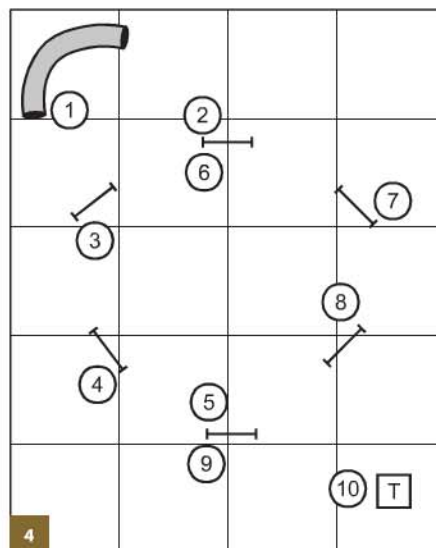
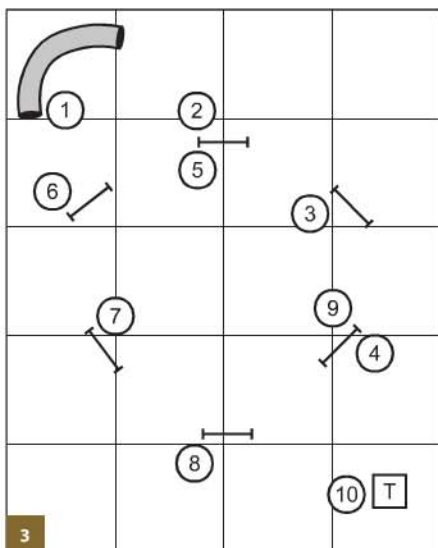
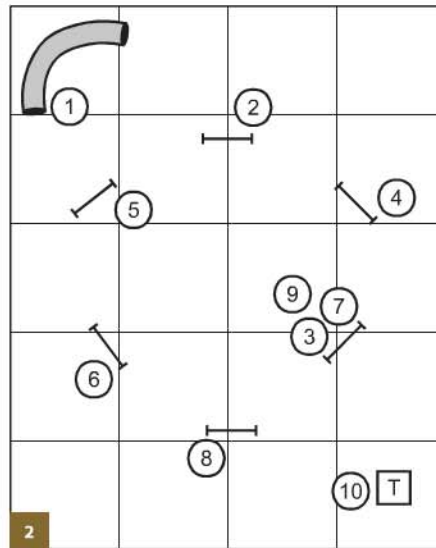
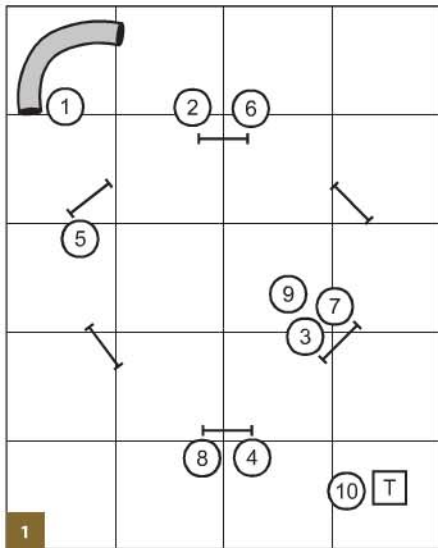


Improve Your
Handling Skills
at Home

Backyard Dogs



By Karen Holik

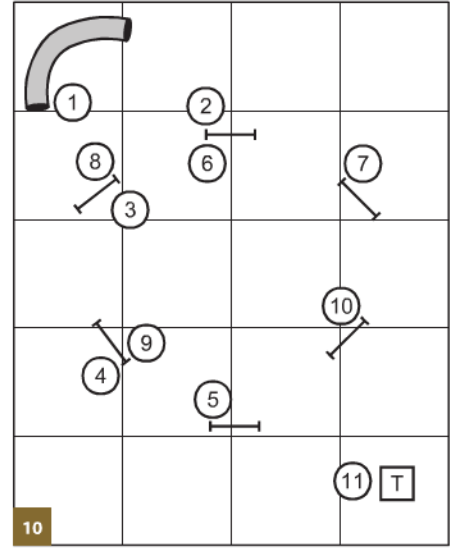
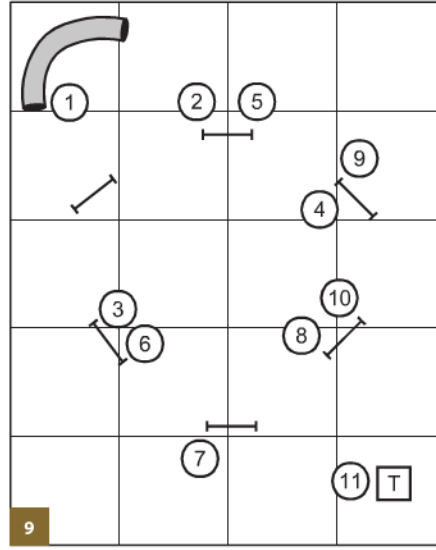
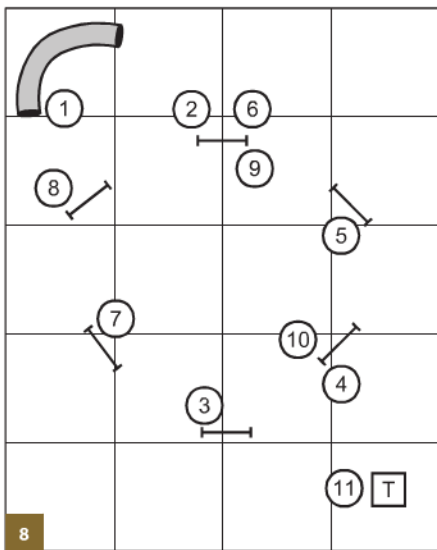
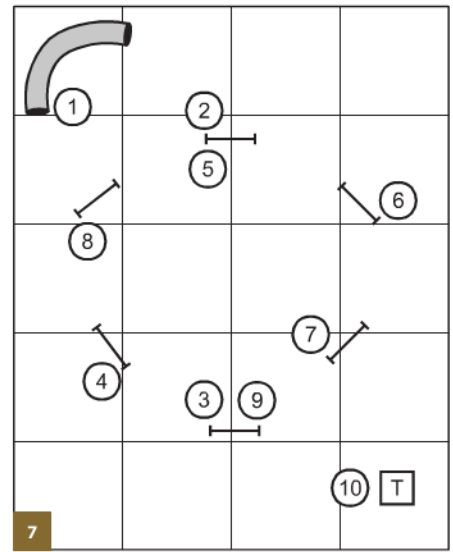
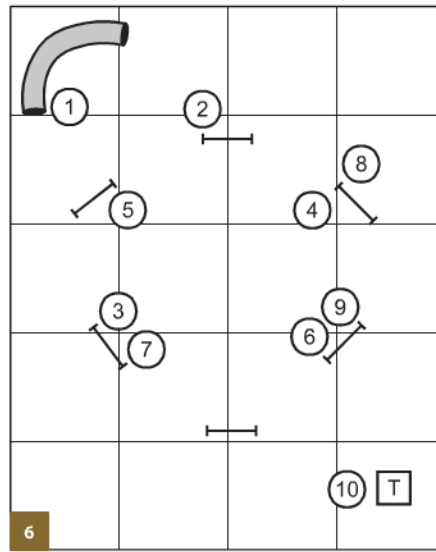
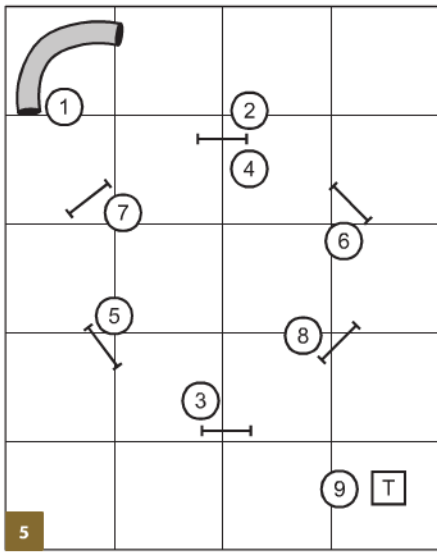


This month's exercises focus on various jumping drills. Included in the sequences are 270s, serpentine, and wraps. If you have problems, lower the jump heights and make sure your dog understands what you want before you raise the jumps to full height. Reward often and break down the sequences if they are too hard.

Figure 1 is fairly straightforward (except for the very inviting off-course tunnel entrance after jump #5.) Try handling the whole sequence with your dog on your left. If your 270 from jump #3 to #4 is successful, try handling it the same way for jump #5 to #6. If the distance between jump #5 and the tunnel is too close for your dog to resist the tunnel, move the tunnel out farther until your dog is successful.

Figure 2 has more 270s, but they are not straightforward. You must change sides (either a front or rear cross) between jumps #2 and #3, and again between jumps #6 and #7.

Figures 3 and 4 have some fun serpentine. Figure 3 is best handled starting with your dog on your left for the first serpentine (jumps #2, #3, and #4). Then do a front cross after jump #4 to handle the next serpentine on your right (jumps #5 through #8). Figure 4 should be handled the opposite of Figure 3. Start with your dog on your left, then do a front cross after jump #2, and handle the first serpentine on your right (jumps #3, #4, and #5), and the next serpentine on your left (jumps #6, #7, and #8).



Figures 5 and 6 contain some wraps. Remember to start gradually and reward often for success. You don't have to be successful at the whole sequence in the beginning. You might want to do jumps #1 through #3 and reward, then #1 through #4 and reward, and so on. Keeping your dog focused and motivated is what counts. Drills are not fun for most dogs, so we need to keep them interesting.

The rest of the drills contain most, if not all, of the skills you worked on in the

previous sequences. In **Figure 7**, the best option is to start with your dog on your left. Can you drive your dog through jump #3, and then indicate to the dog to slow down and make a tight turn from jump #3 to jump #4, and also from jump #5 to jump #6? You will also have to indicate the wraps of jumps #7 and #8 before the dog takes off to get a tight turn.

Figure 8 starts out with a choice of a front cross on the landing side of jump #2, or a rear cross at jump #3. Follow this with

a serpentine at jumps #3 through #6, with your dog on your right and another serpentine at jumps #7, #8, and #9, with your dog on your left. This is followed by a wrap at jump #9. The wrap is made more difficult after the dog has been driving through two serpentine at speed and must now slow down. Don't forget to reward highly for a tight turn here.

Figures 9 and 10 include more of the same types of drills. Reward often and have fun! 🐾

Karen Holik, involved in agility for over 15 years as a competitor and a USDAA and AKC judge, has competed in the finals of the USDAA Grand Prix of Dog Agility World Championships and Dog Agility Steeplechase Championships many times with all her dogs: two Shelties, a Border Collie, and an All-American. Her youngest dog, ADCH MACH2 Triune's Feelin Hot Hot Hot, a.k.a. Sizzle, is a two-time USDAA national Steeplechase champion and a member of the AKC/USA World Team in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Karen offers private lessons and seminars; contact her at oncourseagility@comcast.net.