

# Could your dog be a star?

## Why not try Heelwork to Music!

### What is Heelwork to Music?

Heelwork to Music is Obedience training with a twist! Your dog has to display its understanding and knowledge of training commands. However, this is done by incorporating its obedience skills within a choreographed routine, which has been devised by the handler, alongside a chosen piece of music. There are two categories of competition; Heelwork to Music where two thirds of the routine must be Heelwork and the remainder choreographed as you wish, and Freestyle where, as the name implies, the routine is entirely of your devising! Heelwork to Music requires many dog training skills and those taking part usually have had backgrounds in other training activities, although this is certainly not a prerequisite for Heelwork to Music. Competitors are judged over three sections; Programme Content, Accuracy and Execution of Movement and Musical Interpretation, each allocated a maximum of 10 marks. Events are held around the country, usually starting with classes for beginners up to advanced.

### Reasons why you should do Heelwork to Music

- Meet new friends – there is a great social scene to be enjoyed.
- Impress your peers with your dog's new talent – "HTM", as it is known, has even been a great success on talent shows.
- Discover your creative side by creating exciting choreographed routines for you and your dog.
- Your dog will love the chance to learn new obedience skills.
- Your dog does not have to be a pedigree – all dogs can do Heelwork to Music.
- You do not have to be musically talented to be able to do Heelwork to Music – anyone can do it.

### All you need to know is:

- Your dog must be registered on the Kennel Club Breed Register or the Activity Register.
- Competitors taking part in any Kennel Club licensed event must familiarise themselves with the Kennel Club Rules and Regulations beforehand. The Heelwork to Music Regulations can be found in the Heelwork to Music Regulations booklet which is available from the Kennel Club Publications Department.
- Dogs can start competing at 12 months of age.
- No previous experience necessary so request a list of Heelwork to Music Clubs today!

### INFORMATION BOX

For a free list of **Training Clubs running Heelwork to Music classes\*** in your county please contact the Kennel Club on **0870 606 6750 ext 226 or 212**, or complete a **Further Information Request form** available **via the Kennel Club website**.

Alternatively, show listings can be found in the **Kennel Gazette**. To purchase the Kennel Gazette please contact the Kennel Club publications department on **020 7518 1016**.

For a **Heelwork to Music Regulations booklet** please call the Kennel Club publications department on **020 7518 1016**.

\*Clubs are listed under county. Not all Clubs are registered with the Kennel Club. Where no clubs are registered in your chosen county, club listings closest to your address will be sent instead.

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[www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)

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Together we can make a  
dog's life the healthiest and  
happiest it can be.*  
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### Dancing the course: Top Tips

#### Programme content

To design the best routine, the dog's movements should have greater emphasis than the handler's. The routine should have lots of different movements with no excessive repetition, otherwise points may be lost.

#### Accuracy and execution of movement

This will test how smoothly your dog moves and how promptly it acknowledges the cues which are given.

#### Musical interpretation

Have you and your dog produced a flowing choreographed routine? Has your interpretation of the music and rhythm been apparent? Has your routine been balanced and well structured? This is what the judges will be marking you on, so make sure you practise those steps.



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## Are you ready for your first Heelwork to Music show?

So, you have been attending Heelwork to Music classes and are now ready to enter your first show. Here's a run down of what you need to do next.

### Entering the show

- Contact the Kennel Club for a list of shows in your area. We will send you listings of all the shows, with the telephone and address details of the club secretaries who are running them.
- When you've decided which show you want to enter, phone the secretary of the club and request a schedule (these are usually free of charge).
- Once you have the schedule you will have to select which class or classes you would like to enter and complete the entry form (which is located inside the schedule).
- Send your entry form and payment to the secretary before the closing date. Entries usually close at least one month before the show, so you will need to plan in advance. Entries received after the closing date will not be accepted.
- As a new competitor to Heelwork to Music you will have to begin in Starters.
- It is also probably a good idea at this point to contact the Secretary to find out what format to bring your music for your performance, although this may be included on the schedule.

### Before the show

- Groom and prepare your dog.
- Prepare a show bag containing your treats, toys, leads, water bowls, water, poop scoop etc.
- Remember to take your show passes (if appropriate), schedule and directions.
- If your routine involves you wearing a special outfit or using props make sure you remember to bring them or all that practise will be to no avail.
- Don't forget your music!

### At the show

- Arrive at the showground/venue to get your bearings and to give your music to the Secretary.
- Change into outfit.
- Keep an eye on the judging and don't miss your turn!
- Speak to fellow exhibitors and learn more about Heelwork to Music.
- Look around the show and have a fantastic day!

## INFORMATION BOX

### Handling your dog

Attending your first Heelwork to Music show may cause your dog to behave differently than it does in training. Young dogs in particular can be bothered by crowds and if this is the case you can move a little way from other competitors and officials. Just remember it is a new experience for you and your dog and should you have any concerns there are always Stewards/Officials available to speak to.

*"Heelwork To Music is a sport which creates a partnership between you and your dog of trust and understanding. It's a wonderful combination of music, dance and dog training – suitable for handlers of any age and for dogs of any breed including crossbreeds. Training my dog in this sport has eradicated my dog's unwanted behaviour. She became a dog to be proud of, making our relationship very special."*

**Kath Hardman**

