

Improve Your
Handling Skills
at Home

Backyard Dogs



By Karen Holik

This month's exercises focus on various lead-out positions and some advanced jump work, including a few serpentine.

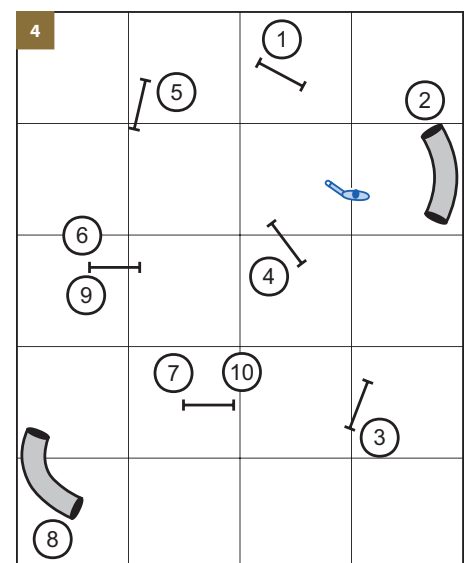
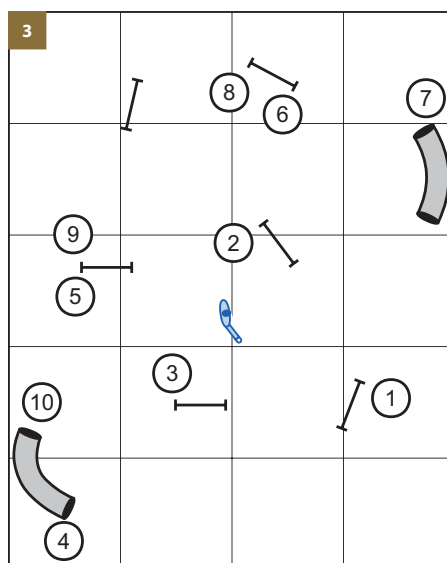
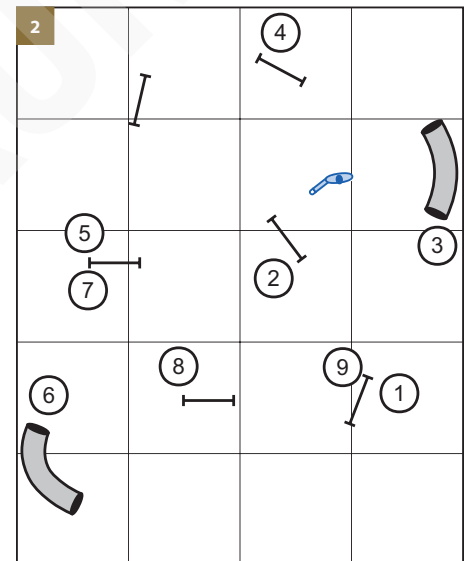
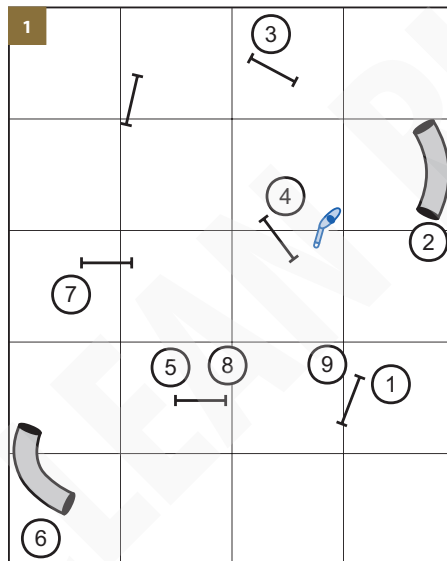
Can you lead out to the position indicated in **Figure 1**? With your position lateral to the jump, your dog should know the direction he is going before he takes off for jump #1. For the remainder of the sequence, try handling #3, #4, and #5 with your dog on the right and then #7, #8, and #9 with the dog on your left while you execute a serpentine.

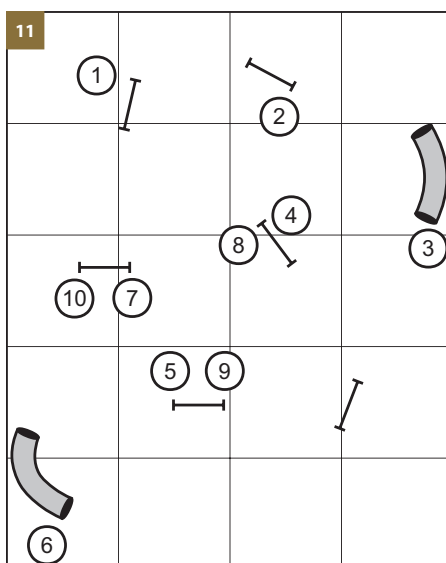
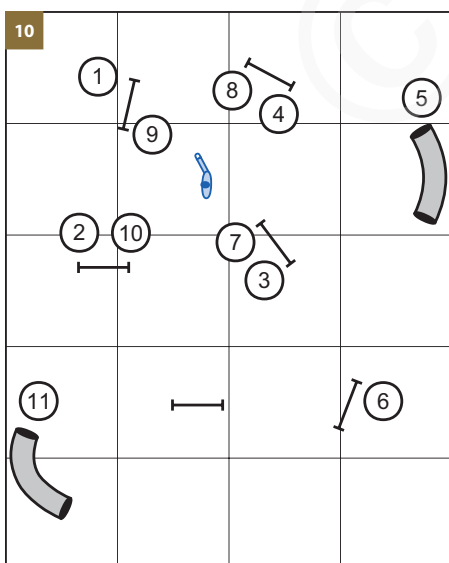
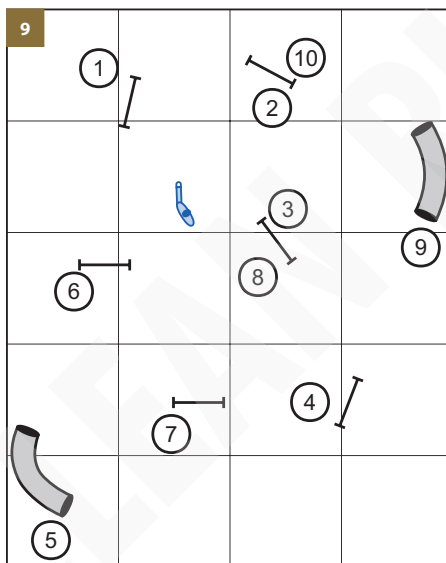
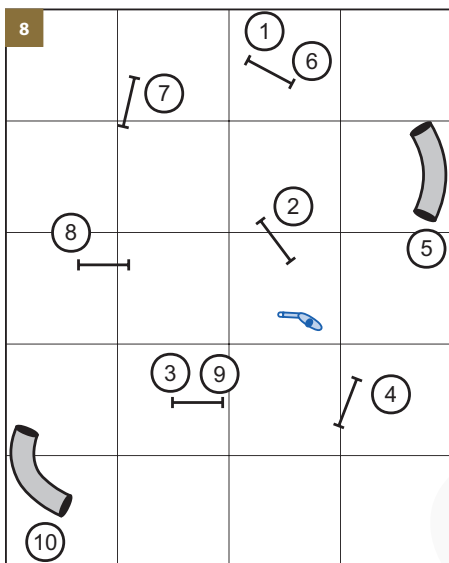
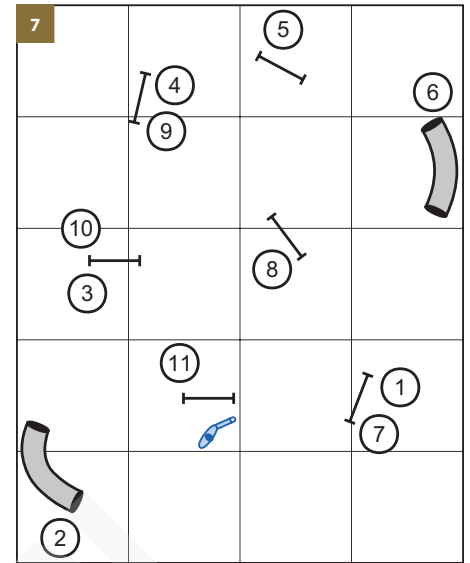
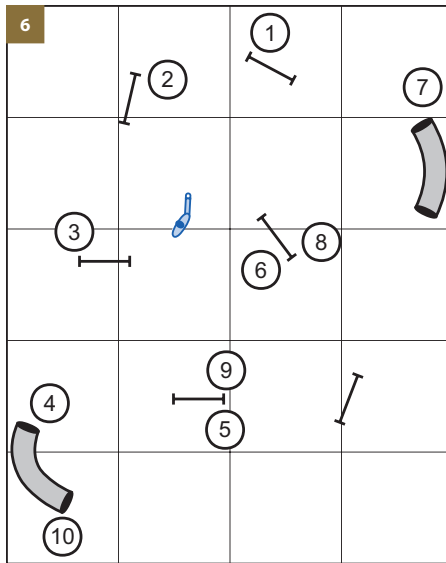
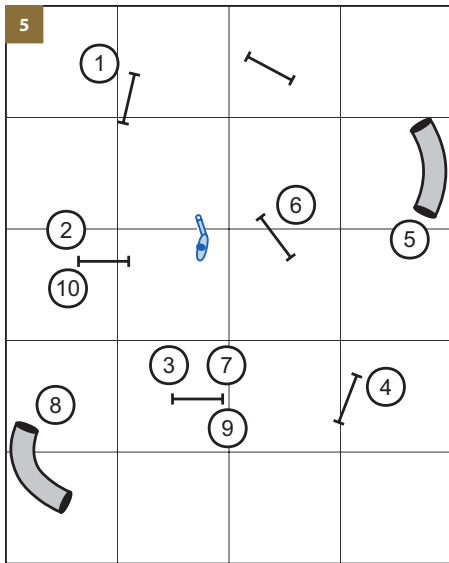
Next try a front cross on the landing side of #3 and keep your dog on your left to the tunnel. After doing a front cross between #7 and #8, keep your dog on the left to the end.

In **Figure 2** try leading out again to the position indicated. After performing #4, #5, and #6 with the dog on your right, try handling #7, #8, and #9 with your dog on your left and also on your right.

In **Figure 3** leading out past jump #1 could prove to be difficult with the angle of jump #2. Try leading out to the position indicated and do a front cross between #2 and #3 to get your dog on your left until jump #8. There you can practice either a front cross between #8 and #9, or a rear cross at #8, and finish with your dog on your right.

In **Figure 4** if you can't trust your dog to take obstacles #1 and #2 without you, you might not be able to get your dog over the correct side of jump #3. After that you can do a front cross after jump #3 and again after jump #6, or you could try keeping your dog on your left for jump #3 and do a rear cross at #5; and then with your dog on your right, do a rear cross at #7.





After leading out to the position indicated in **Figure 5**, can you keep your dog on your right for the remainder of the sequence? This maneuver requires a difficult serpentine from #6 through #8.

In **Figure 6** try leading out to the position indicated and keep your dog on your right for the entire course. Also try starting with your dog on your right through #4 and keep your dog on your left for the remainder of the course. You will need to position yourself on the landing side of #8 to keep your dog on your left.

After leading out to the position indicated as seen in **Figure 7**, can you keep your dog on your left all the way to a rear cross at jump #9?

In **Figure 8** try keeping your dog on your right for the entire course or at least until a rear cross at jump #9.

Figures 9 and 10 offer even more challenging jump work.

If you still need more to work on, try the exercise in **Figure 11**. 🐾

Karen Holik has been involved in agility for over 10 years as a competitor and also a USDAA and AKC judge. She has competed in the finals of the USDAA Grand Prix World Championships seven 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) won the Steeplechase event at the USDAA World Championships in 2003 and 2006. Karen and Sizzle were members of the AKC/USA World Team in 2003, 2005, and 2006. Karen offers private lessons and seminars and can be reached at oncourseagility@comcast.net.