

Is My Dog Ready for an Agility Class?

Dogs of every breed and size have enjoyed agility. Your dog doesn't have to be an obedience champ to have fun in class, but since it's vitally important that your dog have a safe and happy experience--motivation is everything in this sport!--you may want to consider whether YOU are willing to be patient and positive with the challenges your dog may present. My experience is that YOU will have more fun in class if your dog has enough training and experience to focus on the new and exciting Agility Game.

If you're uncertain about your dog's level of training, if your dog isn't used to working around other dogs, or if your dog needs some brushing up on his basic obedience skills, please consult with the trainer before registering. If you have a new puppy or your dog has never attended a class, consider ***Clickin' With Your Dog***. This 6-week course in Basic Manners & Obedience is especially designed to get beginning dogs and handlers off on the right paw.

Is My Dog Old Enough?

All dogs over six months of age are welcome in the Introductory agility class, but their participation may be restricted in some exercises. Repetitive jumping and weave pole work are particularly hard on young dogs. Until their growth plates have fully closed, keeping Agility easy and moderate is crucial.

Disclosure and Assumption of Risk

Please read carefully!

Agility is a competitive canine sport where dog-handler teams negotiate an obstacle course to get the best score and time. Courses are different at every match, so it is up to the human handler to tell the dog which obstacles to do and what order to do them in. Obstacles might include jumps of various kinds, tunnels, A-frames, dog walks, see-saws and weave poles. Agility is fast-paced, requires lightning decisions, and at its best brings out the magic in the human-canine teamwork. But you needn't want to compete in order to enjoy it--agility is a fun recreational activity for dogs and their humans, whether you ever plan to enter a match or not!

That said, agility is a fast-moving sport which involves running, jumping, climbing, sudden turns and quick stops. Like any athletic endeavor, it involves risk, both to you and your dog. Injuries, both human and canine, can and do occur; some are serious. Dogs who are out of shape, elderly, of poor conformation or of breeds prone to ailments such as back trouble or hip dysplasia are particularly at risk. For safety reasons, puppies and dogs under one year of age are not recommended in intermediate classes. Until a pup has reached maturity and the growth plates of their joints have closed, the constant repetitive actions of jumping or weaving typical of agility coursework place too much strain on still-growing bones and joints. Your pup may be brilliant on the course and seem absolutely fine--but you are putting his future soundness at risk. Please be patient with your young dog--there are many important skills you can work on to get him ready for the big day when he starts running "real" agility courses!

The Introductory class being offered is suitable for sound, healthy dogs of all breeds and ages, but Agility is an inherently dangerous sport. The Clicker Coach will be happy to answer any questions regarding the nature of the class, the exercises and the equipment being used, but you and you alone are responsible for the health and well-being of yourself and your dog in class. If you have any questions or health concerns about your dog or yourself, please consult with your veterinarian and/or doctor before registering.

About the Location: Classes will be held at a private home off of N. Old Stage in the Mt. Shasta area. The ring was formerly a horse corral. There is shade and water available. Please wear closed-toed shoes suitable for running on dirt! Jackets for cooler weather, sunscreen for hotter weather and bug-spray for occasional mosquito visitors recommended.

Directions will be sent with registration confirmation.

**For additional information or questions,
please contact:**



(530) 925-2261

www.clickercoachdogtraining.com

Requirements for ALL classes:

1. All dogs **MUST** be current on vaccinations. If you have any doubts, please check with your veterinarian before attending classes.
2. If your dog is sick, please do *not bring sick dogs to class*. Likewise, please do not bring female dogs in season to class.
3. There will be a maximum of 6 dogs per class. While every effort will be made to provide quality, individualized instruction, we cannot accommodate aggressive dogs, and a group setting may be too stressful for fearful dogs. ***If your dog has aggressive or fearful tendencies, please arrange for a private consultation with the trainer BEFORE registering for class.***

What to Bring

1. **Treats!** Soft, quickly eaten treats are best, cut up in roughly pea-to-dice sized pieces. Commercial treats such as lamb lung, jerky or freeze-dried liver are fine; you can also use sliced hot dogs, boiled or sautéed poultry, cut-up rolled dog food (like Natural Balance), string cheese... an assortment is good. You will be using more than you think, so bring more than you think you'll need!
2. **Collar.** A plain buckle collar or well-fitted body harness is *required*; other styles of collars may get caught on obstacles and are dangerous. Please don't bring choke chains, prong collars or head halters to class.
3. **Leash.** A plain 4 or 6 ft. cloth or leather leash. *Flexi-leads are not suitable for agility and may not be used in class.*
4. A favorite dog toy such as a ball, tug or squeaky toy.
5. Dress and footwear appropriate for the weather and the activity. You will be running with your dog!
6. **RECOMMENDED:** a clicker if you use one, mat or crate.

Class Courtesy

1. Please be on time. We will not be able to go back over material you miss.
2. We will be training in a private location. The training area will open 15 minutes before the scheduled start of class for set-up. Please do not enter the training area prior to that time.
3. Different dogs may be at different levels of socialization and playing skills. Please be respectful of the other participants in class, and do not allow your dogs to play with each other.
4. Children are welcome to attend classes with their dog, but must be supervised at all times. *Please ask your children to be respectful of the other participants in class, and to not approach or pet other dogs without permission from the owners.*
5. Always clean up after your dog. Bags and scoopers are available.
- 6. *Dogs must be leashed and under handler control at all times, except when running the course as designated by the instructor.***

Keeping Agility a safe and enjoyable experience for both you and your dog:

1. The Clicker Coach STRONGLY recommends that you consult with your veterinarian about your dog's fitness and suitability for agility training before registering your dog for a class. If your dog is elderly, out-of-shape, a giant breed or a breed prone to hip dysplasia, getting your vet's opinion is vital! Agility is not for every dog.
2. If your dog is--dare we say it?--a bit of a couch potato, ask your vet about a diet/exercise plan. Even a few extra pounds can cause problems on an agility course! If you have an elderly, overweight or out-of-shape dog, making haste slowly is a good rule to follow.
3. Dogs instinctively try to conceal injuries, and will not tell you when they are hurt. It is up to you to be sensitive to your dog's ability and fitness level, and to monitor closely for any signs of pain or distress. NEVER push your dog if he seems off.
4. Keep water available, especially in hot weather, and be sure that your dog drinks.
5. Do not feed your dog a big meal immediately before class. Running on a full stomach isn't good for anyone.
6. Trim your dog's nails, if necessary, a few days before class. Long raggedy nails can get caught in equipment and cause painful injuries.
7. Consider your own level of fitness and use common sense. You needn't be an athlete to have a wonderful agility career with your dog, but if you have bad knees, back trouble or other medical conditions, inform the trainer of your limitations and be sensible. The Clicker Coach is happy to do everything possible to accommodate people of differing abilities, and will modify course work to suit your needs whenever possible.
8. If you notice a hazard or dangerous condition during class--a gopher hole, broken equipment, a loose dog--immediately notify the trainer so the situation can be remedied.
9. You have an absolute right and responsibility to decline, for yourself and/or your dog, to do any exercise which you feel is unsafe, frightening, or beyond your current level of ability.
10. Agility equipment is designed for canines, not humans. Please do not play or allow children to play on the agility equipment. Equipment may only be used under the direct supervision of the trainer, following the trainer's instructions.