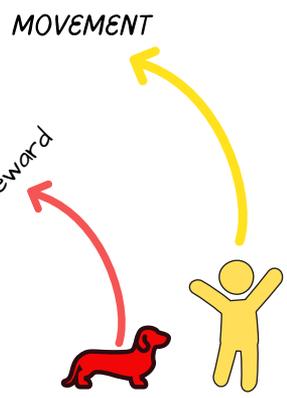
Now that your dog understands send (the cue "go on") we are going to begin with other handler cues to teach your dog if you want them to move to the right or to the left.

**AS ALWAYS, WE WILL BEGIN SLOWLY AND BUILD AS YOUR DOG GAINS UNDERSTANDING**

## Go-Left & Go-Right

WE WILL BE USING THE "FOLLOW ME" GAME TO TEACH OUR DOGS THE LEFT & RIGHT TURN WITH

- 1 With your "follow me" hand outstretched, begin with a forward movement at a swift walk.
- 2 Use the cue "left" or "right" and turn in the correct direction ensuring that your dog is following you.



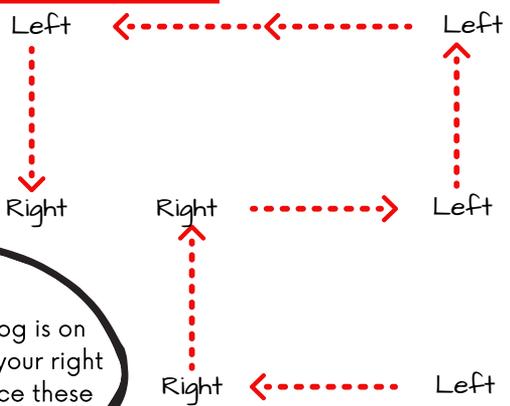
## AT HOME PRACTICE:

YOU CAN PRACTICE THESE CUES IN YOUR OWN YARD!

**THE END**

Make sure your dog is on both your left and your right side as you practice these cues!

**CLICK! Reward!**



REWARD FOR EACH TURN YOUR DOG MAKES!

# Putting It Together

Begin with your dog on their platform or in the hula hoop set on the ground in their starting position we learned in foundations class

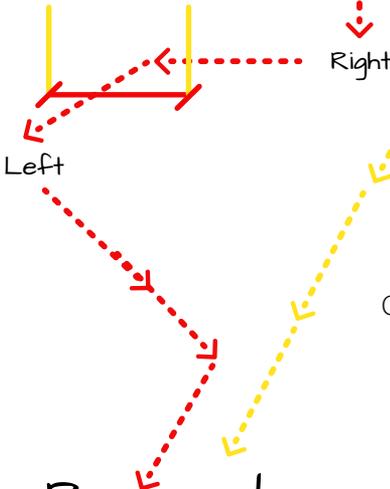


Pause Box



Use your "free-dog" release word and cue "follow me"

Cue "right" and then send your dog through a ground bar with "go on" cue



Even when your dog moves away from you, your "follow me" arm should still be extended to guide your dog's movement

Cue "left" to get your dog to return to you

Reward  
**THE  
END**

***DON'T FORGET TO  
CLICK!***

When you begin putting the cues together, start with one obstacle. We recommend beginning with a ground bar since that is the obstacle that your dog has been practicing with the longest. (Or cones when at home)

**Training  
Tip:**

Get yourself a handle leash! Instead of a traditional dog leash, using a leash which is only the handle attached to the clip will allow you to gain control of your dog quickly after the drill without getting in your dog's way

# Reading The Course

AGILITY COURSES ARE ALWAYS CHANGING AND YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO READ THEM SO YOU KNOW WHICH OBSTACLE COMES NEXT.



Here are what the icons we use look like

 Pause Box

 Tire Jump

 Tunnel

 Single Jump

 Teeter

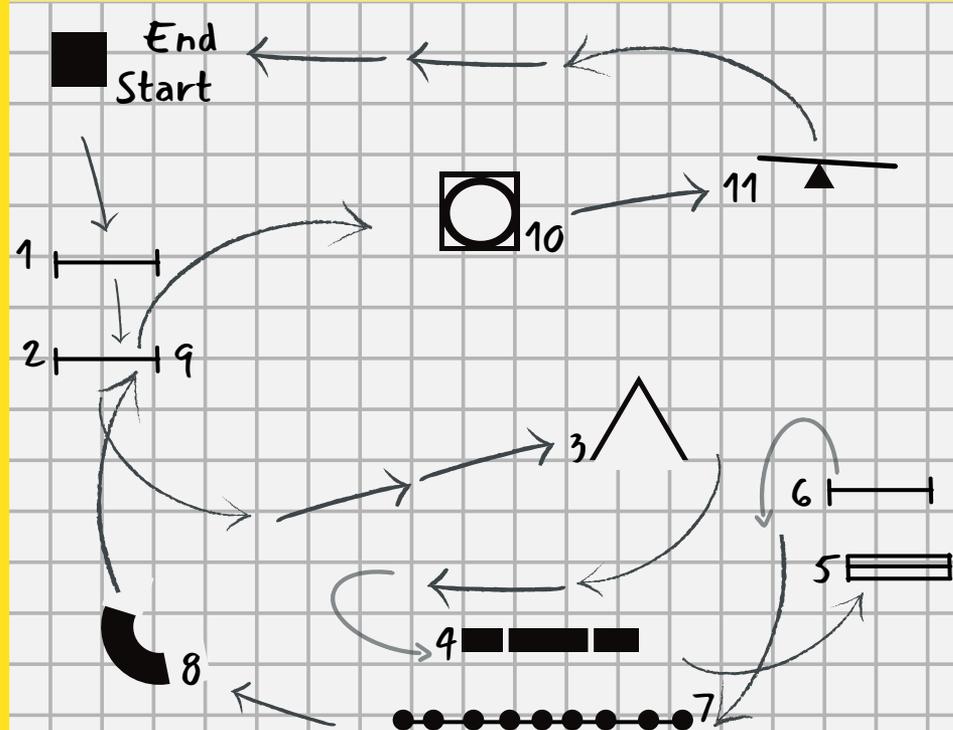
 A-Frame

 Triple Jump

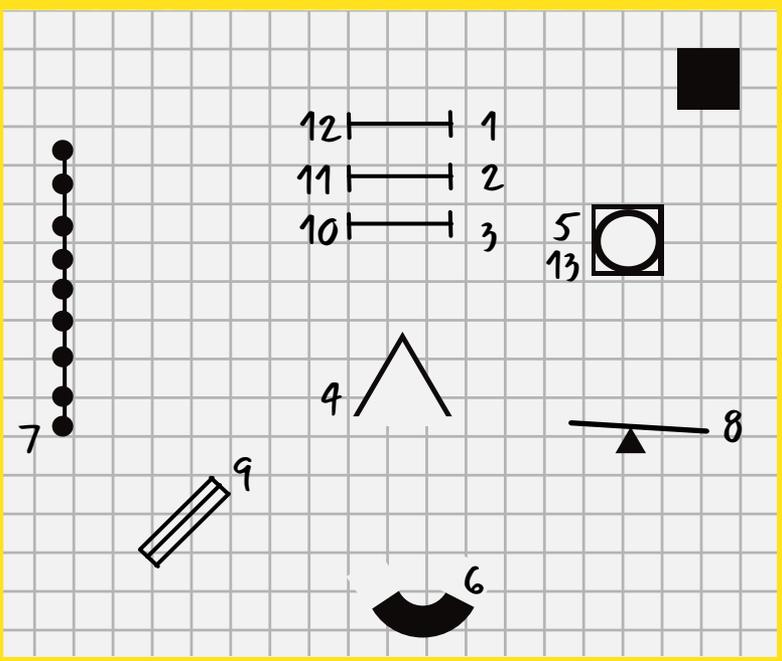
 Weave Poles

 High Walk

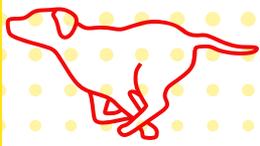
NEXT TO EACH ICON, YOU WILL SEE A NUMBER OR EVEN TWO. THAT WILL LET YOU KNOW THE ORDER OF EACH OBSTACLE.



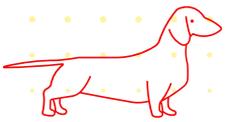
# Reading The Course



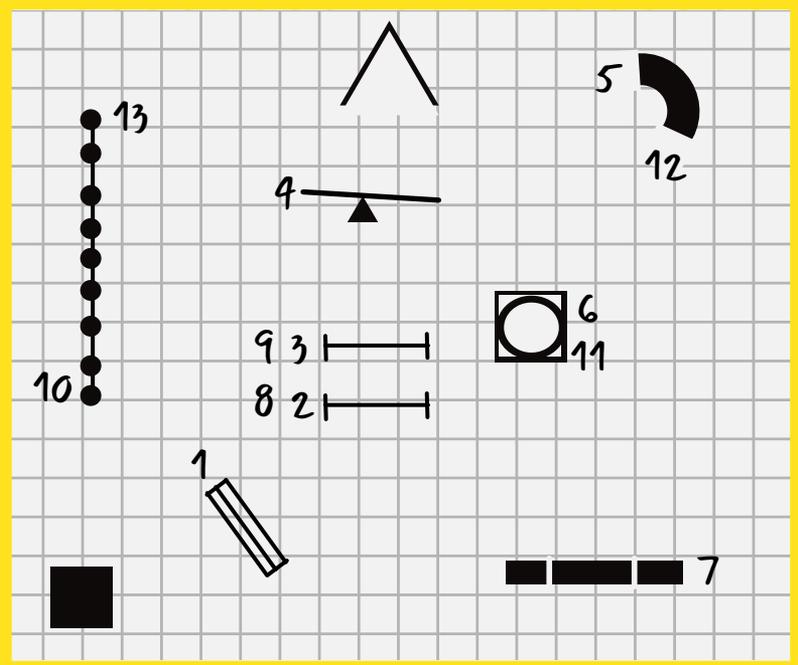
AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE, THE COURSES CAN BE A BIT CONFUSING WHEN THERE ARE OVERLAPPING STEPS.



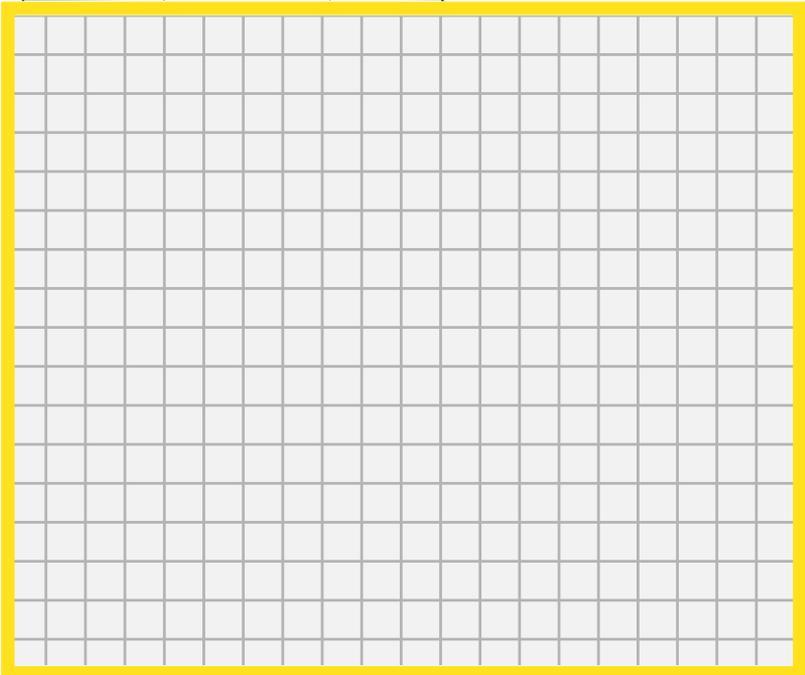
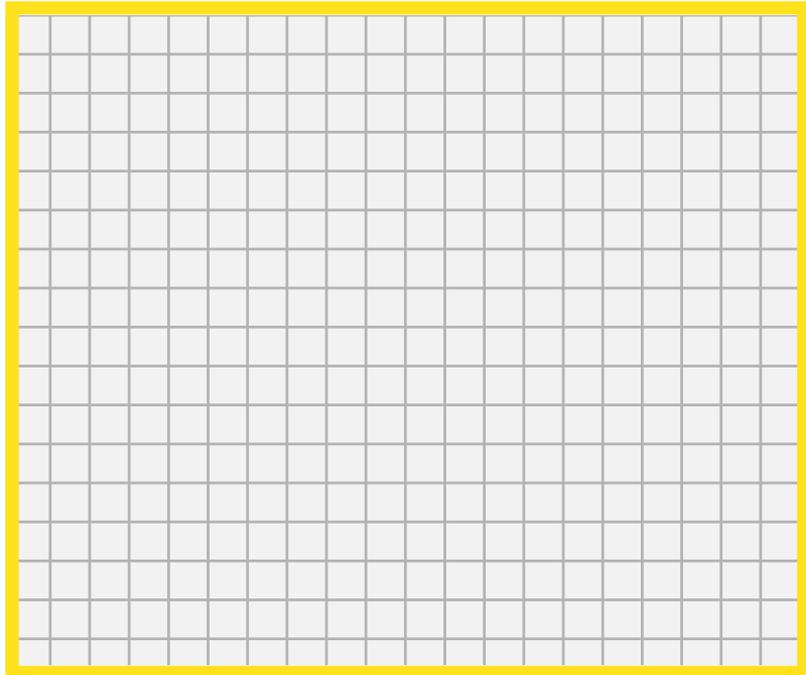
OFTEN, COURSE MAPS WILL NOT HAVE THE ARROWS POINTING TO THE NEXT STEP, FORCING YOU TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE SIDE OF THE OBSTACLE THAT THE NUMBER IS ON SO YOU KNOW WHICH DIRECTION TO APPROACH IT FROM.



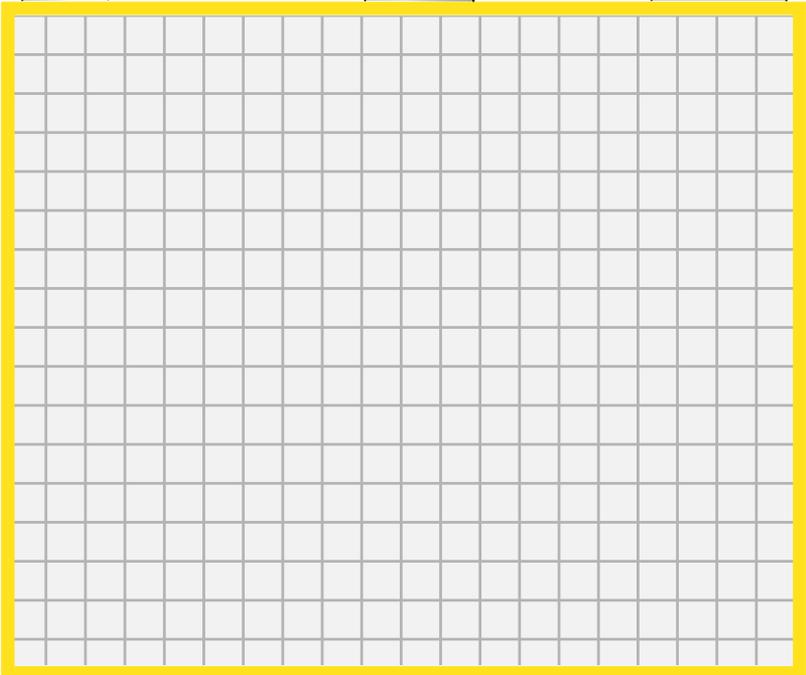
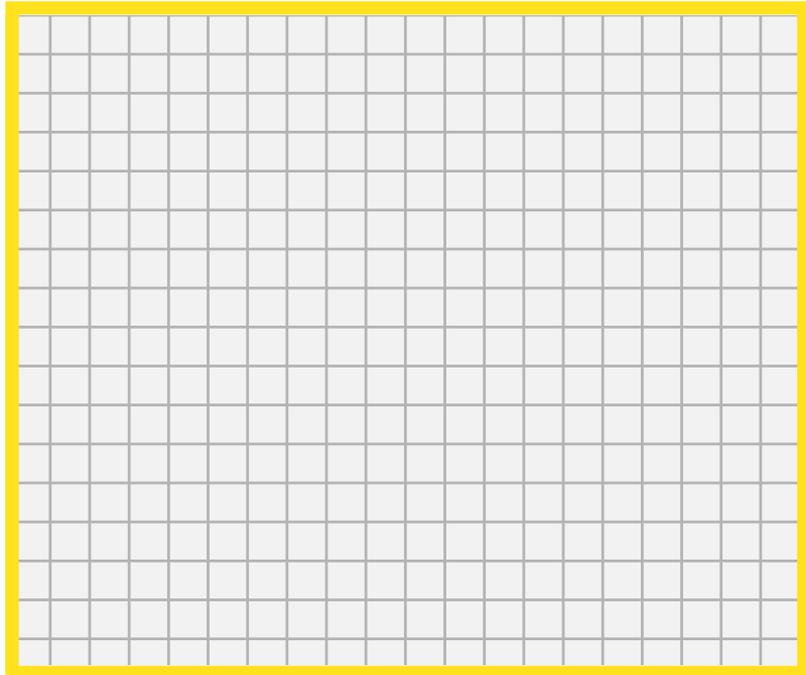
Sometimes not all obstacles will be used in an agility course. Additionally, there are times when they are stacked together, like the tunnel going under the A-frame.



# Draw Your Own Course



# Draw Your Own Course



# Log Your Progress



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with a decorative yellow ribbon-like pattern winding through the page.



# Log Your Progress



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with a yellow wavy pattern in the background.



# Log Your Progress



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with a yellow wavy background pattern.

