

Teamworks Dog Training® Classes



AGILITY CLASS GUIDELINES

- ◆ ***You will need a buckle collar and a short (three to four foot) leash for agility training. Tab collars (4-6") are also very useful.*** Gentle Leaders and Easy Walk Harnesses can be used before and after class, but should be taken off when doing the obstacles.
- ◆ ***Bring your dog's favorite treats and toys.*** You will find a nail apron or fanny pack is very helpful.
- ◆ ***Clickers, target sticks, and target plates are great training tools for agility!*** Target plates will allow the dog to concentrate on where you want his focus to be and the clicker will allow you to mark the behavior you want. While it isn't necessary to use a clicker for agility training, it often helps dogs catch on much faster.
- ◆ ***Targeting versus luring.*** If your dog needs a lot of encouragement, we may use treats as a lure the first time or two on an obstacle, however, over the next few repetitions, make sure you quickly progress to just using the target plate without a treat. This allows the dog to really think about his task, rather than being only focused on getting his treat.
- ◆ ***We request that you do not put treats directly on the obstacles;*** they often leave a greasy residue and cause dogs to want to sniff the obstacles, rather than do them, which creates bad habits that are hard to break later on. Store treats in a fanny pack, apron, or in your pockets, and if you must put a treat on an object, put it on the target plate.
- ◆ ***Agility should be fun and it should be a confidence builder; forcing a dog onto an obstacle will only cause the dog to dislike the obstacle more.*** Watch for stress signals like ears back, tail down, eyes to the side, licking lips. When your dog is that stressed, always drop back a step or even switch exercises to regain his confidence. Tails should always be wagging.
- ◆ ***If your dog looks a little scared on an obstacle for the first time, you must remember not to "comfort" him (praise him for being afraid), but rather, praise him heartily for being bold!***
Although its human nature to want to comfort, what happens in "comforting" is that the dog gets rewarded for the wrong behavior. Without forcing him, watch him closely for signs bravery and *really* praise each step. (If you hear the instructor start praising your dog...it means you're being too stingy with your praise.)
- ◆ ***Only the dog that is working on an exercise with the instructor should be off lead at any given time.*** All other dogs should remain on lead and owners should follow the instructor's directions.
- ◆ ***If one dog gets loose and begins to run around, remember that you are responsible for your own dog.*** If the loose dog comes toward you, turn yourself and your dog away from the loose dog to let him know you are not going to play his game. If your dog is the one that got loose, lure him in with treats and make sure to praise him for coming to you. However, keep him on lead for the next few classes; make him earn his freedom back.

Teamworks Dog Training® Classes



- ◆ ***Please do not work on obstacles outside of organized class exercises or out of turn.*** While your dog may “already know” an obstacle, it is important for you to follow class instructions for the dog’s safety. If you put your dog on an obstacle out of turn, you may find that it hasn’t been set up properly (because it wasn’t intended to be used for that class) and could risk injury to your dog. You might also cause an unfair level of distraction to the dog that is working. Please consider renting the ring if you feel you need more practice time (available online to OP students and up).
- ◆ ***Limit dog-to-dog interactions by watching your dog at the end of the leash.*** Agility is about you and your dog, not your dog and other dogs. Always give the working dog plenty of space, and do not inadvertently allow “unsolicited sniffing” between dogs.
- ◆ ***Remember: if you ignore your dog during “down time” in class, your dog will later learn that ignoring is a part of agility.*** When training for agility competition, you need to teach your dog to pay attention to you – but this rule applies to you, too. When the agility training collar and lead go on, the dog should be working. If you are waiting for your turn, have your dog work on long downs, long sits or warm-up exercises. You are also welcome to bring a crate for your dog or to tether your dog to the outside of the fence in between turns.
- ◆ ***Warm your dog up at the beginning of each class.*** While your instructor is setting up for class, you should be warming your dog up with the stretching exercises you will learn on the first week. This is a routine that should follow you all the way through to agility competitions.
- ◆ ***If you come late to class, be sure to warm your dog up*** before joining up with the class. Try not to arrive late, because that will put the rest of the class behind and also could cause you and your dog to miss critical information.
- ◆ ***Please wear comfortable clothing and footwear.*** Cotton stretch pants or running pants are recommended. Please wear sneakers with a good tread on them. Be prepared to be sitting or kneeling on the ground.
- ◆ ***Be very careful to follow the guidelines for jumping your dog.*** Dogs under one year of age should not jump higher than one half their height at the shoulders. Beginner dogs over one year of age should not jump any higher than their shoulder height. Try to always practice jumping on a cushioned surface.
- ◆ ***Please clean up after your dog.*** If your dog eliminates anywhere on the obstacles or inside the ring, please use the disinfectant spray bottles provided. Plastic baggies will be provided for removing excrement on or off the course.
- ◆ ***If you have an intact female in heat or close to being in heat, please do not bring her to class.*** You can receive credits for missed classes.
- ◆ ***If your dog is injured, please get a veterinarian’s clearance before returning to class.*** You can receive credits for missed classes.
- ◆ ***Please remember to call the agility weather hotline*** 919-340-0120, mailbox #2 two hours before class to be sure class is being held.