

Improve Your
Handling Skills
at Home

Backyard Dogs

By Karen Holik



This month's exercises focus on beginner-level, as well as advanced-level exercises. I have tried to include some of the important handling maneuvers that we have seen in our fundamental work (or for those of you just beginning, you will soon see them). These include modified pinwheels, 180s, 270s, pull-throughs, serpentine, and layering. When these sequences are taught, we usually train each one with one or two jumps or a box of jumps. I have added the tunnel to make the exercises more fun for the dog and also to see if your dog can do the exercises at a higher rate of speed.

If some of these exercises are too difficult, don't be discouraged. You might not be ready for the exercises near the end of the article. If that is the case, just do the exercises you are comfortable with and then reverse the numbers. After your training progresses a bit, pull these exercises out in a few months and see how much more you can accomplish.

Even if you do get through these exercises without problems, pull them out in a few months and see if you can do them even more efficiently. 🐾

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 with all four of her dogs on six different occasions. Her youngest dog, MACH Triune's Feelin Hot Hot Hot (a.k.a. Sizzle) won the USDAA Steeplechase Finals in 2003. Karen and Sizzle were members of the AKC/USA World Team in 2003 and were chosen again to be part of the team in 2005. Karen offers private lessons and seminars and can be reached at oncourseagility@comcast.net.



