



ACT COMPANION DOG CLUB INC.

www.actcdc.org.au

Agility Information Pack

Are you considering starting in Agility at CDC ?

Agility is a fun and exciting sport for dogs and their handlers. Agility is based on show jumping and is a relatively new sport which, beginning in the 1980's in the UK, quickly spread internationally and is now one of the most popular dog sports in the world.

Agility requires a handler and dog team to complete an obstacle course cleanly and under a set time (SCT) to qualify. While qualifications are required to gain a title for your dog some of the most memorable runs have been non qualifying runs. Not everyone aspires to compete in agility, but we train all dog and handler teams to the same level whether their goal is to compete or not. Go along to a training session or a trial to see more.

Agility at CDC is structured so teams learn to use each piece of equipment at a measured pace. This allows teams to gain a solid foundation on which to build. Once teams are competent in the use of each piece of equipment, the pieces of equipment are strung together to form a course. Again the courses are structured so that teams are able to negotiate the obstacles safely.

For a dog to be able to train in agility we require that they are fit, healthy and not overweight. Included in this pack is an article about weight in performance dogs. Does your dog pass the weight checks? If not, you will need to reduce your dog's weight before commencing agility. See the article on Corpulent Canines included in this pack to better understand this issue – and for tips on how to check your dog's weight – and for how to go about reducing their weight where necessary.

Handlers training in agility must be prepared to have fun! They will also need to assist with the setting up and taking down of equipment including the dog walk and A Frame (both heavy pieces of equipment). Set up and take down needs to be done at the start and finish of each class. If you have an injury that prevents you from lifting heavy items this will not exclude you from doing agility, but you will still be expected to help with the lighter pieces of equipment.

So - are you still interested in taking up Agility? If so please complete the Agility Intake Application form included at the back of this pack and which you can also find on our website at : <http://www.actcdc.org.au/about/form.html>. Please forward your completed form to the club office either by email, post or by hand. Your name will then be placed on the waiting list (it **can** take up to 6 months to get to the top of the list depending on demand). When your name reaches the top of the list, you will be contacted by the Agility Class Manager, via the contact details you put on the intake form (Note: If your contact details change don't forget to update the form at the club office). You will then need to come to an assessment night for the Agility intake where you will :

1. Take a control test – this allows us to assess the amount of control you have over your dog. The test includes some off lead work with distractions such as the presence of other dogs. You are welcome to use toys and/or food during the test to keep your dog focused on you.
2. Have your dog take a fitness test – this involves assessing your dog's gait and watching your dog jump over a small jump, to ensure there are no visible problems that could interfere with the dog's ability to do agility. If there are any concerns about your dog's fitness, the Agility Sub Committee representative may request it be checked by a qualified veterinarian.

We also perform a weight check on your dog to ensure that they are not overweight which would cause undue strain on the dog.

3. Attend an agility intake lecture (held on the same night).



Corpulent Canines?

Chris Zink, DVM, PhD

Our dogs depend on us to put food in their bowls. And, more often than not, we are putting in too much! I have assessed the weight on hundreds of dogs of a variety of breeds over the past year at seminars all over the country and a conservative estimate is that about 50% of the dogs that I see are overweight; approximately 25% are actually obese. These are not couch potato dogs. These are dogs whose owners expect them to jump in obedience, to run over rough ground in retrieving tests, and to perform in agility. And we are seeing the sad results: ruptured anterior cruciate ligaments (often both legs), severe degenerative arthritis in dogs in their prime, degenerative disk disease, and many more conditions that are caused by, or exacerbated by, excess weight.

Why are so many working dogs overweight? The following are some possible answers to this difficult question:

1. Keeping a dog at working weight is incompatible with showing in conformation. I have never understood why dogs whose breed standard states that they should be shown in "hard working condition" don't win in the conformation ring unless they are FAT. The only thing that I can think of is that we are mistaking fat for muscle. For breeds such as Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, assume that if your dog is winning in the conformation ring, it is probably about 8 to 15 lb. overweight. When you are finished showing your dog in conformation, take the weight off, for his own good.
2. People are feeding their dogs the same amount of food they were fed as adolescents. This is a common mistake. But just as most of us eat less now than we did as teenagers, your dog needs less too. A dog's metabolism slows down with age and adult dogs need less food to maintain their weight.
3. People believe the suggested feeding regimens that are printed on dog food bags. Even the most active dog doesn't need as much food as most dog food companies recommend. The best way to determine how much food a dog needs is to feed it the amount that maintains its weight. This is a matter of trial and error.
4. The dog has been less active, but he is being fed the same amount of food. Adjust your dog's intake to his activity level. Remember that in the winter your dog may not get as much exercise and decrease his intake accordingly. [Editor's note: In Australia you probably need to decrease food in summer because the dogs are less active]
5. People don't know how to determine the correct weight for their dogs. Dogs vary in height, bone structure, and muscularity, so there is no one correct weight for a dog of any given breed. The best way to determine whether a dog is overweight is to test 3 different parts of the body: the neck, the ribs, and the hips.
 - a. To check the neck, press your thumb and index finger deep into the side of the neck just ahead of the shoulder, and pinch them together. If your fingers are more than 1/2" apart, the dog is overweight. (Note: this is where old dogs tend to carry most of their excess fat, and they may actually be thin in other locations.)
 - b. To check the ribs, stand with your dog beside you, facing his butt. Place your thumb on the middle of his spine half way down the back and spread your fingers out over his last few ribs. Then run your fingers up and down along his skin. You should be able to feel the bumps of his ribs without pressing in.
 - c. To check the hips, run your hand over your dog's croup. You should be able to feel the bumps of his two pelvic bones without pressing down.

Some of you may be reading this and thinking, "I would never want my dog to be that skinny!" Think about the Olympic athletes. If you want your dog to be an athlete then it is only fair that you do what you can to help him achieve the body that he will need to perform and stay healthy and injury free for many years.



6. People worry that their dogs will not get enough nutrition if they feed them less. Premium dog foods are packed with nutrients. If your dog is overweight, unless he has a hormonal problem (e.g. hypothyroidism), he is getting too much nutrition, and cutting back will not put him in jeopardy. Remember: just like humans, individual dogs vary in their metabolic rate and some dogs just need less food.
7. People don't know how to get their dogs to lose weight without all the side effects —begging, that sad-eyed look that says "I'm hungry", etc. Try the pumpkin diet. Reduce your dog's regular food by 33% and replace it with a 67% volume of canned pumpkin (not the kind with sugar and spices, ready-made for pies). For example, if you are currently feeding your dog 3 cups of food, you would instead feed him 2 cups of food and a whole cup of canned pumpkin. Dogs love the pumpkin—it has the texture of canned dog food, it provides vitamins and roughage, it makes them feel full (so they don't forage in the yard for leftovers), and they lose weight! [Editor's note: grated pumpkin or carrot can also be used in this manner]
8. The vet said that the dog was a good weight (or even underweight). I have asked many vets why they don't tell their clients that their dogs are overweight, and I always get the same answer: "I have lost so many clients because they were offended when I told them their dogs were overweight that I just don't tell them anymore". So please, don't be offended—it doesn't reflect on you personally.

The following is a 'real life' example. Julie Daniels, a well-known agility competitor, was showing her female Rottweiler, Jessy, in conformation. After she got her first major (5 points), Julie decided that she would rather compete with Jessy in agility. Now Rottweilers are not ideally structured for agility. So she took 21 lb (yes 21 lb.—this is not a typo) off the dog. The dog looked lovely, and in the process lost 1 1/2" in height at the withers. (For many medium-sized dogs this could mean the difference between having to jump 26" and 22" in agility.) Jessy is the all-time top winning Rottweiler in agility (USDAA National Finalist 5 years in a row) and is healthy and injury-free at the age of 10 (and still competing in Veterans).

So why not do this for your best friend?

Reprinted with permission of the author. Chris Zink, D.V.M., Ph.D., is a leading authority on the dog as an athlete and award-winning author of [Peak Performance: Coaching the Canine Athlete](#) and [Dog Health and Nutrition for Dummies](#) and co-author of [Jumping from A to Z: Teach Your Dog to Soar](#). Chris has put over 60 obedience, agility, retrieving, tracking, and conformation titles on dogs from three different groups. She is a consultant on canine sports medicine and gives seminars worldwide to rave reviews.



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You must be a member of CDC in order to use the CDC Grounds and to take Agility and other classes

Agility Intake Application

Dogs will only be accepted into Agility classes after their fitness has been assessed by Agility instructors and they are judged to be sufficiently fit & healthy. In case of non-acceptance, any applicable activity fees will be refunded.

Handler's Details Date Placed on Agility Waiting List / /

Surname: First Name: Age if under 16

Email 1:

Email 2:

Address:

Suburb: State: Post Code:

Phone: (H) (Bus) (Mob)

Are you an ACTIVE CDC instructor YES / NO If yes, at what level and in which discipline do you instruct?

Level 1 Level 2 Obedience Agility Flyball DWD

Experience

Please detail any previous Agility experience (including any Titles you have obtained with this or any other dog:

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We will advise you by email or mail of your acceptance into the Agility intake process. Please notify the office if you change your email or postal address because if we cannot contact you, you may lose your place on the Agility intake waiting list.

Dog's Details

Dog's Pet Name	Sex (M/F)	DOB	Desexed	Breed	Obedience Level
.....	/ /	YES / NO

Questionnaire:

Please answer the questions below. Answers will not impact upon your position on the waiting list. The information will be used by the Agility Sub Committee to ensure that your experience in Agility training is safe and enjoyable.

1 Please give details of any handler disabilities that may impact on agility training (ie: damaged knees, arthritis, hearing impairment etc.) or indicate N/A

2 What motivates your dog ? Toys ? Food ? Other ?

3 Does your dog have dog reactive/aggression issues ?

4 Does your dog have people reactive/aggression issues?

5 Has your dog any physical limitations (ie: past injuries) which may impact on training ?

6 Can you easily feel your dog's ribs without pressing firmly ?

7 Is your dog excessively noisy when left tied up ?



..... Agility Sub Committee Use Only

Intake Details: Agility Class Manager

Invited to attend Agility intake tests

Letter	Email	Phone	Response	Date
/ /	/ /	/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No Reply	/ /
/ /	/ /	/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No Reply	/ /
/ /	/ /	/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No Reply	/ /

Comments:

Control Test: Test Date 1: / / Test Date 2: / /

Obedience Level at time of intake test: Test 1: Test 2:

Passed 1 YES / NO Tester: Passed 2 YES / NO Tester:

Issues arising during testing :

If dog failed testing, will the Agility Class Manager contact the team for the next intake or will the handler contact the Agility Class Manager ACM Handler

Advice Given:

Comments:

Physical Test

Tester: Date 1: / / Tester 2: Date 2: / /

Passed 1: YES / NO Dog's Weight: Thin / Ideal / Slightly overweight / Overweight / Obese

Passed 2: YES / NO Dog's Weight: Thin / Ideal / Slightly overweight / Overweight / Obese

Issues arising during testing:

Advice given:

Comments:

Intake Lecture

Team attended intake talk ? YES / NO Date: / /

Accepted to Start

Team to start classes on: / / at Level: ACM Initials: