

Do & Don't list for Dog Agility Classes

Update: October 2010

- The classes start promptly on the hour. Please come with enough time to setup your sitting area and to potty your dog. If you come late, class time cannot be used to catch up on what you missed. When the class ends please be prompt on removing your items from the area, so as to make room for the next class (if there is one).
- All Potty areas are to be kept clean. You are responsible for cleaning up after your dog. If anyone does not clean up after their dog they may be told to leave for that class. This is a very strict rule that you will also find enforced at all dog shows. If your dog is not in a kennel you must be aware of what they are doing at all times. All poop bags must be thrown in the poop bucket.
- Parking is only allowed on the gravel areas when the ground is soft. When the ground is hard enough (late summer and fall) parking is behind the white trailer and not on the gravel area.
- Your dog must be under control at all times. Never off leash except in the training area and when the instructor has approved it.
- No one is allowed to practice on the agility equipment unless they have instructor approval and not before or after class. This is both a safety rule and a courtesy.
- All agility equipment is for dog use only. The equipment is not made to handle the weight of a human. Please for everyone's safety do not step on or stand on any of the equipment.
- Handler Dress - wear comfortable clothing that allows movement. Gym shoes are best. Sandals and open toed shoes are not allowed. You will be moving a lot, long hair should be tied so as to not get in the way of your sight when making turns. Best if you dress in layers for change of weather. During the wet weather (especially spring and early summer classes) you might invest in some goulashes or easy to move in boots to wear and protect your shoes from the mud. All classes will be in the yard. The grass doesn't really come in good until late summer around here.
- Suggest you bring water for yourself since your mouth may get dry when working outside. No chewing of gum on the grounds please. Some kinds are toxic to the dogs and we do not need to step in it.
- Students are encouraged to help when moving equipment or changing jump heights to help speed up the set-up and allow more training time. This is also a good time to learn how the equipment would be set for different jump height changes and will prepare you to volunteer at show trials.

The Dog –

- Must have a water bowl and water for water breaks. Do not let your dog use another dog's water bowl since this could transfer health problems.
- Collars can be a buckle or snap, no prong or slip collars are allowed for the dog's safety.
- Pull Tab type leashes (short grab type leash) are allowed, but will be discouraged (when the dog jumps the grab/tab leash will have a tendency to hit the dog, not a very positive reinforcement).
- Health – Please be aware I will be recommending most dogs to lose weight. Agility dogs must be fit and trim or the extra weight will tax their muscles and bones and could cause future health problems.
- Feet & Hair – nails should be trimmed and neat but do not cut nails within 3 days of a class or show. For dogs that have hairy feet the hair must be trimmed away from the pads, so they do not slip on the contact equipment. Dogs that have hair that may restrict their sight should have it pull up and tied.

- **Reactive dogs** – if your dog reacts to the other dogs in the class and some will, especially when they get excited about the dog that is running the course in the arena. Work at either click and treat or distraction to teach them not to overreact. Do not punish the dog for getting excited or barking. We want dogs to be eager to do the agility. If you have problems in this area with your dog and would like some help, let me know.
- If your dog gets over heated, wet them down either with spray bottle, bottle of water, or wet towel. A small battery operated fan would be a good investment for the hot days.
- **Dog motivation treats** - are encouraged to be used. Plan on using a lot of very small treats so you might skip their evening meal before class (or just give a little bit). Experiment with what your dog likes. Use the most valued treat for learning new behaviors and then the lower value treats as reinforcement for learned behaviors. Treats should be very small no matter what size the dog is. I recommend that you bring a few different kinds of treats so you can keep them guessing what they will get next.
- **Dog motivation toys** – If your dog will play with tug toys they work best you can even purchase a tug leash this way it is always available after a run to reward the dog by letting them tug on the leash. Other choices are tug toys that you can put treats into to help encourage them to tug. If your dog is a ball lover as is mine, please use only balls that do not squeak the same with any other type of toys. The squeakers will attract other dogs and we may have more than one dog working on the agility course at a time.

Now with all above being said I would really like to see everyone have fun and enjoy agility with their dogs. Smiling and laughing are encouraged! You will see that sometimes I get really silly with my dogs because I want them to have a good time and never to view this as training, but rather as a fun game played for treats and toys.

I Hope you have a good time and enjoy the bond that will grow, by teaching your dog agility!