

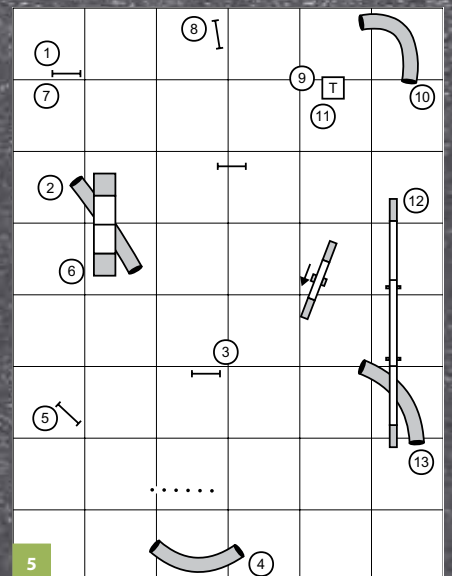
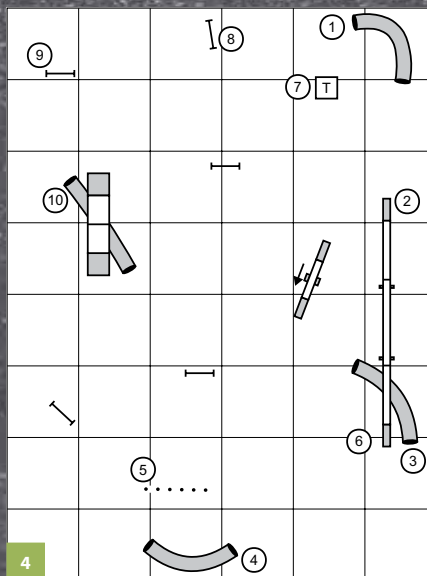
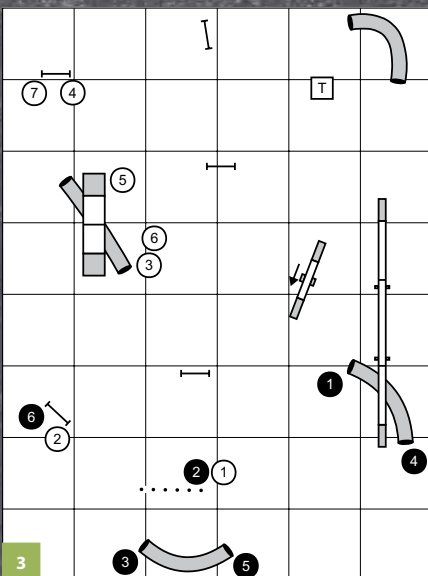
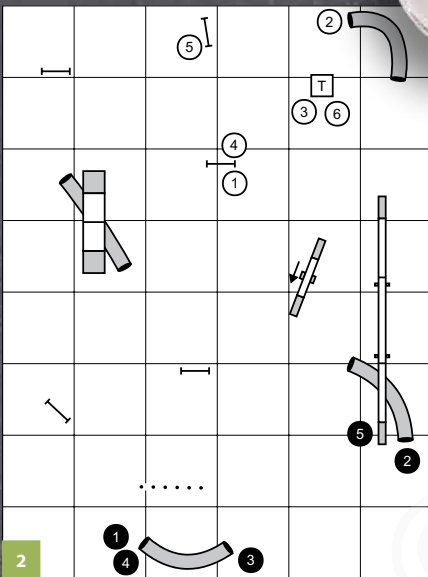
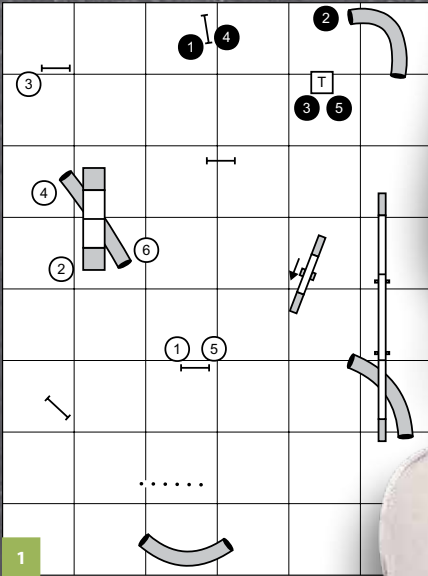
SKILL OF THE MONTH

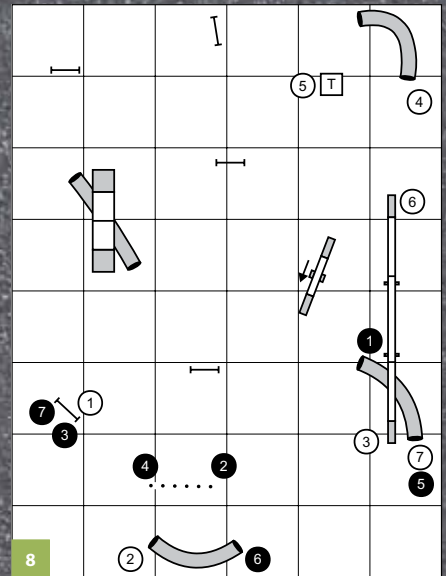
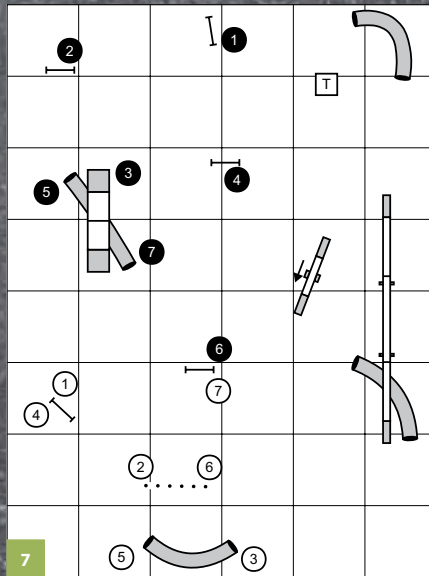
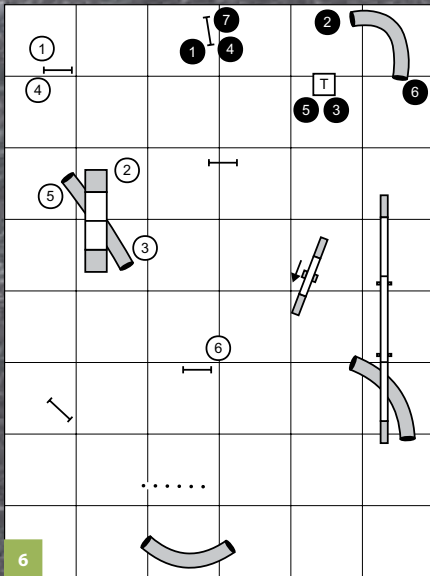
BY KAREN HOLIK

This month's exercises focus on obstacle discriminations. Obstacle discriminations are found in almost every course and many courses contain more than one. There are several ways to show your dog the correct choice in a discrimination. The most important two would be your verbal and physical cues. Work on both to ensure that your dog has a clear understanding of which obstacle to take.

STARTERS/NOVICE EXERCISES

In **Figures 1 through 5**, try starting with a lead-out and without one (as if you were in the middle of the course). Also, make sure you start with your dog on your left and also on your right both when you do the lead-out and when you run with your dog from the start. One side will definitely be harder in each exercise. You might not choose to be on a certain side on course, but sometimes you don't have a choice. Make sure you are prepared and can send your dog from either side to all discriminations.



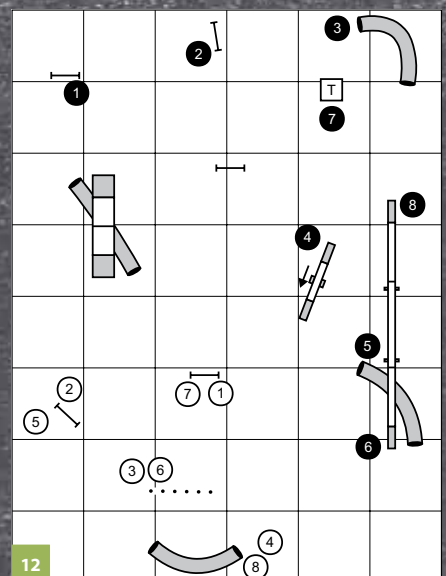
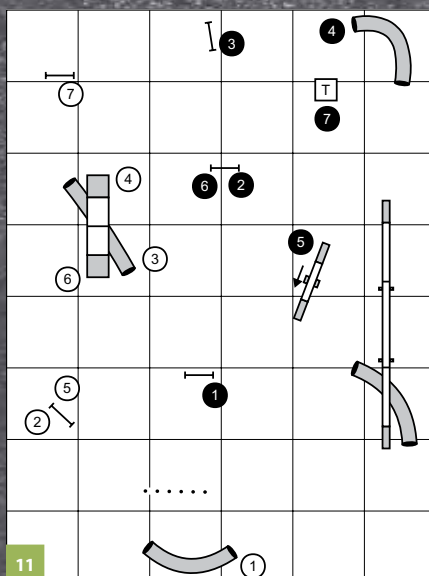
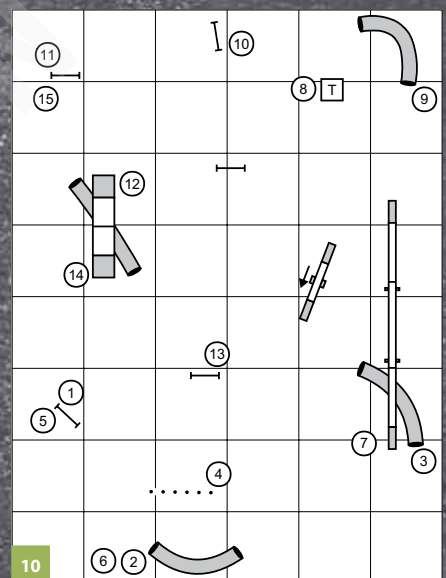
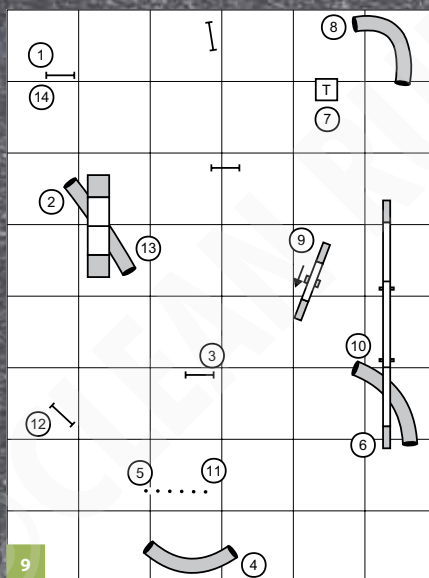


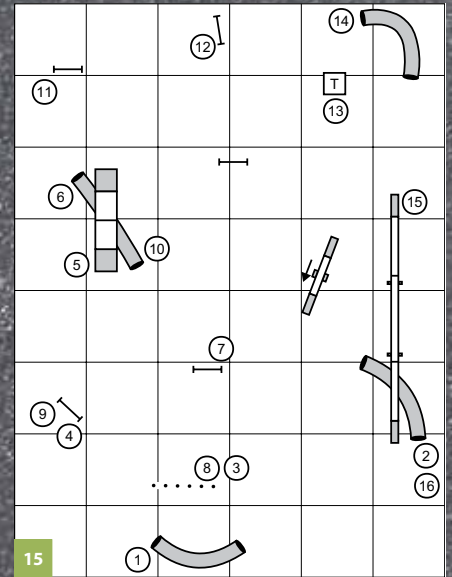
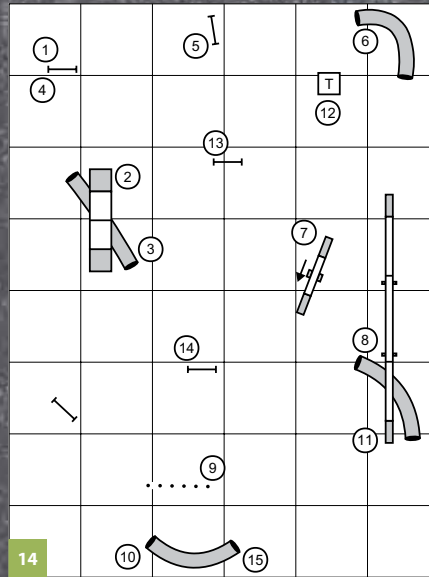
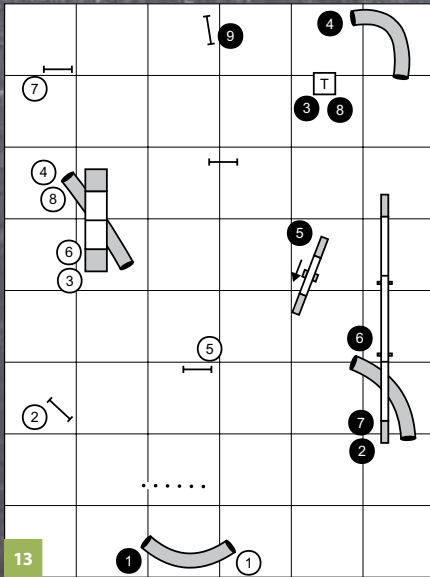
OPEN/ADVANCED EXERCISES

The Open/Advanced level sequences contain the same types of discriminations found in the Starters/Novice sequences; they are just a little more difficult. **Figure 6** has discriminations with the tunnel/A-frame and also the table/tunnel. **Figure 7** has more discriminations with the A-frame/tunnel and also weaves/tunnel. **Figure 8** contains more exercises with the weave/tunnel and dogwalk/tunnel discriminations. **Figures 9 and 10** put all of them together in one course. To make these exercises a little more difficult, be sure to start with and without a lead-out and also on both the left and right of your dog. You can also try to do a front cross and a rear cross before each discrimination. Again, you might not need these crosses on course, but they should be practiced to make sure you and your dog know them.

MASTERS/EXCELLENT EXERCISES

Figures 11 through 15 are very difficult discriminations that include those mentioned previously and





also some teeter/dogwalk discriminations. Again, try each exercise with a lead-out, no lead-out, your dog on your left and your right, and also a front and rear cross before each discrimination. You can also try each discrimination with just a verbal cue or just a physical cue.

Have fun and don't forget to reward your dog for a job well done! 🐾

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 World Championships many times with all her dogs: two Shelties, a Border Collie, and an All-American. Her youngest dog, ADCH MACH3 Triune's Feelin Hot Hot Hot, a.k.a. Sizzle, is a four-time champion at the USDAA World Championships and a five-time member of the AKC/USA World Team. Karen offers private lessons and seminars; contact her by email at oncourseagility@comcast.net.