

# Dog Agility 101: What Is It? How to Choose the Right Puppy for Your Household

By Christy Gammage,

[www.PracticeMakesPawfect.com](http://www.PracticeMakesPawfect.com)



If you are a horse person you like working with animals; training and interacting. For many horse people, dogs are required side-kicks. As well as being great companions, dogs can be athletes too!

Dog Agility is a fun sport where a handler directs a dog over or through various types of obstacles. Agility tests the dog's athletic abilities and willingness to follow instructions. The dog must successfully jump across or through obstacles, run through tunnels, weave through vertical poles and climb over large, narrow or teetering objects. The handler's job is to plan the dog's course through the obstacles and guide the dog using voice or body gestures (no leash).

It is a sport for all sizes of dogs with the jump heights adjusted based on the dog's height. Fast, athletic and cooperative breeds dominate in top level competitions, but all types of dogs can have fun and acquire confidence when learning how to do an agility course. There are no breed requirements to compete in any of the organizations. Even dogs (and people) with physical handicaps can enjoy and compete in agility.

Handlers may run alongside their dog or direct them from a distance, depending on their athletic ability and training preference. When training your dog in agility, you build a better relationship as you break down the desired obstacle performance into small understandable steps so that the dog can succeed. Since most agility competitions are speed

events, positive reinforcement is used to produce a happy dog that understands the task which, in turn, leads to faster times over the course.

Agility is a great outlet for dogs who love to be active and may get into trouble when they don't have a job to do. It is also a lot of fun for the person. Running around with your dog is much more enjoyable than most physical exercise programs.

There are several national level organizations, each with a slightly different "flavor" of agility. Some emphasize speed while others reward consistent performance. Some have more games & strategy classes or reward distance handling. This means everyone can find at least one organization matching your strengths and preferences.

American Kennel Club (AKC) – <https://akc.org>  
 Canine Performance Events (CPE) – <http://k9cpe.com>

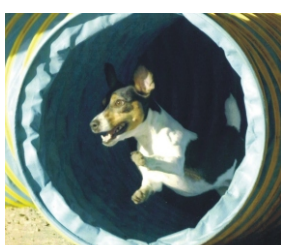
North American Dog Agility Council (NADAC) – <https://nadac.com>

Toy Dog Agility Association (TDAA) – <https://www.k9tdaa.com/>

United Kennel Club (UKC) – <https://www.ukcdogs.com>

UK Agility International (UKI) – <https://ukagilityinternational.com>

United States Dog Agility Association (USDAA) – <https://usdaa.com>



By Ileana Nadal,  
[www.CoolCritters.com](http://www.CoolCritters.com)

A lot of people like to bring a puppy home in the summer. With everyone hanging around the house now, also look forward to the fun of a new puppy. Before you make that big decision, there are a lot of factors to consider: do you have the time and inclination to housebreak and train a puppy? Do you have a fenced in yard? If not, are you prepared to go for long walks several times a day? Do you have small children? Other dogs, cats or other pets?

When you choose a breed, there is a lot to consider: How big will the puppy get? Is the breed good with children? Does it need a lot of exercise? If you already have other dogs, will it get along with them? Do you want to participate in agility, sports, or therapy work? How much grooming will the dog need? Does the breed have genetic issues?

Next, you need to search for a responsible breeder. There is a misconception that a onetime breeder is not responsible. My first Utility Dog Boxer came from a litter bred by our Parish Priest. He did a lot of research and took care of that momma and puppies like they were his children. Sabrina was my



only Boxer to live to the ripe old age of 15!

Look for a breeder that has health tested the parents for genetic diseases. Don't just take their word for it, look at the test results! If you can see both parents, great! But if the father is not present, than ask to look for pictures. Look at the puppies closely and make sure they are healthy and playful. Some puppies might be small compared to an oversized sibling but if they are playful and outgoing they will have potential. My Emmy, who had the distinction of being the first Boxer in the country to earn an Agility championship in both the American Kennel Club and United States Dog Agility Association, was the runt of the litter. I like runts! If you want a puppy to do dog sports with, I have a puppy aptitude test to be administered around 8 weeks that I would be happy to share with you.

Also, your puppy should come with a health certificate issued by a veterinarian. This is the law in Florida! I am shocked by how many people don't know this. Also, if your puppy is AKC registerable, the breeder must accompany the signed form with the litter number ready for you to transfer it to your name.

**Dog Agility**  
**Puppy Classes**  
**Obedience Classes**  
**Original Artwork**



**Cool Critters**

**Ileana M. Nadal, M Ed.**  
 3136 Oak Tree Place  
 Valrico, FL 33596  
 813-653-1494  
[Find us on Facebook!](#)

**WWW.COOLCRITTERS.COM**  
[ILEANA.coolcritter1@gmail.com](mailto:ILEANA.coolcritter1@gmail.com)

**Cool Critters Studio, LLC**

## Need Some Extra Help?

*Serving Christ Through Many Talents*

Pet Sitting  
 Horse Training  
 Senior Sitting Service



Florida Notary  
 Academic Tutor  
 Personal Accountant

Call Jenny At:  
 (813) 345-1533

[www.happytimestables.com](http://www.happytimestables.com)

Service on a mobile basis only, your needs met at your home.

