

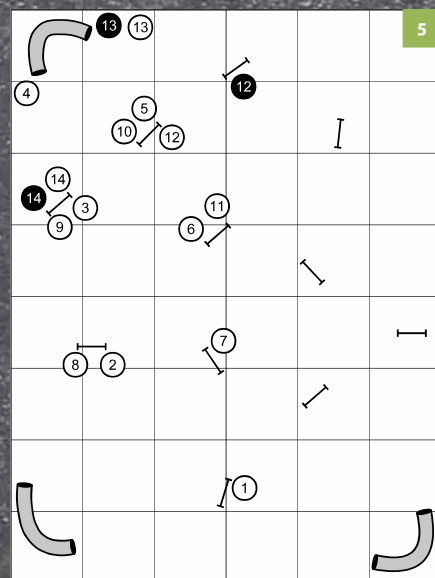
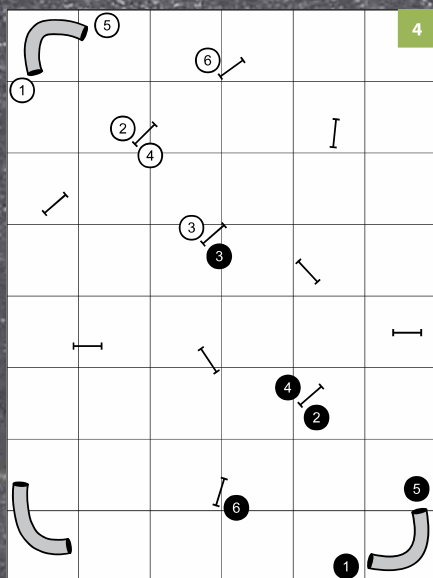
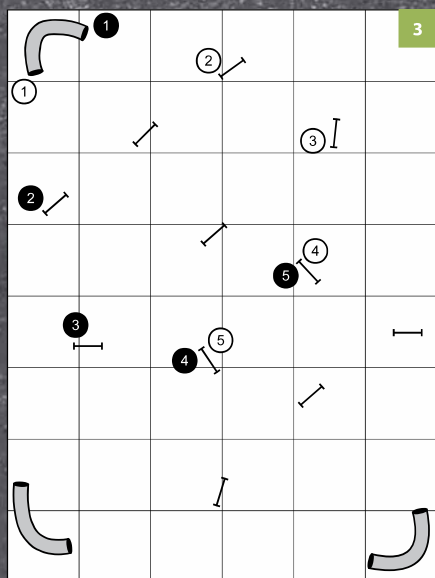
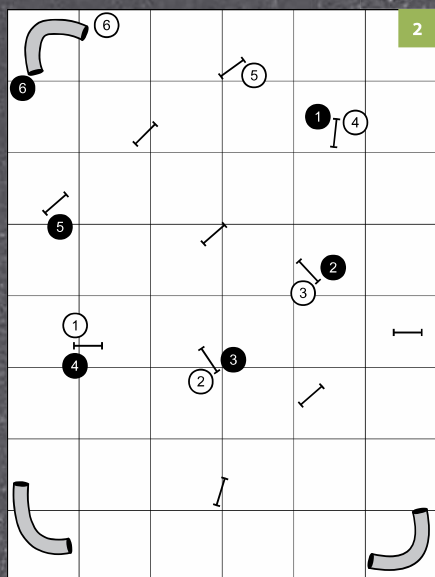
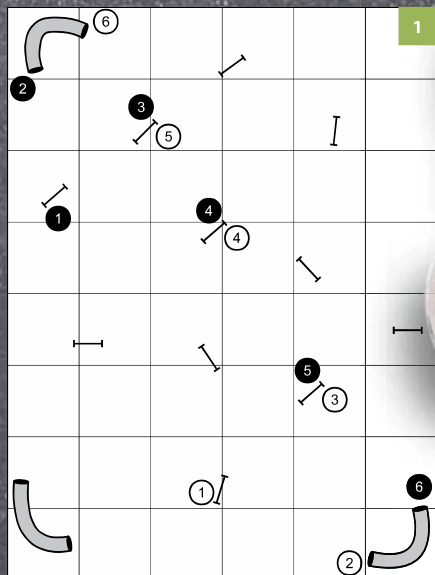
SKILL OF THE MONTH

BY KAREN HOLIK

This month's exercises focus on consistency in your handling skills. Does your dog know before he takes off for a jump whether he is going left or right? Does he know before an obstacle whether he is driving forward to the next obstacle or collecting his stride to come back to you? Does he know to converge on your path and take the obstacle closest to you or to keep driving ahead while staying lateral to you? He should know all of this before he takes off for the obstacle. If he doesn't this can lead to slower course times, knocked bars, off-courses, and wide turns. If your dog does not have an idea of where he is going, he can't run as fast as he can. Your consistency on course will make for a happier dog and also more consistent runs.



STARTERS/NOVICE EXERCISES



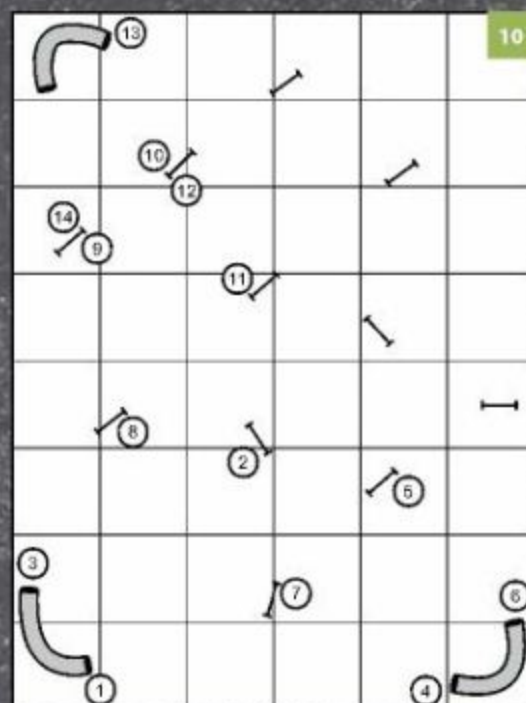
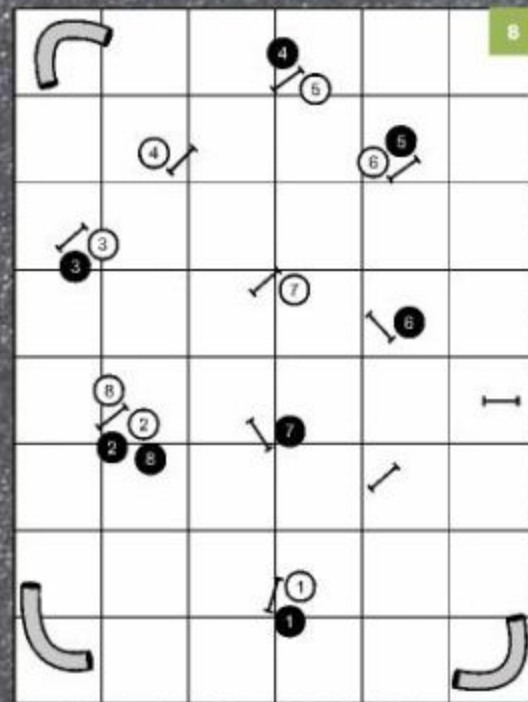
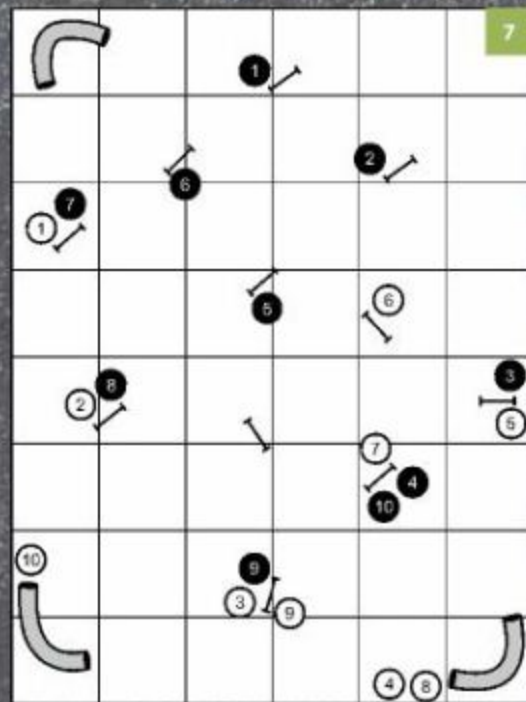
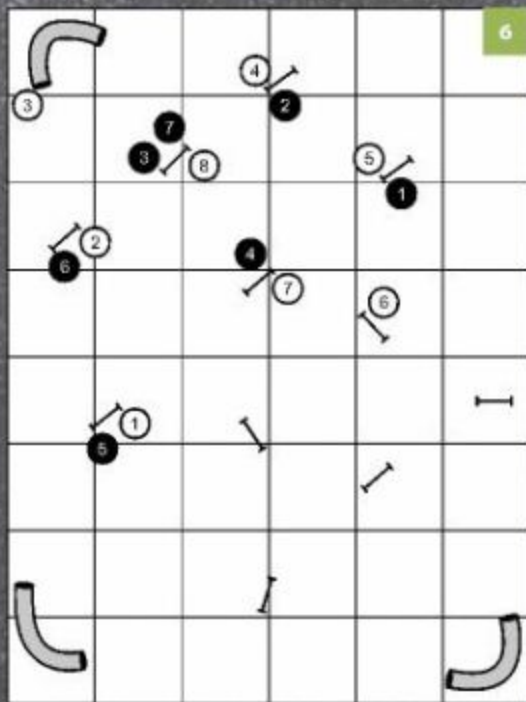
These exercises are designed for the Starters/Novice dog. Figures 1 and 2 can help with your extension and collection cues, Figures 3 and 4 can help with front- and rear-cross skills, and Figure 5 can help with extension/collection cues and also with front- and rear-cross cues.

Figures 1 and 2: First, allow your dog to extend through obstacle #6, rewarding him with a thrown toy/bait bag for driving ahead. Then go back and do each sequence and have your dog collect and turn over jump #5 (without doing #6) and return to you for the reward.

Figure 3: First, try a front cross after jump #5 and reward at your side; then try a rear cross at #5.

Figure 4: Try the sequence two different ways, with a front and rear cross at jumps #3 and #6.

Figure 5: Start with your dog on your left and reward for extension to the #4 tunnel; then reward for collection and a turn from #9 to #10. With the dog still on your left, do a front cross between #11 and #12, and continue with the white numbers. Repeat the sequence, but do a rear cross before #11 and continue with the black numbers.



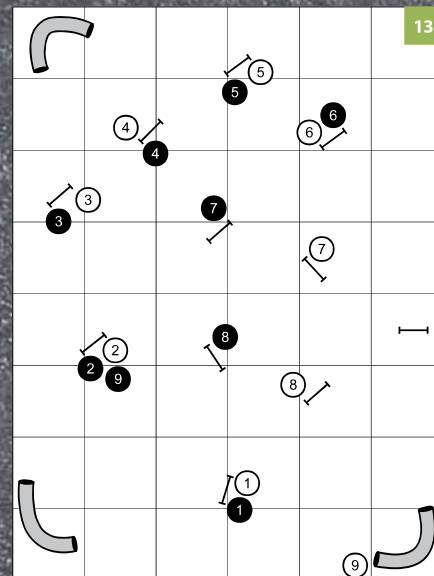
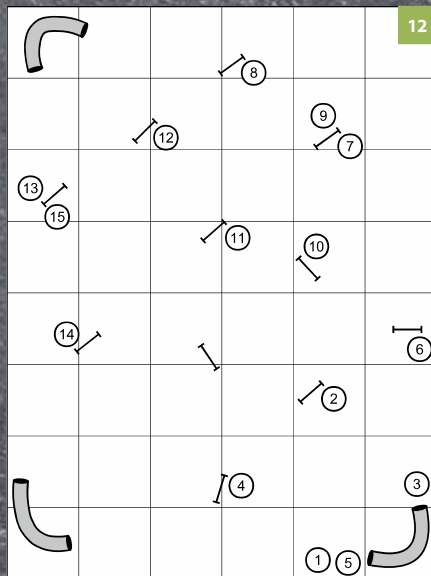
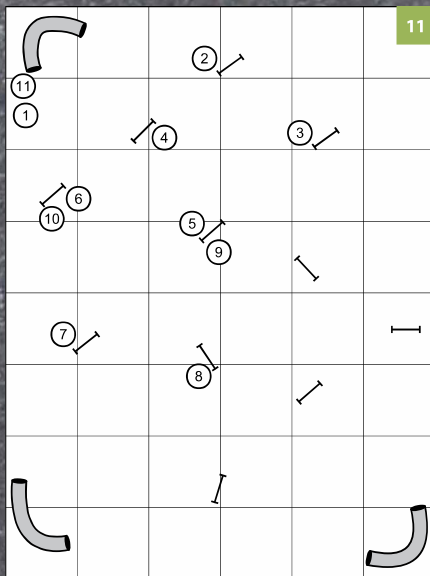
OPEN/ADVANCED EXERCISES

Figures 6 and 7: These exercises can help strengthen your extension and collection cues.

Figure 8: These can help your dog to differentiate between your serpentine and layering cues.

Figure 9: Do a front cross after jumps #4 and #6 in the white-numbered sequence and a rear cross before #4 and #6 in the black-numbered sequence.

Figure 10: Do front crosses after jumps #2, #5, #11, and #14. Also try rear crosses before the same jumps.



MASTERS/EXCELLENT EXERCISES

Figure 11: Try to do front crosses between jumps #3-#4, #4-#5, #5-#6, and #9-#10.

Figure 12: Try to do rear crosses at jumps #2, #4, #8, #12, and #14 in this drill. You can also run the same drill and do front crosses in the same places.

Figure 13: These exercises can help your dog to differentiate between your serpentine and threadle cues.

Figure 14: Try front crosses between #4-#5, #6-#7, #10-#11, and #14-#15. Also try the exercise with rear crosses before #4, #7, #9, and #14.

Figure 15: Have fun with this drill and try to run it many different ways.

Remember to reward often! 🐾

