

Improve Your  
Handling Skills  
at Home

# Backyard Dogs



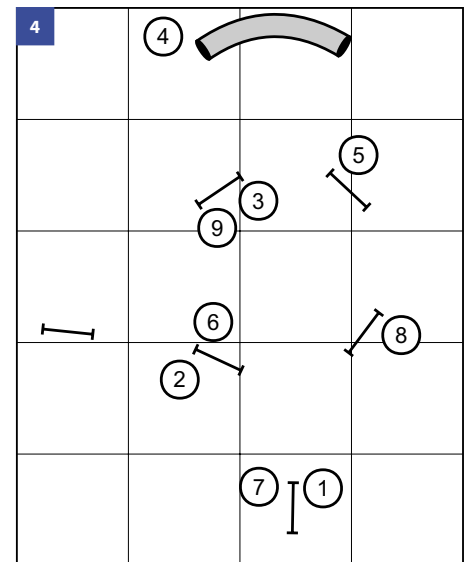
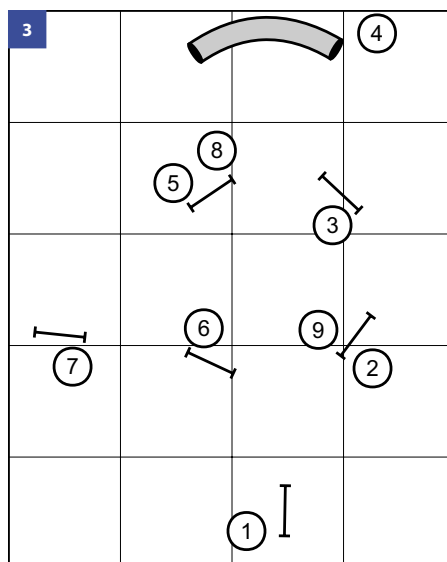
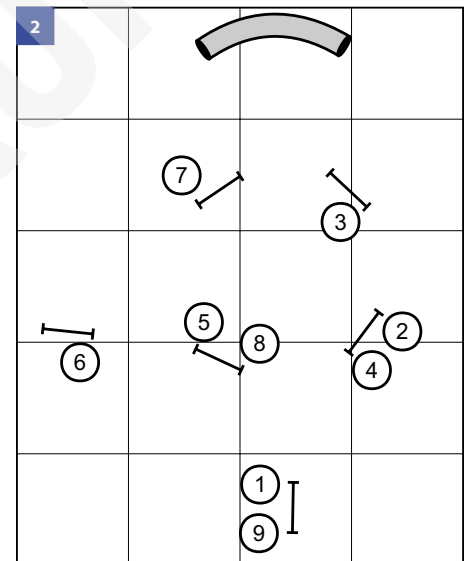
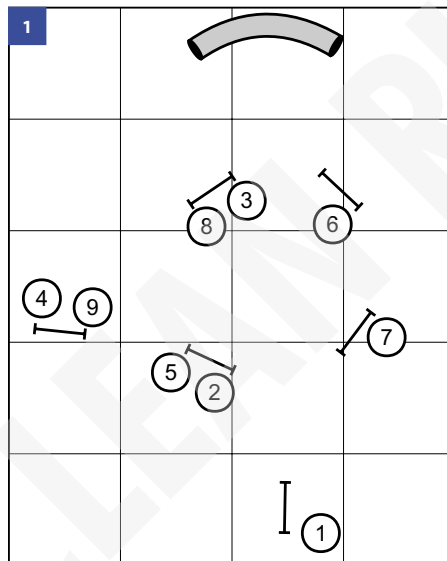
By Karen Holik

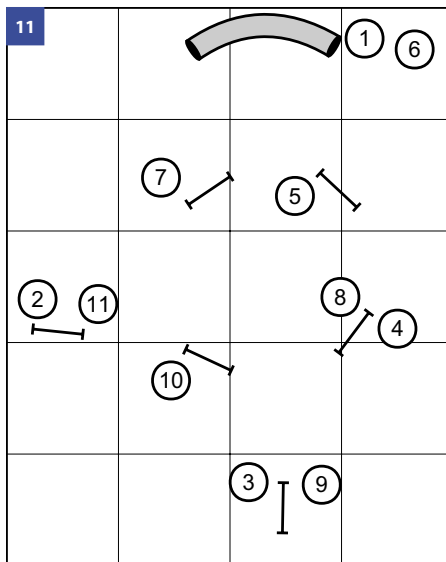
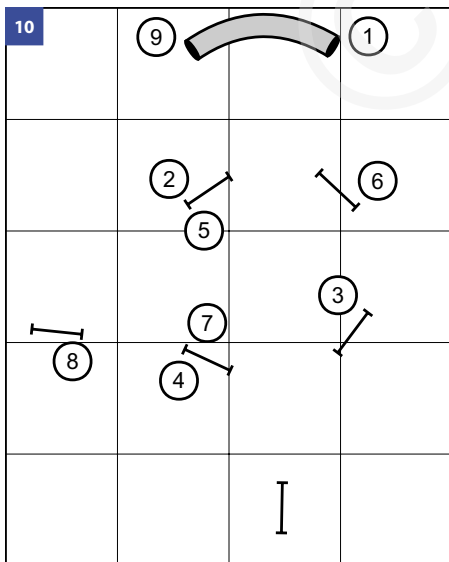
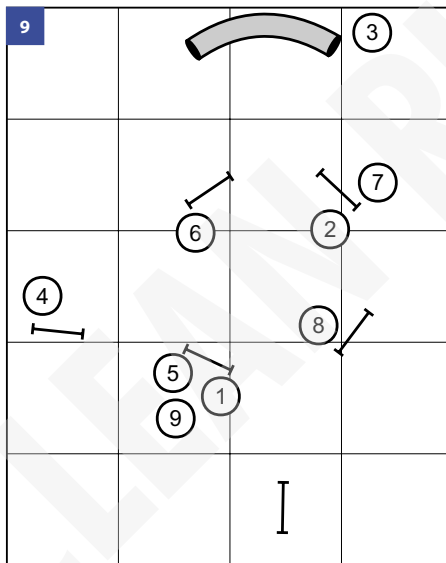
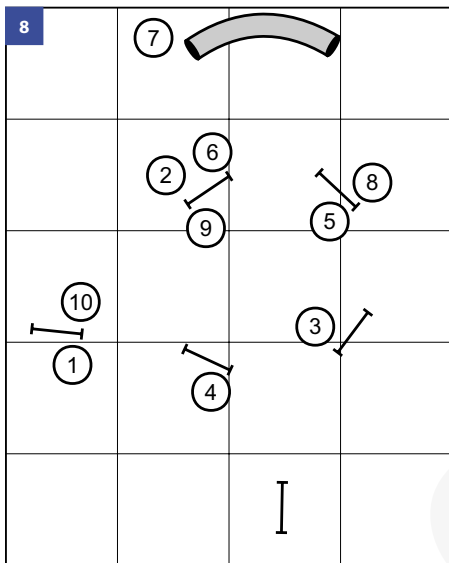
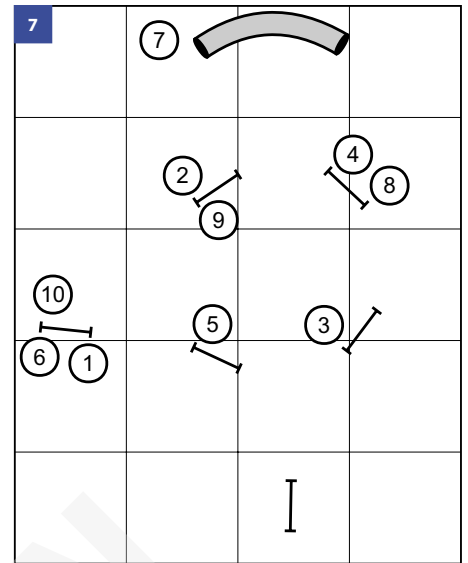
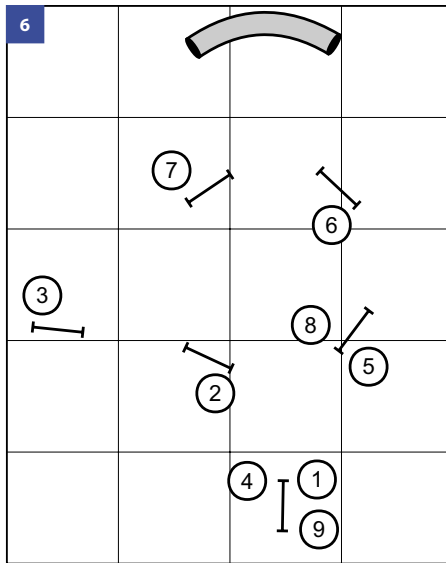
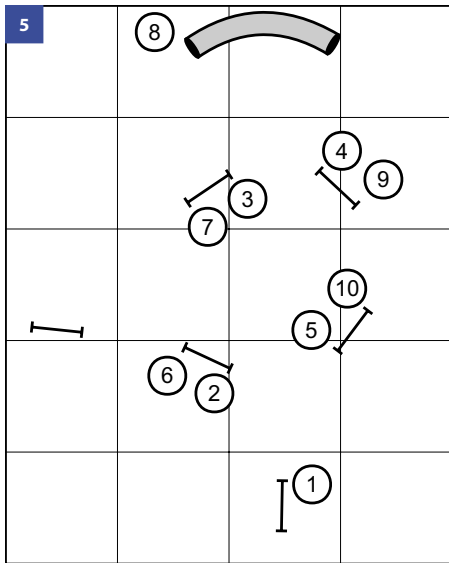
This month's exercises include some great jump work for your dog. The sequences are short and fun and should keep your dog motivated.

In the first few exercises, you can work on your front- and rear-cross skills. In **Figure 1**, try to start with your dog on your left and execute a rear cross before jump #3; and then have your dog on your right and execute another rear cross at jump #6. Try the exercise again with a lead-out and your dog on your right, and finish the exercise with front crosses. Was your dog just as fast either way?

In **Figure 2**, try starting with your dog on your right and do a rear cross before #3, keep your dog on your left, doing #4 through #6 as a serpentine, and do another rear cross at #8. You could also try the exercise again with a front cross before #8.

In **Figures 3 and 4**, you can execute a rear cross at #6 or a front cross. Try it both ways and see which way feels better for you and your dog. You should practice what feels difficult in case you need to use it at a trial.





In **Figure 5**, can you start with your dog on your left, as well as lead out with your dog on your right? The lead-out will be more difficult, because you will have to execute a rear cross before #3.

**Figure 6** allows you to lead out and start with your dog on your right and also to stay with your dog to execute a rear cross of #2.

In **Figure 7**, can you start with your dog on your left and do a rear cross at #3 and also another one at #5? You can do the exercise again with your dog on your left; do a front cross on the landing side of #2 and then another on the landing side of #4.

The exercises in **Figures 8 through 10** offer more opportunities to work on your front and rear crosses. Can you find ways to run them with either all front crosses or rear crosses? Remember: just because you can always get there for a front cross, or for that matter, feel more comfortable doing a rear cross, don't forget to practice both! 🐕

*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, MACH Triune's Feelin Hot Hot Hot (a.k.a. Sizzle) won the Steeplechase event at the USDAA World Championships in 2003. 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](mailto:oncourseagility@comcast.net).*