

# Agility Information and Registration Pack

## General information

Agility is a dog sport based on show jumping, which involves a dog running a course which includes jumps, tunnels and contact obstacles. The challenge of agility is for the handler to communicate the correct course to the dog by voice and body signals. CDC has been involved in agility since the beginning of the sport in the early 1990s.

CDC runs multiple agility classes per week, graded from Level 1 to Masters. The classes are held weekday evenings and the day and time depends on which skill level the dog has reached. Each session runs for 8 weeks, but may not be in line with the club's obedience classes. The lower levels focus on foundation work. This includes handling techniques to enable fast and accurate communication with the dog to achieve a smooth and fast run and familiarising the dog with equipment.

Once the handler and dog team acquires a certain skill level the team can participate in trials. These are special events where teams from various clubs compete in a friendly fashion. The competition levels include entry level (Novice), a middle level (Excellent) and the highest level (Masters). To graduate from a level, the team needs to achieve a certain number of qualifying runs, that is, runs with no faults and within the time limit. Every course designed by the judge is different so there is always a fresh challenge for dogs and handlers alike. It is great fun and the dogs and handlers really enjoy themselves.

## Class requirements to consider before registering

### *Dogs needs to:*

1. Be over 14 months old, for skeletal maturity
2. Be a suitable weight, which is generally lighter than the average pet
3. Come reliably when called off-lead
4. Be able to work off-lead in close proximity to other dogs

### *Handlers must be prepared to, or able to:*

1. Use positive training methods endorsed by the club
2. Help set up and put away the agility equipment before and after class, some of which is awkward and/or heavy. There are many lighter items that those with physical limitations will be able to manage
3. Practice handling techniques at home
4. Be available to train on either a Monday or Wednesday evening. The training day will vary between sessions and the start time may be any time between 6pm and 7.15pm.
5. Assist with stewarding at CDC agility trials or agility trials held by other ACT clubs. Handlers are required to spend at least 1 full day or 2 half days stewarding whilst in the lower levels. This will help them gain an understanding of agility as well as assist with the running of the trials.

### *Additional class rules:*

1. Only one handler is allowed per dog. A team consists of a handler and a dog. The dog depends on the handler to communicate what is required of him via the physical and verbal cues that the handler trains him to understand
2. Only one dog per handler can train in the same class in Levels 1-4
3. The dog must have passed a recent intake and the team must have been offered and accepted a class place
4. The handler must be a financial member of CDC and have paid for the dog to do agility at the club
5. There is a 4 week probationary period in Level 1. If the instructor discovers an issue that was not apparent at Intake and believes that it is not safe for the dog to work in close proximity to other dogs the Agility Sub-committee (ASC) may ask the handler to terminate agility training at CDC with that dog, in which case the fee will be refunded.

### **Registration for agility classes**

To register for agility at CDC:

1. Complete and submit the attached Agility Intake Application form. It is also available at the office or on the club website. Your name will be added to a waiting list and when you are near the top of the list, you will be invited to attend the next intake.
2. Attend the intake night, which includes assessment and a short introductory lecture. You must pass the intake and attend the lecture before you can start training. The assessment involves:
  - a. A control test to assess your control of the dog when it is off-lead and other dogs are nearby. You can use your voice, toys or food to encourage your dog to come when called;
  - b. A temperament test to assess your dog's reaction to being in close proximity to unfamiliar dogs;
  - c. A fitness test to ensure your dog does not have any visible musculoskeletal problems that may be exacerbated by jumping/landing. If there is some concern, the ASC may require a check by a qualified veterinarian;
  - d. A weight check to ensure that agility training will not place undue strain on your dog's joints. (See attached article "Corpulent Canines" by Chris Zink). There is no weight test for handlers!

### *If you pass the intake test and attend the lecture*

1. You will usually be offered a place in the next Level 1 class, however, you may have to wait until the following session as there is a limit of 10 class places in Level 1. Sometimes there are more people invited to the intake than places available in case some fail. If you pass and are not offered a place there will be one available for you in the following session.
2. If you have accepted a class place you need to complete an '**Additional Activity**' form and submit it to the office
3. You must be a **financial member of CDC and pay for the additional activity** at the office before you can begin training

## Preparation for agility classes

Since it can take a few months after you apply before you can start training in agility, it is a good idea to start some simple training exercises with your dog.

1. Practice quick but reliable sit or drop stays, with the handler going about 5-10m away for 15-30 seconds, returning to the dog, rewarding and repeating a few times. This will be of great benefit when you start training your dog on the equipment.
2. Practice walking and handling your dog on your right side. Heeling on the left is great for obedience, but successful agility dogs are comfortable being handled on the left or right side of their handler. Make a game of switching sides and reward your dog on each side.
3. Watch your dog's weight. The ribs should be easily felt and the dog should have a 'waist'. Make use of the dog-weighing scales in the clubhouse to check your dog's weight.
4. Teach your dog to tug on a toy or a plaited rope. Start with something very soft. Tugging creates arousal which can then be used to motivate your dog to play the agility game.
5. Practice recalling your dog when there are other dogs around. Reward generously every time!

We look forward to welcoming you to our agility group.

*CDC Agility Sub-committee*  
2018

## Attachments

1. *Corpulent Canines* by Chris Zink
2. Agility application form



# Corpulent Canines: Why Are So Many Dogs Overweight?

By Chris Zink DVM, PhD, DACVSMR



The summer is over. You spent many healthy weekends outdoors, training and showing your dog. Perhaps during your evenings, you sat out on the deck, consuming healthy things like salads and unsweetened ice tea. If you are like most people, you have taken off some of those pounds that crept on over the winter. You look and feel healthier (even if you are not totally pleased with what the result looks like in a bathing suit). That's one of the advantages of being a human. We get to decide how much we feed ourselves and how much exercise we get.

But our dogs are not so lucky. They 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 representing a variety of breeds at seminars all over North America. A conservative estimate is that about 35 per cent of the dogs I see are overweight; approximately 20 per cent are seriously overweight – enough to endanger their health. These are not couch potatoes, but dogs that jump in obedience, run over rough ground in retrieving tests, and twist and turn on agility courses. Canine athletes that have excess body fat carry a higher risk of musculoskeletal problems such as ruptured anterior cruciate ligaments, early onset of arthritis and degenerative disk disease.

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

**1) Keeping a dog at working weight may be incompatible with winning 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. If someone knows the answer to this question, I would very much like to hear it. In the meantime, for breeds such as Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, assume that if your dog is winning in the conformation ring, it is probably about eight to 15 pounds overweight. If you have a young dog that you wish to show in conformation as well as other performance sports, keep him lean and train and compete in the other performance sports until he is mature and ready to win in conformation. Then fatten him up for the breed ring, let him take the conformation world by storm, and then put him on a diet before you go back to competing in the more strenuous performance sports.

**2) People feed their adult dogs the same amount of food they fed them as adolescents.**

This is a common mistake. But just as most of us eat less now than we did as teenagers, your adult dog needs less too. A dog's metabolism slows down with maturity 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 active dogs don't need the amount of food most dog-food companies recommend. Your dog only needs as much food as will maintain its weight. Two dogs of the same breed and size may require vastly different amounts of food to maintain their weight because there are other factors such as exercise, type of food, etc.

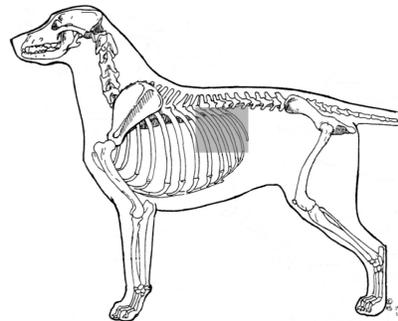
**4) The dog has been less active, but is being fed the same amount of food.**

Adjust your dog's food intake to its activity level. Remember: In the winter your dog may not get as much exercise, so decrease his intake accordingly. Every time you go to the dog food bag, think about how much exercise your dog has had (not how much exercise he might, possibly, get tomorrow if you get your act together) and dole out the food accordingly.

**5) People don't know how to determine whether their dogs are overweight.**

This is a very common problem. Dogs vary in height, bone structure and muscularity, so there is no single “correct weight” for a dog of any given breed. The quickest way to determine whether a dog is overweight is to feel the

thickness of the fat over the last few ribs. In this area, the ribs lie right under the skin. If there is any subcutaneous fat, you can feel it between the skin and the ribs. Take your thumb and index finger and pinch deeply into the skin and tissue below. Then pull the tent of skin outward. You will immediately feel the layer of fat slip out from under your fingers (**Figure 1**). In a canine athlete, that layer of fat should be as thin as tissue paper. As you help your dog lose weight, feel that fat layer to monitor weight loss. It's more convenient and just as accurate as using a scale.



Some of you may be reading this and thinking, "I would never want my dog to be that skinny!" Think about the Olympic athletes. Think about runners in the Olympics 100 meter race. 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. 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 the dog begging for food with that sad-eyed look that says, "I'm hungry."**

Try the pumpkin diet. Reduce your dog's regular food by 25 to 30 per cent and replace it with twice that volume of canned pumpkin (not the kind with sugar and spices, ready-made for pies). For example, if you are currently feeding your dog three cups of food, you would instead feed him two cups of food and two cups 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 backyard for leftovers) and they lose weight! You can also use other low-calorie vegetables if you or your dog prefer. Once your dog has lost the fat, you can gradually increase his intake of dog food, but stop short of feeding the amount he ate when he became overweight. And don't forget to give your dog regular exercise. Not only will the exercise help him lose the excess fat, the muscle mass he'll gain will help maintain his svelte figure long-term.

**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. Honest. The following is a real-life example of the importance of keeping our canine athletes at the proper weight. Years ago, Julie Daniels, a well-known agility trainer and competitor, was showing her female Rottweiler 'Jessy' in conformation. After she got her first major (five points), Julie decided that she would rather compete with Jessy in agility. Knowing that Rottweilers are not ideally structured for agility, Julie took 21 pounds (yes, 21 pounds – this is not a typo) of fat off the dog. The dog looked healthy and muscular, and in the process lost 1 1/2" in height at the withers. For many dogs this could mean a four-inch difference in jump heights. Jessy became the all-time top-winning Rottweiler in agility and was still healthy and competing (in the Veterans classes) at the age of 10. So why not do this for your best friend?



# ACT COMPANION DOG CLUB Inc

## Agility Intake Application

- You must be a member of CDC in order to use the CDC grounds and to take agility and other classes
- Dogs will only be accepted into agility classes after they have been assessed by agility instructors and judged to be fit and healthy. In case of non-acceptance any applicable activity fees will be refunded

You will be contacted regarding your acceptance into the Agility intake process. Please notify the office if you change your contact details. If we cannot contact you, you may lose your place on the Agility waiting list.

Application date:  /  Age (if under 16):

Surname:  Given name:

Mobile no:  Other phone no:

Email:

Other email:

Are you an ACTIVE instructor at CDC? Yes  No  If yes, discipline and level:

Please detail any previous agility experience, including titles obtained with this or any dog:

### Dog's information

Pet name:  Breed:  DOB:  /

Obedience level:  Male  Female  Desexed: Yes  No

### Questionnaire

Your answers to the questions below will not impact your position on the waiting list. The information will be used by the Agility Sub Committee to ensure your experience in agility training is safe and enjoyable.

1. Please detail any disabilities that may impact on your agility training, eg. Damaged knees, hearing impairment
2. What motivates your dog (eg. Toys, food)
3. Tick if your dog has aggressive or reactive issues toward: Other dogs  People
4. Has your dog any physical limitations which may impact on training, eg. Past injuries? Yes  No
5. Can you easily feel your dog's ribs without pressing firmly? Yes  No
6. Does your dog bark excessively when tied up? Yes  No

**Agility Sub Committee use only**

**Handler:**

**Dog:**

**Breed:**

**Invitation to attend Agility intake assessment**

Year / session	Method	Date	Method	Date	Response
/		/ /		/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No reply
/		/ /		/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No reply
/		/ /		/ /	Accept / Decline / Defer / No reply
Comments:					

**Date 1**    /    /

**Control test**

Obedience level:	Pass? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Tester:
Issues arising during testing:		
Advice given / comments:		

**Physical test**

Smooth gait <input type="checkbox"/>	Jumping <input type="checkbox"/>	Pass? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Tester:
Dog's weight: Thin / Ideal / Slightly overweight / Overweight / Obese			
Issues arising/advice given			

**Date 2**    /    /

**Control test**

Obedience level:	Pass? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Tester:
Issues arising during testing:		
Advice given / comments:		

**Physical test**

Smooth gait <input type="checkbox"/>	Jumping <input type="checkbox"/>	Pass? Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Tester:
Dog's weight: Thin / Ideal / Slightly overweight / Overweight / Obese			
Issues arising/advice given			

**Intake lecture**

Attended?	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Date:        /    /	Accepted to start at level:
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