

Beginner's guide to... agility



What is agility?

Agility is a fast and fun way to test the skills of both dog and handler. A course is set by the judge, made up of various obstacles for your dog to navigate including jumps, weaves and tunnels – all against the clock! Agility is a great test of fitness and accuracy for your dog, while equally testing your skill and precision as a handler in directing your dog around the course.

**Suitable for both
pedigree and
crossbreed dogs**

Jess Clark/The Kennel Club ©

Why should you do agility?

- It's one of the fastest growing canine activities in the world
- Your dog does not have to be a pedigree - all dogs can do agility
- It's both physically and mentally engaging for you and your dog
- It teaches your dog to respond quickly and accurately to a variety of commands



All you need to know

- Your dog must be registered with The Kennel Club on the Breed Register or the Activity Register
- Competitors taking part in any Kennel Club licensed event must be familiar with the Kennel Club rules and regulations beforehand. (The agility regulations are available to download from the Kennel Club website or can be purchased via the publications section of our online shop)
- Dogs can only enter agility shows once they are 18 months of age and for safety it is recommended that dogs do not start training on equipment until they are at least 12 months old
- All dogs are required to be measured before competing and you will need to purchase an Agility Record Book for when you have your dog measured. These can be found on the publications section of our online shop and can also be used to record all your competition wins and clear rounds
- There are seven grades of competition, from one to seven, with beginners starting at grade one
- No previous experience is necessary and you can use the 'Find a Club' section of our website to look for training classes in your local area
- When you're ready to compete, our 'Find a Show' section can help to locate shows in your areas

Handling your dog

Attending your first agility show can be daunting for both you and your dog. Young dogs in particular can be bothered by crowds so it's important to stay aware and move away from other dogs and handlers if needed. Remember it's a new experience for you and your dog and if you have any questions or concerns, the show officials and ring party are there to help.



*You can register
your dog on the
Activity Register
using form 5 online*

*[thekennelclub.org.uk/
activityregister](http://thekennelclub.org.uk/activityregister)*

Get started today!

To find a list of clubs, training classes or competitions near you, use the 'Find a Club' and 'Find a Show' services available on thekennelclub.org.uk

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Agility obstacles top tips

The course

Each obstacle will have a number in front of it, and you will need to make sure you go round the course in the correct order, or you will be eliminated.

For a full list of all agility obstacles visit thekennelclub.org.uk/agility

In every class you'll have an opportunity to 'walk the course' without your dog beforehand so you know which route through the obstacles you and your dog will need to take.



Sean Cameron/The Kennel Club ©

The hoop (tyre)

The hoop, or tyre as it is commonly known, started out as a life buoy, which you would normally see in a swimming pool! It's moved on a lot since then and is now made of soft material with a breakaway element, so the dog won't hurt itself. The dog must jump cleanly through the hoop, and you will gain faults if the dog displaces the breakaway part.

Tunnels

Normally dogs love these obstacles so much that they fly through them, creating lots of speed on the course! Tunnels can be straight or slightly curved and dogs must enter from the correct end to avoid elimination.



Sean Cameron/The Kennel Club ©

Yulia Titovets/The Kennel Club ©



'A' frame and dog walk

The dog must go up and over the obstacle and be sure to touch the down contact to avoid incurring faults from the judge.

Jess Clark/The Kennel Club ©



Seesaw

Faults can be incurred if the dog does not touch the contact points and you need to make sure your dog is safe when the seesaw tips. The seesaw must be touching the ground when the dog alights to avoid faults.

Yulia Titovets/The Kennel Club ©



Weaving Poles

Weaving poles come in either a group of 6 or 12 poles and the dog must enter the weaving poles with the first pole on its left hand side. All of the weaves must be completed to avoid elimination.

Are you ready for your first agility show?

Visit thekennelclub.org.uk/agility

for all you need to know about entering shows and the next steps to becoming an agility competitor!

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