

Do & Don't list for Dog Agility Classes

Update: September 7, 2020

- The classes start promptly on the hour. Please come 10-15 min early to potty your dog. If you come late class time cannot be used to catch up on what was missed. When class ends please be prompt on removing your items from the area, so you will not hold up any cars that may be parked behind or in front of you in the parking area.
- 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 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 out in the poop can, located by the human potty house.
- Parking is only allowed on the gravel areas in spring or when the ground is soft. Please park so others can pull in behind you. Pull all the way forward towards the garage or extended parking area. I will let you know if you can park on the grass.
- Your dog must be under control at all times. Never off leash except in the training arena area and when the instructor has approved it.
- Dogs are not allowed on the agility equipment before, during or after class time, unless they have instructor approval. 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 or stand on any of the equipment.
- Handler Dress - wear comfortable clothing that allows movement. Gym shoes are best, sandals are not allowed. You will be moving a lot; long hair should be tied so as to not get in the way of sight when making turns. Best if you dress in layers for change of weather. During the wet weather you might invest in some goulashes or easy to move in boots to wear. Additionally, a washable blanket to put down in the car for your dog might be easier to clean, when they get muddy. All classes will be held in the fenced agility yard. Expect some mud when wet. In the summer and fall bring or wear bug spray. Make sure to use heartworm preventive on your dog. We will be training next to a lake.
- Students are encouraged to help when 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 up for a real agility trial. The agility clubs are always looking for volunteers to help with the equipment during their shows, so please take the time to learn while you train.

The Dog

- Must have water bowl and water, for water breaks.
- Collars can be a buckle or snap, no prong or slip collars are allowed for the dog's safety. All collars must have nothing hanging from it – no tags or other items that may catch on the agility equipment.
- 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. Think of them as an athlete, training for competition.
- Feet & Hair – nails should be trimmed and neat but do not cut nails within 2 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 eye sight, should have it pulled up and tied.
- Reactive dogs – if your dog reacts to the other dogs in the class and some will, when they see another dog running the course. 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, let me know. Aggressive dogs will not be allowed in class.

- If your dog gets overheated, wet them down either with spray bottle, bottle of water, or wet towel. I will try and have the small wading pool out to cool dogs off, on the hot days.
- **Dog motivation treats** - and toys 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, then lower the value of the treats as reinforcement for learned behaviors is not needed. 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 may get next. Break them into small pieces before you come to class. **Try and Not drop treats in the agility area, this will make for bad habits to other dogs to forage for treats and ruin their training.**
- **Dog motivation toys** – If your dog will play with tug toys, try a tug leash (I can show you an example). 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 mine are, please use only balls that do not squeak. The same with any other types of toys. The squeakers will attract other dogs and we may have more than one dog working on the agility training 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!