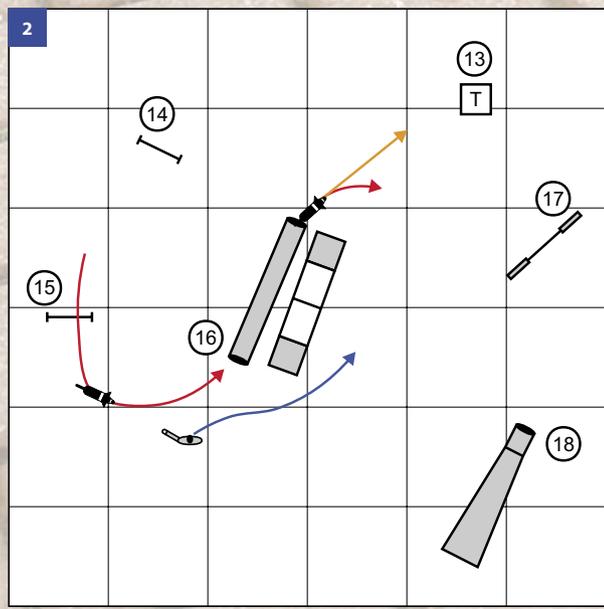
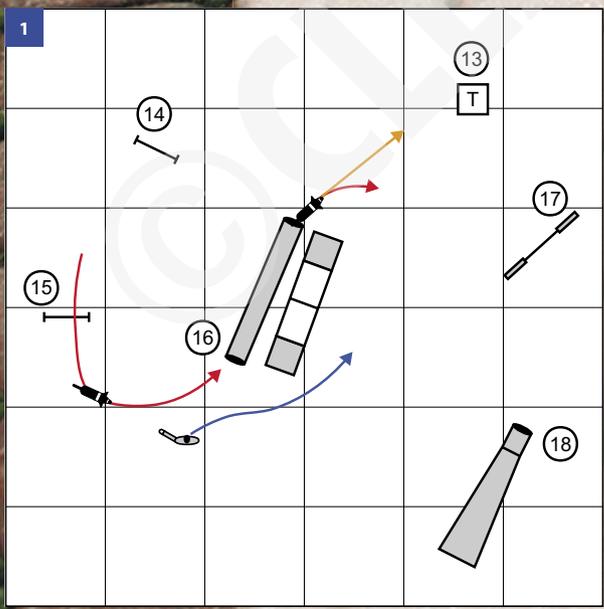
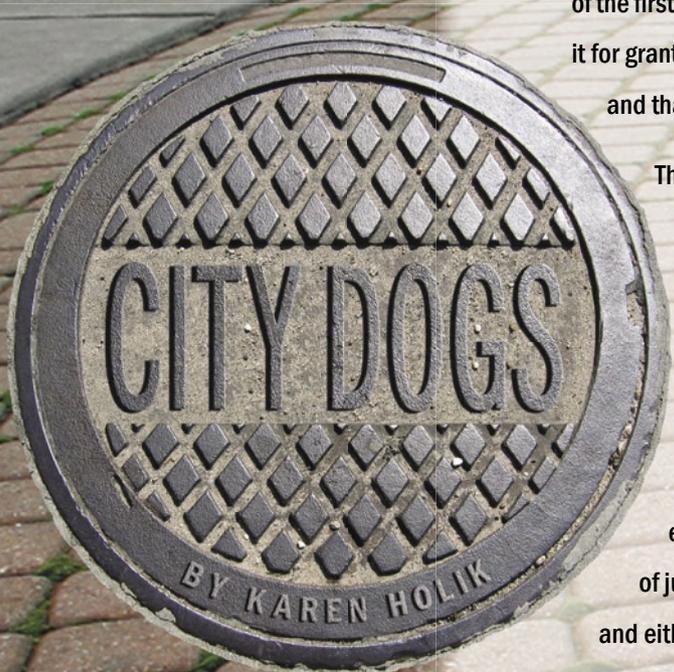
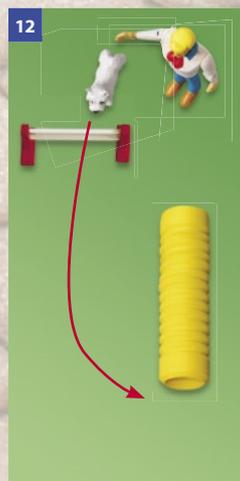
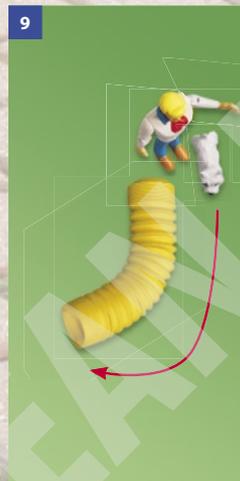
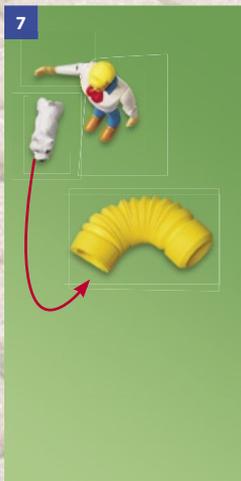
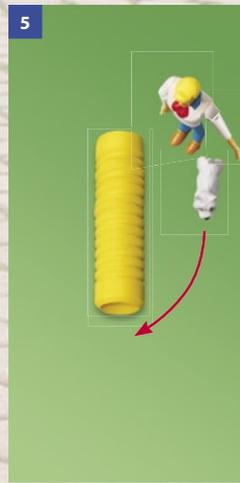


**This month's exercises focus on tunnel training.** The tunnel is one of the first obstacles we train and our dogs all love it. Perhaps we sometimes take it for granted that our dogs will always find the entry of the tunnel independently and that they can enter it from any angle.

This past week at a USDAA trial, judge Pat Corl presented us with the sequence shown in **Figure 1**. Many of the handlers that went past jump #15 to signal the entry of the tunnel, as shown in Figure 1, caused their dogs to go off course to the table or to knock a bar at jump #17 because they got stuck behind the A-frame and lost sight of their dogs. At the least, dogs that were handled this way took a wide turn to the tunnel entry because the handler couldn't get into position soon enough to signal the turn. The handlers that stayed on the takeoff side of jump #15, as shown in **Figure 2**, could recall the dog through the tunnel and either do a front or blind cross at the exit. These handlers had a very tight and efficient turn to jump #17. I have seen this handler advantage many times on course—with both the chute and the open tunnel.

This month we will work on some exercises that you can do in a small area to ensure your dog really knows his tunnel entrances.





In the exercise in **Figure 3**, send your dog through the tunnel while you stand still (one of the first things we teach).

Also practice recalling the dog through the tunnel as shown in **Figure 4**. Be sure to practice this exercise from both sides of the end of the tunnel.

**Figures 5 and 6** show sending your dog to the tunnel when he can't see the opening and you remain stationary at the exit. Remember to do this exercise on both sides.

In **Figures 7, 8, and 9**, change the shape of your tunnel so that the dog really has to work to find the entrance.

For the exercises in **Figures 10 and 11**, replace the tunnel with the chute and recall the dog through the chute. I have seen this on many courses over the years as the first obstacle, and it is a definite advantage if you can recall the dog through the chute. Also send the dog from a stationary position so that he has to find the chute entrance on his own.

Add different obstacles such as a jump before the tunnel and send the dog to the entrance as shown in **Figure 12**. 🐾

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, ADCH MACH2 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).