

# Dog Agility? Get Out of Here!

By Christy Gammage,  
Practice Makes Pawfect

Good agility Handlers can run to the best location on the course to help their dog successfully navigate the obstacles in the fastest time. But many people hear the word "run" and think they won't be able to do agility with their dog. Great agility Trainers teach their dogs to work at a distance from them so the handler doesn't need to run as much. We've talked about sending the dog ahead of you with a "Go On" cue. Now let's look at sending the dog laterally (to the side) away from the path you are traveling.

Imaging you and your dog are walking in a big circle with you on the inside track. The obstacles you want the dog to take are further out on an even bigger circle. Training the dog to work at a distance will allow you to take a shorter path, while sending the dog out to take the jumps.

As always, we start with a very basic setup; one low jump. We've trained the dog to "Go On" ahead of us to a toy or target



plate with a treat. Now let's just move over to the side a bit. Put the dog in a stay a stride before the jump. Place a toy or food on the landing side 5-10' away. Position yourself next to the dog facing forward, but a foot or two away from them. Send them over the jump to the reward, running forward on a parallel path with them. Next time, start with you 2-3' off to the side. Gradually add a foot or two away from the dog with each repetition. A good signal for the dog to stay at a distance is keeping your dog-side arm outstretched with your hand up (like you are pushing the dog away or a traffic cop's Stop signal) and aimed ahead along the dog's path. When they understand the idea with you running 6-8' away, add the verbal "Out Jump" (or whatever your word is for jumping). Do the same jump progression with you on the other side of the dog.

What if the dog turns in toward you? 'Push' them out with your hand gesture

and say "Out, Jump". Try using that 'pushing' motion to push/throw the reward out over the jump. If the reward is 'out there', they should learn to go out to it instead of looking to you for the reward.

When your dog will jump with you running 6-8' away from them on a parallel path, try sending them out laterally to the jump. Start with the dog closer to you on a path 4-5 feet parallel to the dog's previous jumping path. Move forward on your handler path past the jump while giving your hand signal and the "Out, Jump" cue. Still reward on the dog's path away from your path. Again, add slightly more distance with each successful repetition.

When the dog will stay out on their own line or go out laterally to a single jump, now it is time to try multiple low jumps.

Putting 4-6 jumps in a big circle (say 40'-60' across) is the example we started with. Keep the jumps low so you don't wear your dog out before they learn what you are trying to teach them - working at a

distance from you. Send them around the circle with you staying as close as needed for the dog to smoothly run from jump to jump. After a partial or full circle, reward with a thrown toy or treat container on their path, so the reward is not coming from you in the middle. With a couple of repetitions they will get the idea that they should run around the outside. After 2 or 3 laps, call them to you and send them out in the other direction to practice on the other side.

Next training session, see if you can be further away from them (with you running a smaller circle in the middle). Remember to keep your outstretch arm up pointing ahead of the dog at where you want them to go (out there). Reward randomly but at least every lap and a half. The goal is for you to be walking a small 10-20' circle while they race around the outside to get their reward.

Happy Practicing.



**The place for dog sporting fun**  
Orlando, FL

**Agility Field Rentals  
Trials and Seminars  
Fun Runs  
Structured Practice**

Christy Gammage  
● [agility@gammage.org](mailto:agility@gammage.org)  
● [PracticeMakesPawfect.com](http://PracticeMakesPawfect.com)

**Main Street  
MSI Insurance  
Agency INC.**

**Competitive Quotes On:**

- Horse Mortality
- Equine Liability
- Automobile
- Homeowners
- Recreational Vehicles
- Business Insurance

**Hours:**  
M-F 8-6 S 8-5  
Closed Sunday

941-371-6591  
Fax:  
941-378-9754

**STOCKYARD**  
Feed & Western Wear

**Specializing in Purina Feeds**

We carry feed, ranch supplies, hardware,  
western wear, home & garden and pet supplies

[Stockyard84@verizon.net](mailto:Stockyard84@verizon.net)  
1010 Cattlemen Road, Sarasota, Florida 34232



**Running out of time?**

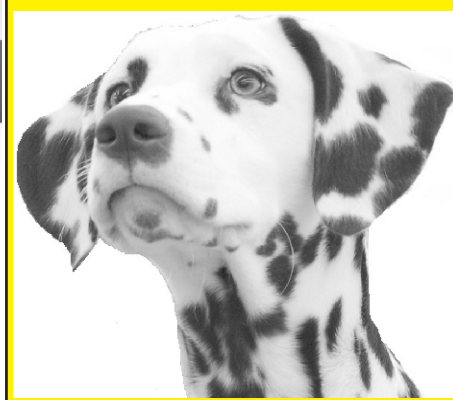
**LET US HELP**

**We can set up  
your ad at  
no extra charge!**

*Just e-mail us your ad info & send  
photos & logos as jpeg attachments*  
[Horsepny@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:Horsepny@tampabay.rr.com)

**352-463-1136**  
3260 W Patton Ave., P.O. Box 289 Bell Florida 32619  
352-463-7634 fax

**mainstreetagency.com**  
Licensed to sell insurance in NY, NJ, TX, PA, CA & FL



*Get Spotted...*

**ADVERTISE!**

**Horsepny@tampabay.rr.com**