

Improve Your
Handling Skills
at Home

Backyard Dogs



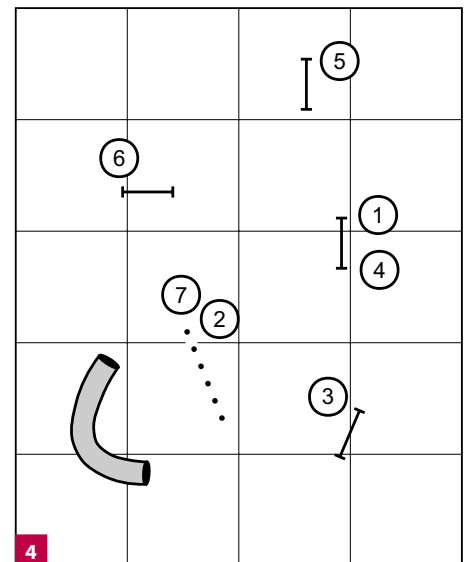
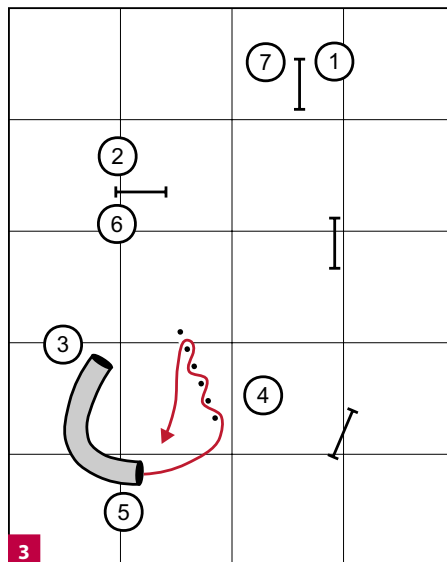
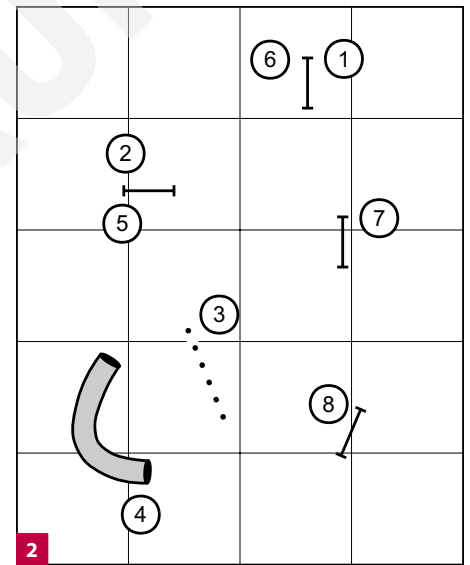
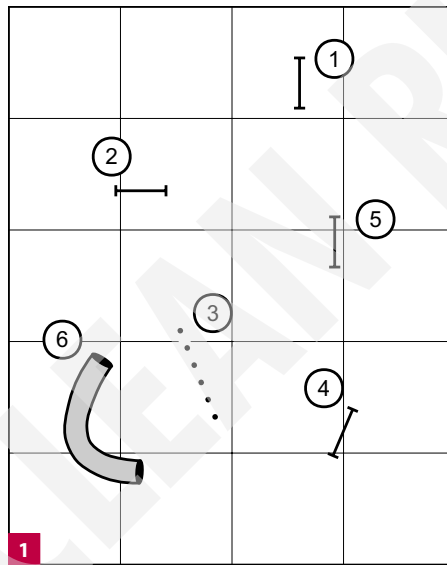
By Karen Holik

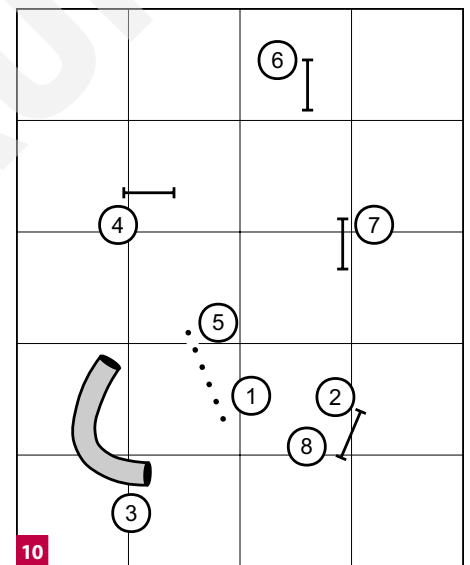
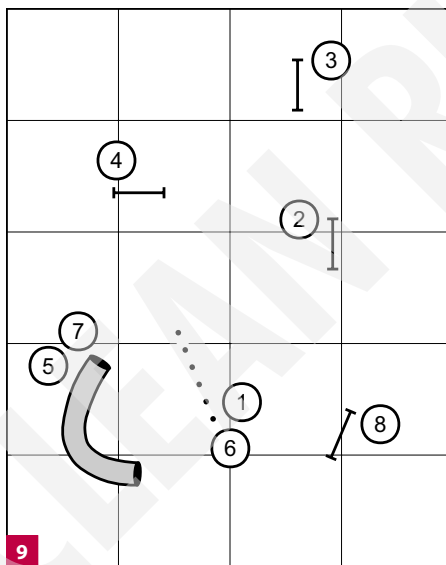
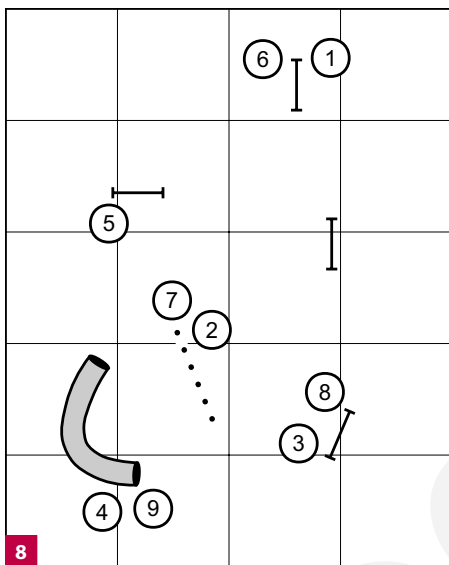
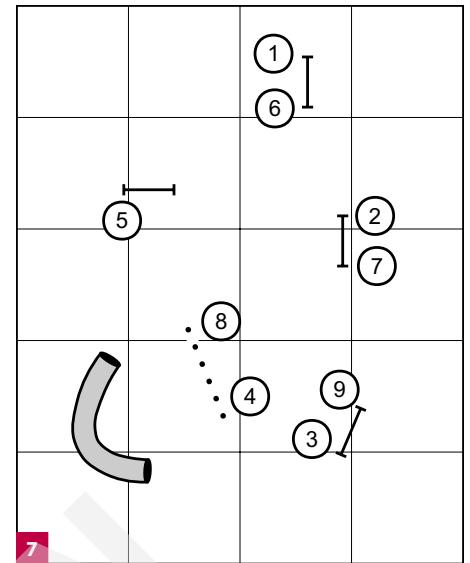
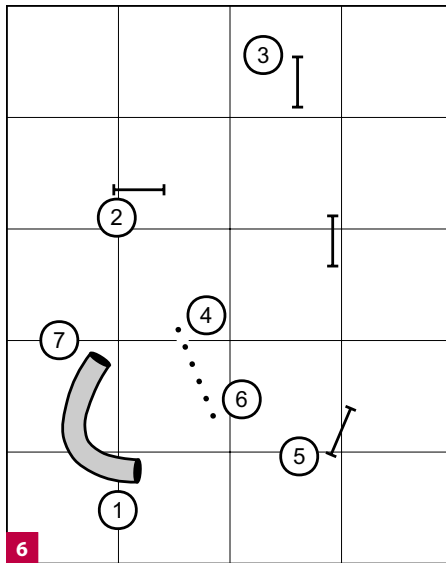
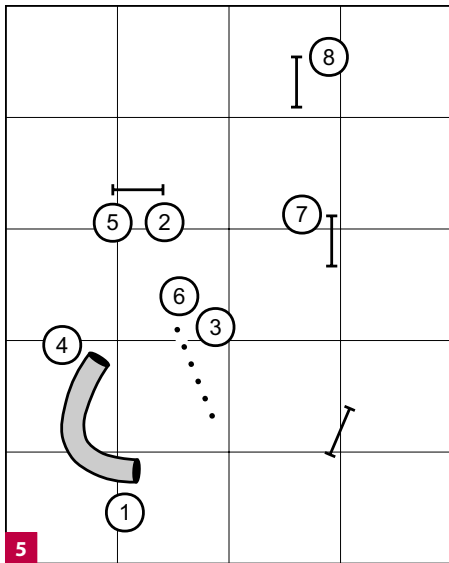
This month's exercises include not only hard entries into the weaves poles but challenge you to work on your dog's most efficient path when exiting the poles. They were inspired by some tough USDAA Team/Masters Snooker courses I have seen recently. Remember, when judges calculate standard course time for Snooker, they look at the most efficient path a dog could take, not the wide, loopy paths we sometimes get.

In **Figure 1** the entry and exit to the poles is pretty straightforward.

Try handling your dog on your left through the poles either by leading out past jump #2 or by crossing behind the poles as in **Figure 2**. Also, try to handle your dog on the right through the poles and push him to the tunnel. Can you step in front of your dog at the end of the poles to give him the most efficient path without causing your dog to pop out of the poles?

In **Figure 3** you are faced with a nasty entry to the poles. Can you hold back and let your dog find the entry on his own, thus not stepping into his most efficient path (shown by the red lines)? Also, remember that your dog doesn't have to go past the exit of pole 6. Your dog's path should be to wrap pole 5 and head straight to the tunnel as shown.





Try the exercise in **Figure 4** with and without a lead-out, each time making sure you are not in your dog's path. Also, can you leave your dog to start moving toward #4 and #5 to work this sequence better?

For the exercise in **Figure 5**, send your dog around to the right and also the left of jump #2. Don't forget to find the straightest path to tunnel #4.

Figure 6 illustrates a hard entry to the poles. Work on a front cross at the end of the poles before #5 and also a rear cross.

Figures 7 through 10 offer more fun with weave entries and exits.

Remember to concentrate on both your weave entries and exits the next time you are running a course. You will be thrilled with the result in your faster course times! 🐾

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.