



AGILITY

ACT Companion Dog Club Inc.

What is agility?

Agility is a timed sport where a dog and handler team race around an obstacle course. The aim is for the team to complete the obstacle course as quickly as possible with no mistakes. It is a fast and visually exciting form of competition that sees dogs of all breeds and sizes compete on equal terms. While named for its most essential skill 'agility', the sport also requires a high degree of handling and control to achieve consistent results.

What kinds of obstacles are there?

The obstacle course in agility includes a variety of height and distance jumps, hoops, tunnels, elevated platforms and ramps, and a set of 12 vertical poles for the dog to 'weave' or slalom between. There are four competitive levels and five height categories in each level. The jumping obstacles are set at different heights for different heights of dogs.



What requirements do I need to meet to start agility training?

Agility classes have entrance requirements that are separate to ACTCDC obedience classes. They involve demonstrating a basic level of control over your dog; it must be able to stay by your side when off-lead and to recall with distractions. Your dog will need to complete basic jumping exercises and will be assessed for fitness, which includes a weight assessment. As a general guide, you should be able to feel the ribs of your dog with your hands without having to press too hard on the rib cage. If you cannot, your dog is probably too heavy to safely do agility.

Dogs must be at least 14 months of age to start in classes to avoid possible structural damage through repeated jumping. If you want to train in agility classes you need to provide your details to the office and they will let you know if there is a waiting list.

Do I need a particular breed of dog?

No! At ACTCDC we have a wide range of breeds of all sizes participating in agility activities. Some breeds (and cross-breeds) take to the sport more readily, such as working breeds, energetic bouncy dogs, or those that are keen to please their handlers. Giant breeds often have difficulty negotiating some of the equipment and this can limit progression through classes.



What is the class structure?

ACTCDC trains dogs (and handlers!) at all levels of agility, whether you are new to the sport or you are at competition level. The diagram to the left describes our levels.

What kind of commitment do I need to make?

People do agility for a range of reasons and not all aim to compete in trials. No matter what the motivation, the sport requires considerable commitment.

You need to be prepared to make a commitment to:

- Attend training every week of a session which runs for two months. If too many are missed you may have to repeat a level if you do not have the required skills to move up. If trialling is your aim, as a rough guide, most dogs can take 6-12 months of training before commencing competition.
- Turn up on time, every time, to assist with putting up equipment and remain afterwards to put it away. Some equipment is quite heavy. Classes are held mostly at night and in winter, it is decidedly chilly!
- Practice some skills, such as weaving, regularly outside of scheduled classes (ideally daily). All that is required for weaving is some PVC pipe and stakes, so the expense is minimal. Dogs that lag behind in weaving skills cannot progress at the same rate as their more proficient classmates.
- Ensure that your dog achieves and remains at a high standard of health and fitness. This generally requires regular off-lead exercise. Agility dogs can suffer from the same kind of minor injuries as human athletes so some expenses may be incurred.
- Help out where possible at working bees and at ACTCDC agility trials. A lot of behind the scenes work is required from members to keep things running smoothly.

How can I compete in agility?

ACTCDC encourages members to participate in official trials. Once you have successfully completed our basic classes you are ready to start training and competing.

There are a number of organisations that conduct such trials around Australia. ACTCDC conducts [ANKC](#) trials. If you wish to compete in an official ANKC trial you need to join Dogs ACT and register your dog; if you live in NSW then you will need to join Dogs NSW. Forms to join Dogs ACT are available from our office. You also need official entry forms for every trial you enter and these also are available from our office. Please see the ANKC website for details of the formats of ANKC trials.



You will need patience and perseverance to succeed in all trials, not just agility trials. The satisfaction of having a highly trained, companionable dog and the many friends you both will make along the way are ample rewards for the time and effort involved!

Enquiries

Please contact the ACTCDC Office
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