



You can make big improvements by becoming a student of the sport. Take an active interest in your development. Study good handlers and trainers, analyze what is happening in their runs and in your own training, and seek out solutions. Have a plan so you can build on success. We learn from our mistakes and hopefully grow and improve.

The following drills focus on handling and have three main goals:

1. **Precise, decisive handling when approaching traps.** If you are handling well and your positioning and timing are correct, your dog will not even look at the wrong obstacle. If you are using deceleration to cue your dog to turn, is he reading it well? How are you differentiating deceleration when you want a tight turn versus deceleration because you are going into a pinwheel and don't have room to move but you want your dog to keep his speed?
2. **Improving your post turn/shoulder pull.** This handling technique is the least worked on and most poorly defined signal for many dogs.
3. **Course strategy choices.** There are several instances where you can choose to turn left or turn right. Time your runs, ideally with video, to determine which handling direction is better for you and your dog.

If you have problems, decide whether it is a handling problem or a training problem.

- If you make a handling mistake, walk the sequence again and make sure you have it clear in your mind what you want to achieve.
- If you feel you handled it well but it still went wrong (and it's often good to get a second opinion on this or video it), you probably have a training issue.

Your goal isn't necessarily to run the course clean but to run the course with solid handling; that is, good positioning and timing.

The Agility Coach

Your guide to success.

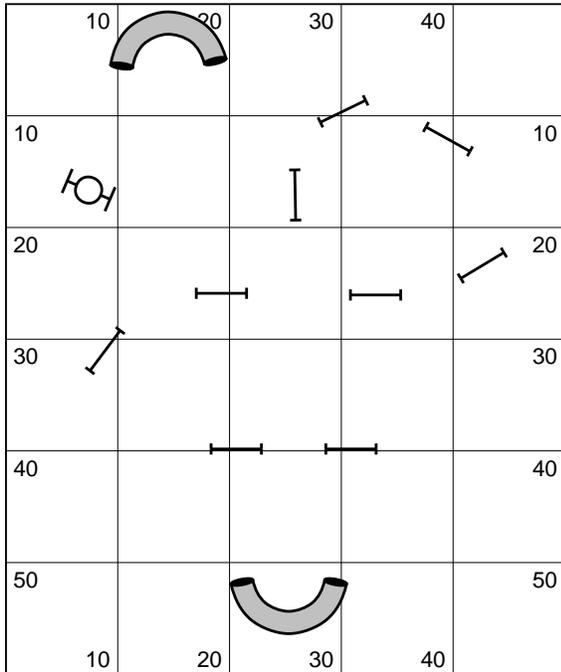
Go to www.TheAgilityCoach.ca for **FREE** additional sequences of this Exercise of the Month

The Agility Coach provides in-depth skill development programs for all levels of agility competitors, whether it is foundation skills for beginners or mental preparation and peaking for world-class competitors. The programs are progressive and goal-oriented, the training plan an elite coach would lay out for an athlete striving to be the best she can be.

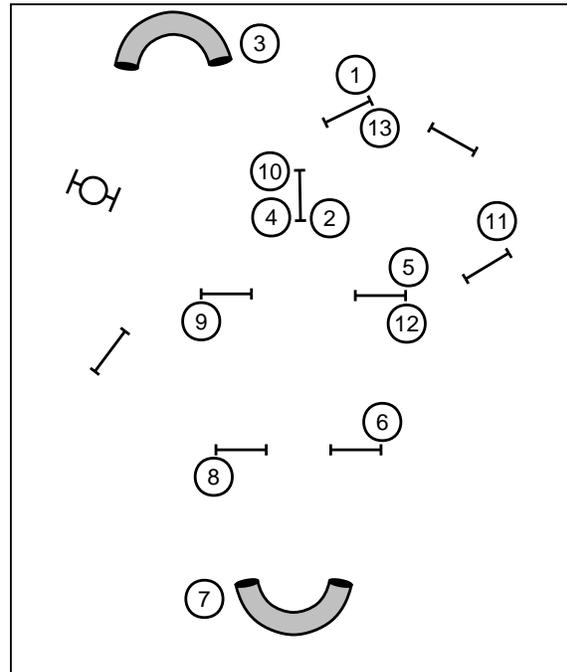
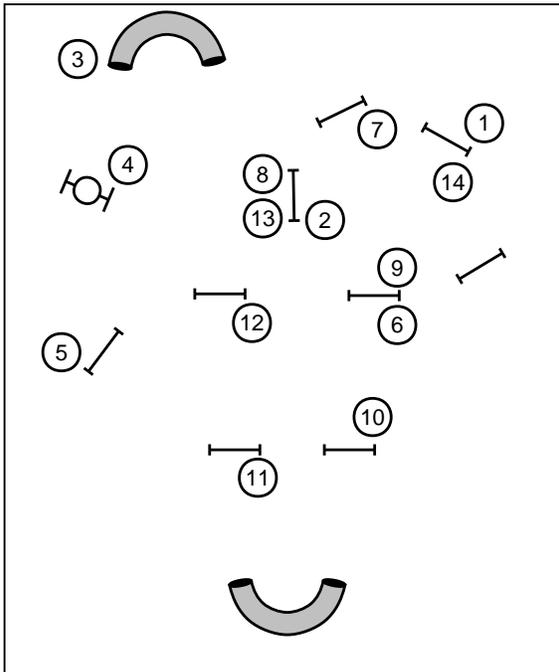
Kathy Keats is The Agility Coach. She knows what it takes to be successful. Kathy has participated in and won major national and world class events in dog agility and basketball, and competes at the Open level in sheepdog trials. Kathy graduated from the National Coaching Institute and since then has worked with elite athletes and coaches from around the world. She has coached at the university, national, and international level. She was one of the first people to introduce the sport sciences to dog agility and enjoys working with new handlers and dogs as well as seasoned competitors.

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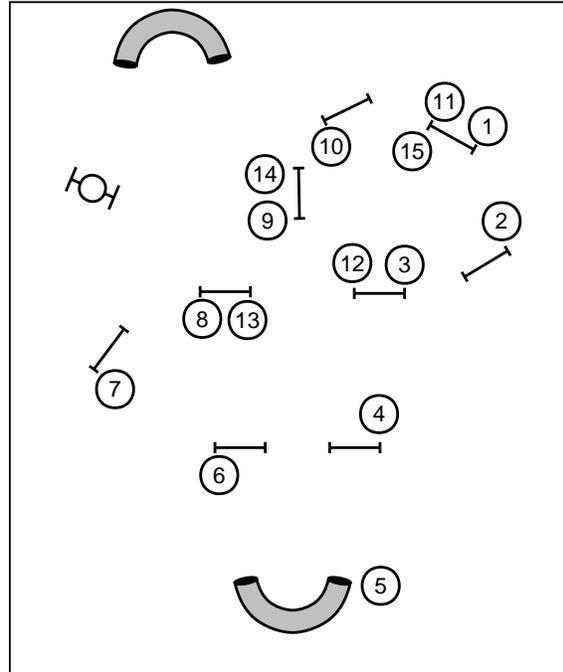
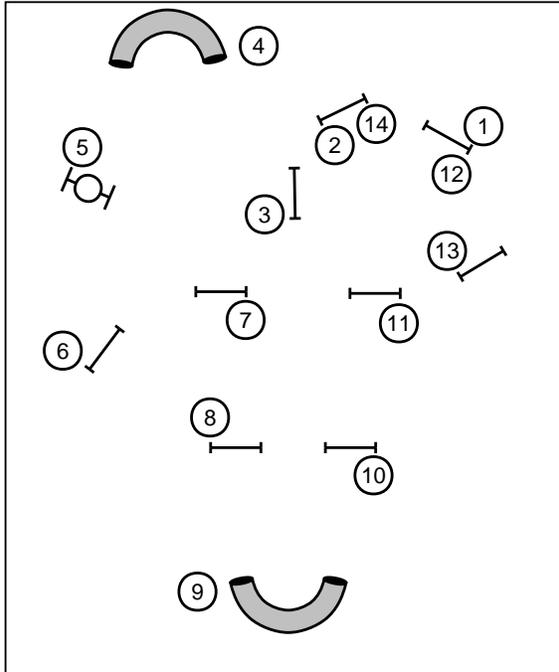
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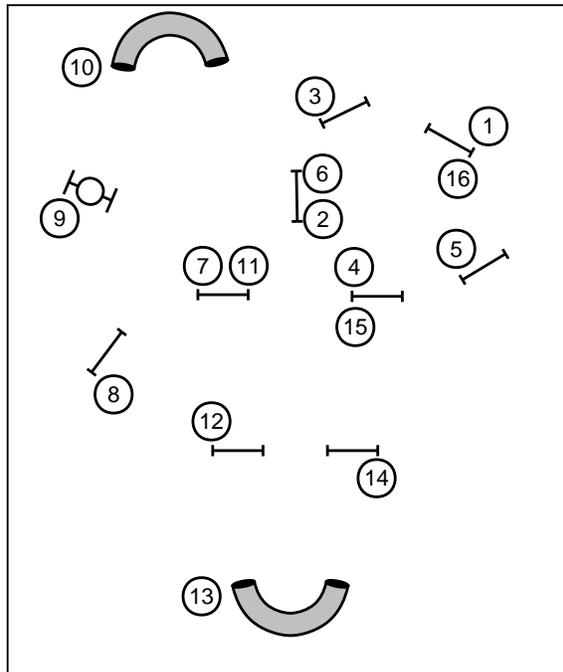
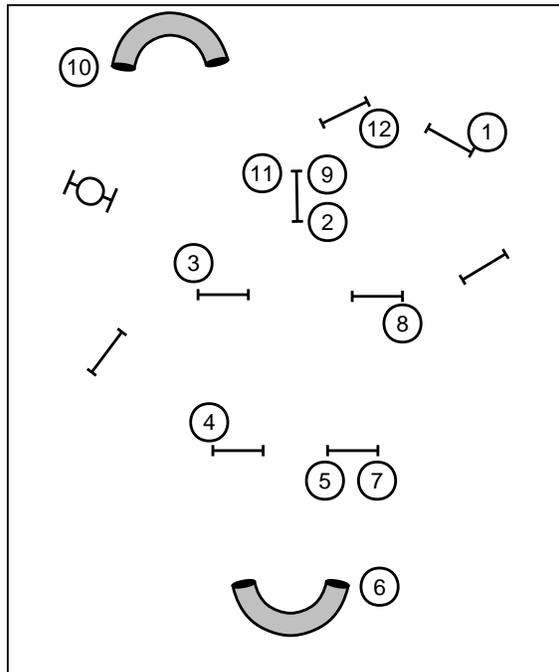
Exercises 1 & 2



Exercises 3 & 4



Exercises 5 & 6



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