

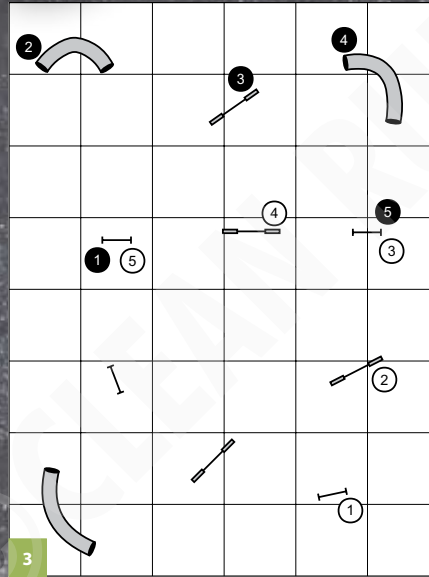
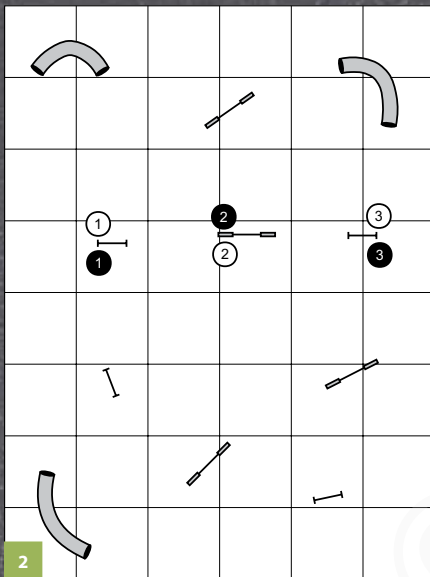
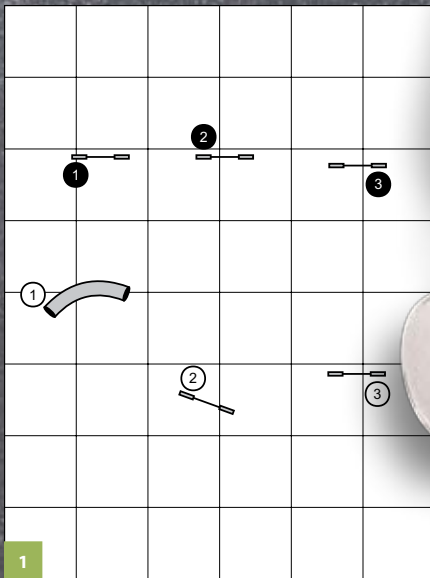
# SKILL OF THE MONTH

BY KAREN HOLIK

This month's exercises focus on serpentines. A serpentine is a line of obstacles taken in either direction as shown in **Figure 1**. The dog must alternate his direction, first jumping away from and then toward his handler in an S-shaped path. In most cases, your dog will be faster and more efficient when you are in front of him on the serpentine. One reason is that he is chasing you and the other is that he has a better understanding of where he is going next. You should try each serpentine working ahead of the dog as well as working behind him.

## STARTERS/NOVICE EXERCISES

**Figure 2:** Try the sequence starting with your dog at jump #1 and also with a lead-out. Remember to do the drills with your dog on the left and the right.

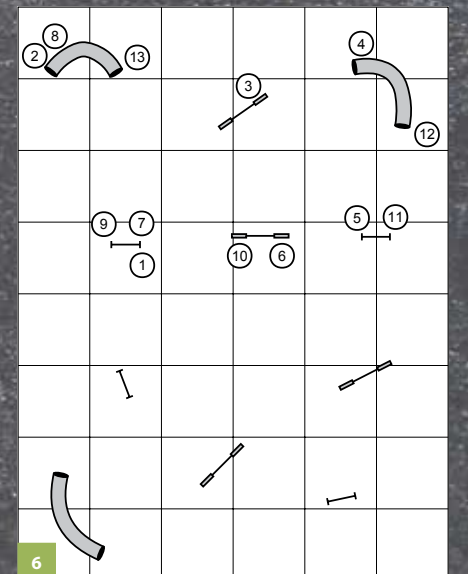
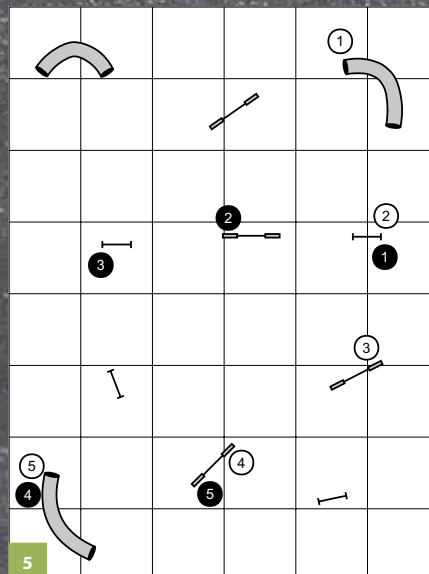
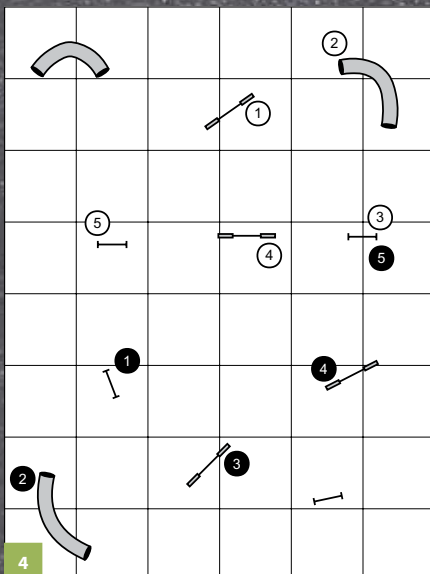


**Figure 3:** Try this sequence with a lead-out and also without one. Do the white numbers with your dog on the right and the black with your dog on your left.

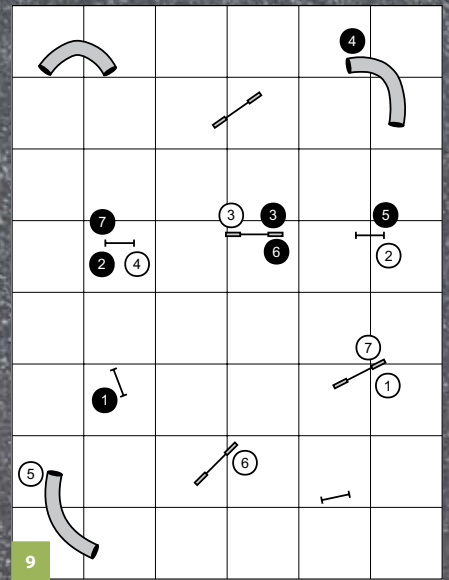
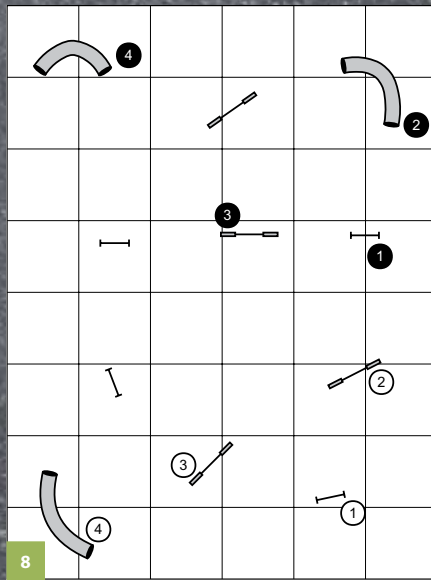
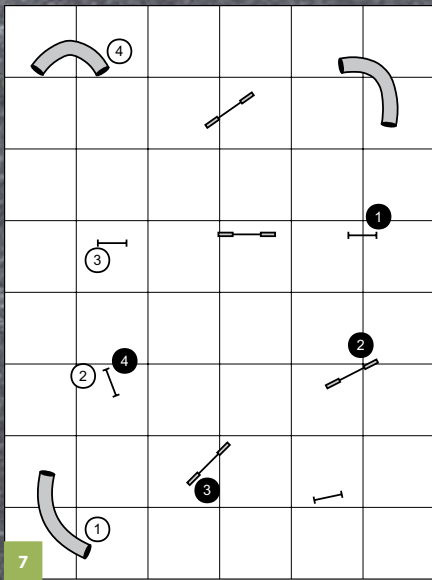
**Figure 4:** This exercise is just the opposite—dog on your left for the white numbers and on your right for black numbers.

**Figure 5:** A lead-out would benefit you in both sequences.

**Figure 6:** Try this exercise with your dog on your left for #1 through #8 and switch to your dog on your right for #9 through #13.







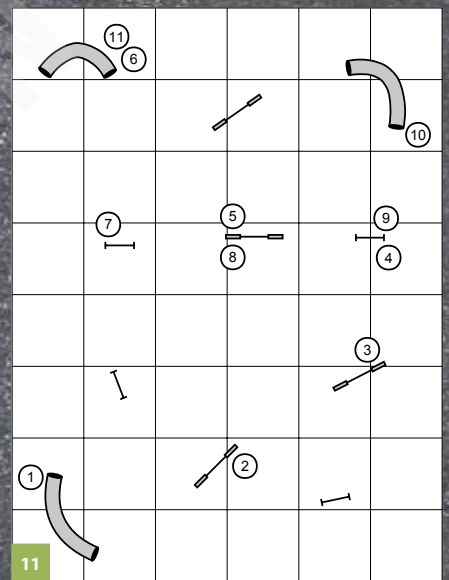
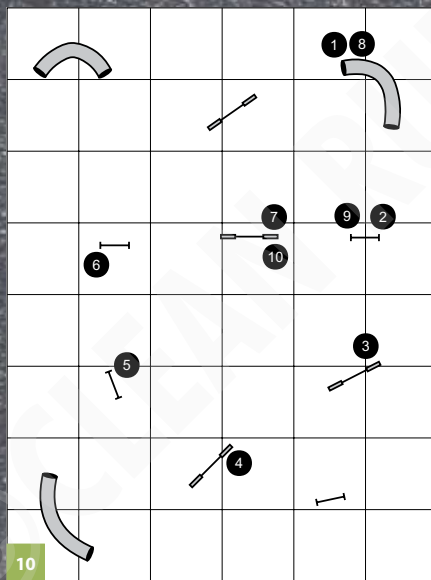
### OPEN/ADVANCED EXERCISES

**Figure 7:** Try handling the sequences with your dog on your left.

**Figure 8:** Handle this exercise with your dog on your right.

**Figure 9:** Try handling the black numbers with your dog on your left and the white numbers with your dog on your right. Don't forget to try each of the above sequences with and without a lead-out.

**Figures 10 & 11:** Both are longer sequences that offer many serpentines. Try handling the black numbers (Figure 10) with your dog on your left for the entire sequence and with your dog on your right for the white numbers (Figure 11).

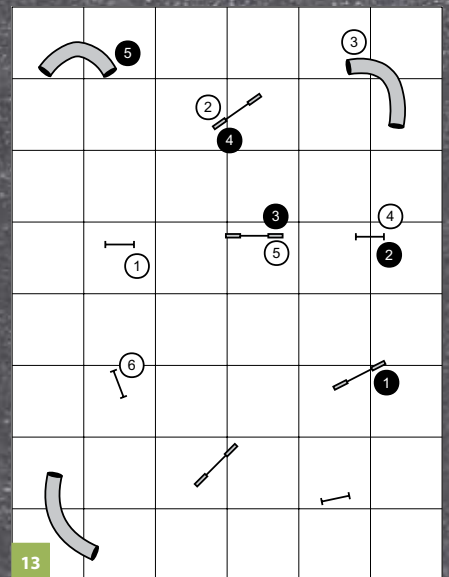
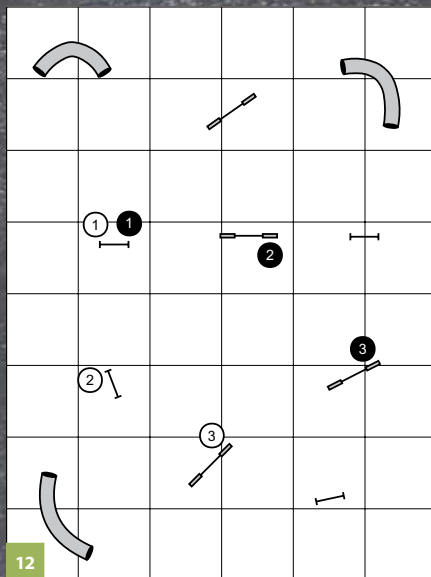


### MASTERS/EXCELLENT EXERCISES

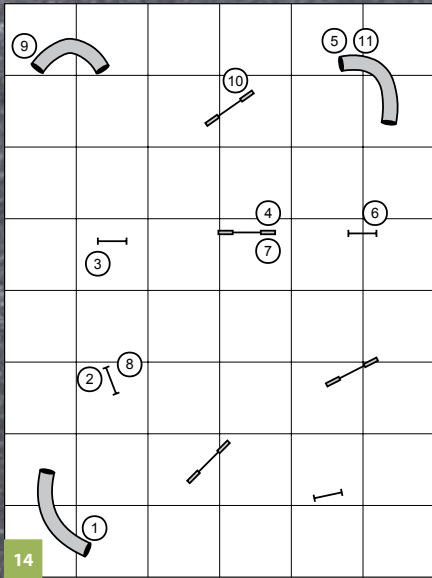
These sequences will require more practice. You may never attempt these serpentines in a trial, but you will feel more confident after practicing these difficult serpentine sequences.

**Figure 12:** Try this exercise with your dog on your right for both and also with and without a lead-out.

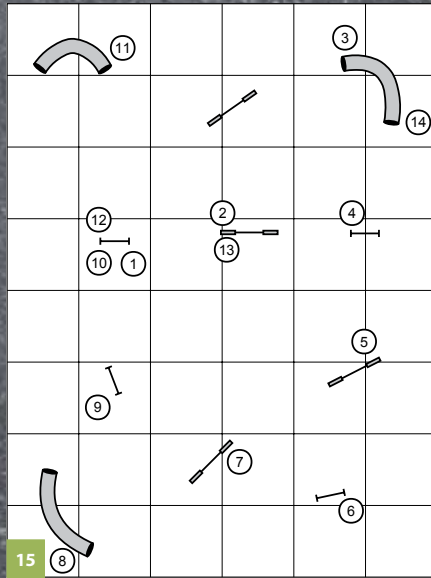
**Figure 13:** Try the black numbers on your right and the white on your left.



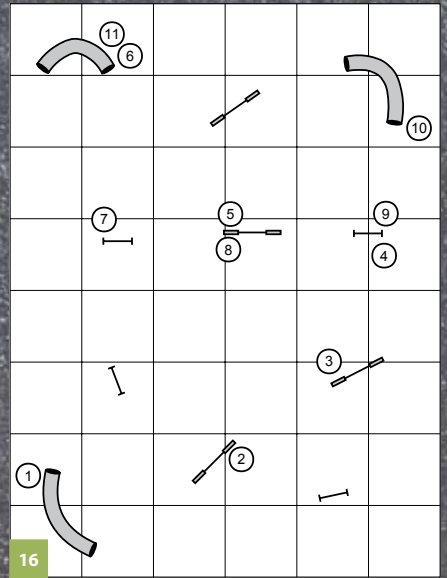




**Figure 14:** This exercise is best handled with your dog on your left.



**Figure 15:** This exercise is best handled with your dog on your right.



**Figure 16:** You should try handling this sequence with your dog on your left. 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](mailto:oncourseagility@comcast.net).