

One Jump to Agility Success

By Christy Gammage
Practice Makes Pawfect

It's hot. You don't have much yard. You don't really have agility equipment. But you can still improve your skills this summer with just one jump. Yes, really.

"But I don't even have one jump..." Go get a broom stick and put it across some bricks/blocks/buckets. For safety, the bar should be easily knocked off by the dog. The height for this practice should be less than your dog's shoulder height. It's not about the height; it's about the angle, the speed, where you are in relation to your dog, is your dog coming towards you, with you or away from you. Lots to practice so go set something up in the shade with some room around it for maneuvering.

In this article we will look at some of the initial things you should be doing with your one jump.

For more examples and video, check out Bad Dog Agility's One Jump Training at <https://baddogagility.com/one-jump-training/> which lists 16 skills with pretty fancy names.

For each exercise, practice with the dog on both sides of you, with you close to your dog, then further away if possible. So, each individual exercise turns into multiple slightly different repetitions. Each time the dog should be rewarded with a treat or short play session after the jump.

Start with just running with your dog (dog takes the jump, you run alongside).

This is a great one to see how far away laterally from your dog you can be and they still take the jump.

Next put your dog in a stay, go to the other side of the jump facing away from your dog and call them as you run away from them. This builds your "start stay", essential for competition.

The third exercise is working on sending your dog across the jump to a reward on the other side. Place a desirable toy or treat 10 feet away from the jump on the other side and send them to it with a "Get It" or "Go On" as we've talked about in previous articles.

Now we take the above 3 exercises and add angles. Instead of coming at the jump straight, a ninety-degree angle perpendicular to the jump bar, let's try a 60 degree angle, then 50, 40, 30. This is called slicing across the jump. It will test the dog's commitment to taking the jump without just running past it. At the sharper angles, be sure to verbally cue the dog with "Jump" or "Over" or "Hup" or whatever you've been using. The reward placement should be on the dog's



line of travel so it will become increasingly easy for the dog to skip the jump and take any placed reward. If that happens, then don't put the reward down initially, but instead as the dog jumps, throw the reward ahead of the dog on their path or praise for correct performance as you run to place a treat on the empty target plate.

Let's add turns after the jump. We will start with a Post Turn. You move with the dog up to the jump, then turn away from the dog as you get to the jump (staying in basically one place, like a post). Call the dog to your side (the same side they were on when you started). You can reward from that hand or run a little way then reward. The goal is for the dog to take the jump and turn to come back to your side. You can just turn 90 degrees or a full 180 degrees to

wrap back and run in the direction you came from. A good example can be found in the video on the webpage mentioned above at the 10-minute mark.

Another way to turn the dog after the jump is with a Front Cross. To do a Front Cross after the jump, start with your dog on your left and put them in a stay 5-10' from the jump. You walk out past the jump watching your dog over your left shoulder. Release the dog to the jump as you move across their path, turning towards the dog coming at you until the dog is on your right and you are moving forward turning the dog to their right. Of course, practice both sides.

You can also practice wrapping the dog back with a Front Cross. Run up to the jump with the dog. As your dog-side arm sends them over the jump, turn your body towards the dog. While the dog jumps, you continue to turn and then move in the direction you came from. Make sure you have enough room the dog can come between you and the jump. Call the dog back to your new dog-side hand. Check the video above for an example.

Again, you can add speed and angles to these exercises. Do one or two repetitions of each thing, then change exercises to keep it fresh for the dog. Keep your sessions short (less than 5-10 mins). Use a high rate of reward and your dog will be jumping for joy. Happy Practicing.

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