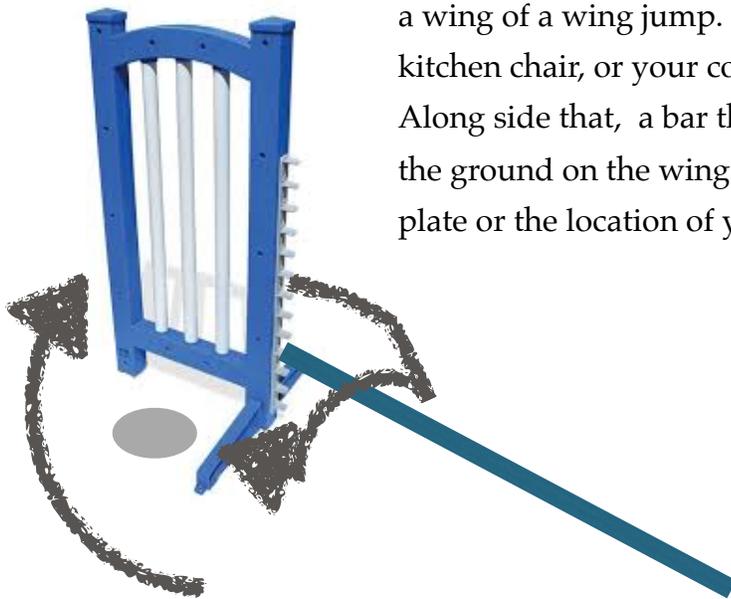


Training the back side of jumps

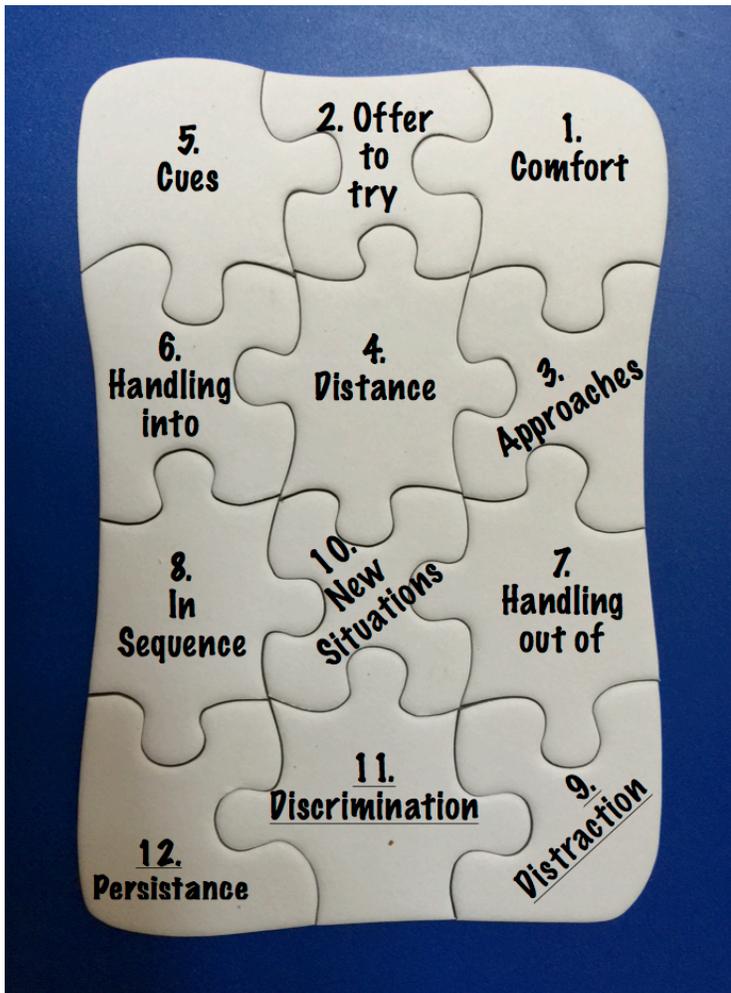
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Once you have done some basic training with respect to sending your dog around cones, or barrels or trees, you can begin to work on the difference between sending around the forward side of a jump and the back side. As always, there are many ways to train this, but let me throw out an approach that works pretty well to build some nice distance and independence in this behavior.



The set-up that works nicely is to take something that represents a wing of a wing jump. It can be an actual wing, or it could be a kitchen chair, or your cone or barrel that you've been using. Along side that, a bar that is laid on the ground or maybe 8" off the ground on the wing side. The grey dot represents a target plate or the location of your toy reward.

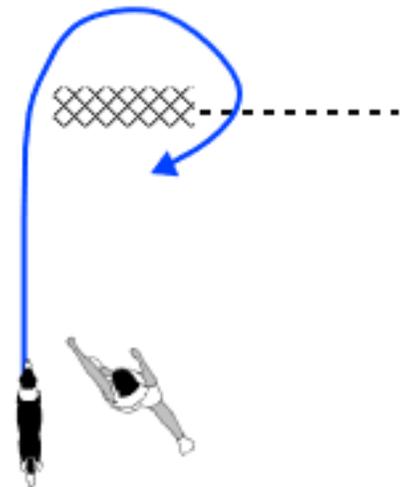
In this example, we are working on the dog going around the left side of the wing so you will initially work the dog on your left side, so you are on the inside of the arc and they will push to the backside and turn toward you.



As a reminder, here is your complete puzzle picture for this behavior

Step 1 Comfort: Since you have already done your foundation work, this is likely to be a non-issue. However, introduce the dog to the set up by throwing a toy to the left of the wing and letting them run past the non-bar side to get it. Then hide the toy behind the wing and use hand-in-collar to give them a chance to find it - again, setting up an approach angle that makes it obvious that the best way to get to the toy is to go the non-wing direction. Gradually move the toy (or treats) so they go to the left side, and then turn around the wing to get to the toy location shown by the grey dot in the initial graphic.

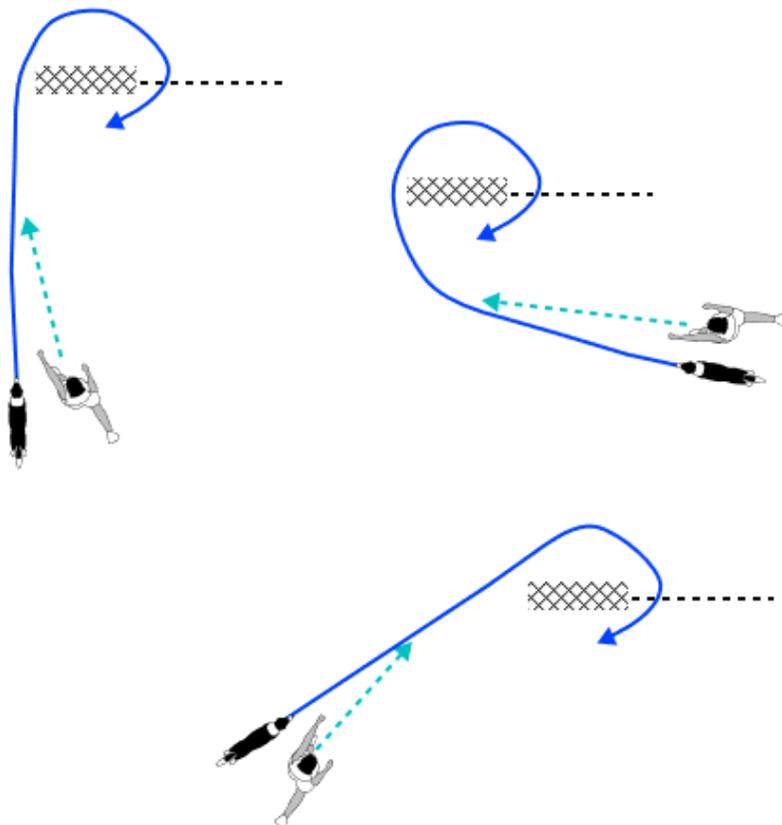
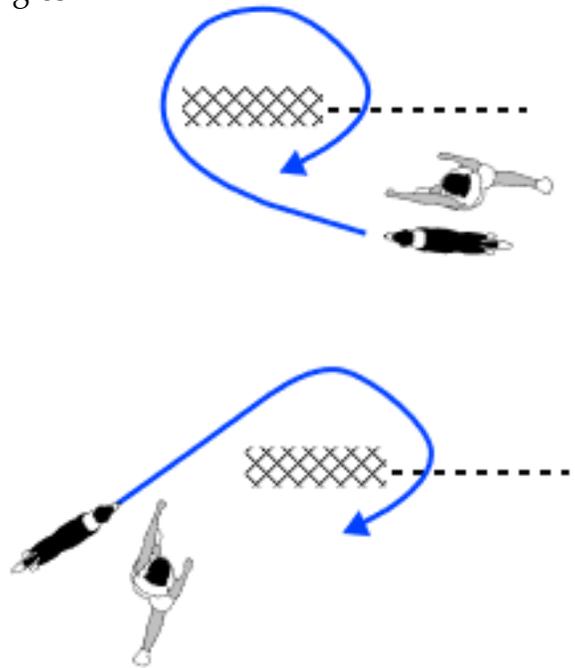
Step 2 Offer to try: If your dog has already been doing jump training, they will most likely offer to take the bar side of the set up so knowing this, start at an approach angle that they are likely to try the non-bar direction. If necessary, take the bar out for a few repetitions and pattern them on going to the back side and then put the bar back in. Step 1 should have given them some understanding that going the non-bar way is an option. When they can initiate the game by heading around the wing from an obvious approach, move to step 3.



Step 3 Approaches: The 3 specific approach angles you want to introduce early include:

- across the face of the jump
- perpendicular to the jump
- coming from the left

Start maybe 2-3 feet away from the jump and organize your dog at your left side in heel position before you release them. Face the half way point on the path to the back side. You can either use a stay behavior or hand-in-collar (I prefer this).



Step 4 Distance: Quickly add more distance to your send so your dog gets a chance to see the bar side and choose to go to the non-bar side. If at any time the dog is confused, cut the distance in half and work up to the same distance and stop. Let them think and revisit later. At this stage work, 2 feet up to 15 feet (or more). If you stay at the same distance too long - your dog can begin to get a muscle memory of taking a few strides and turning - whether they have taken the jump or not.

Step 5 Cues: The physical cue for pushing to the back side is to push on the path, as per any other obstacle. A verbal name for this behavior is very beneficial and will help lend clarity when body language isn't easy to show. Whatever name you choose, the order of cues will be:

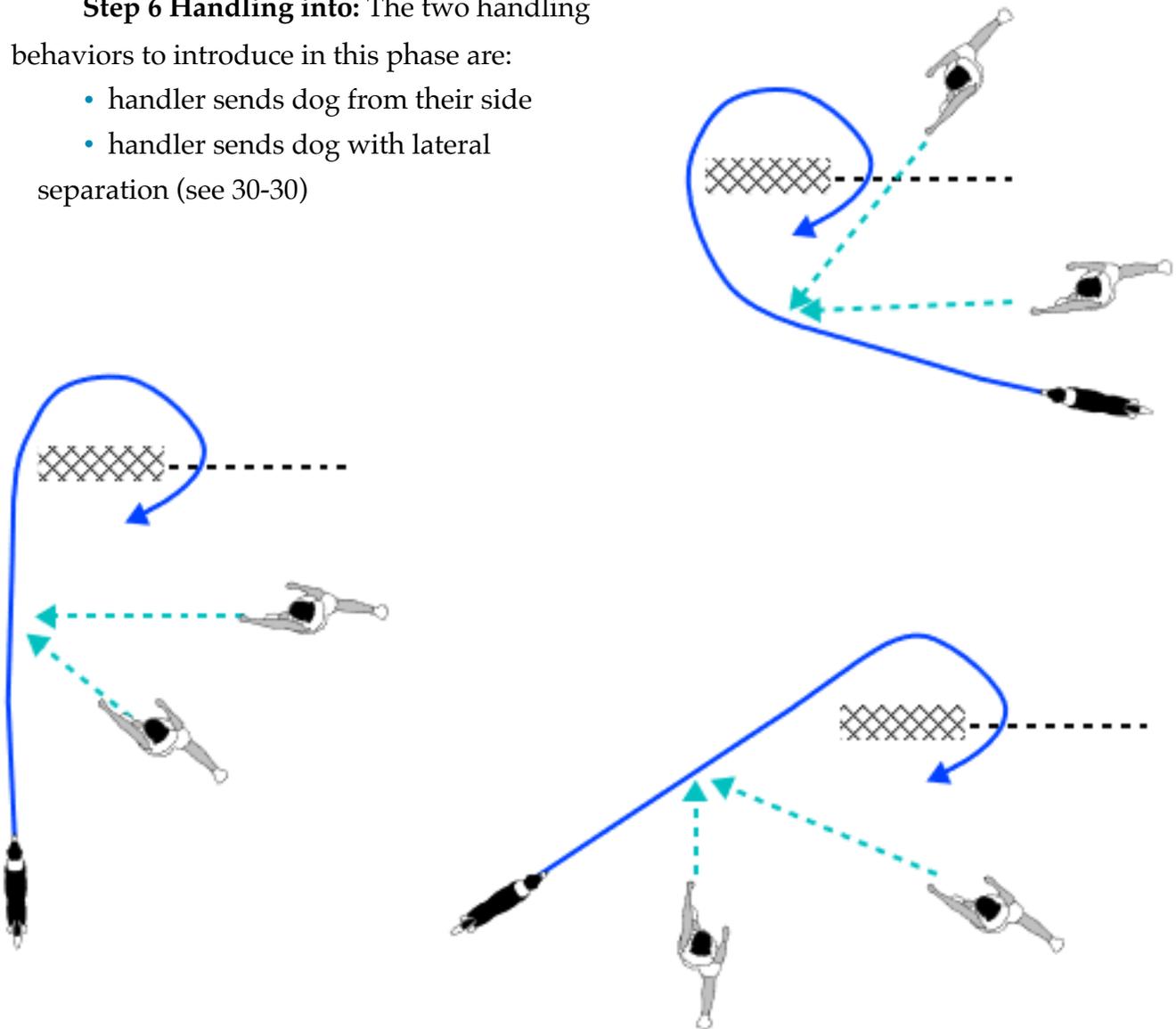
“OK” - release from stay or “Ready/steady” and let go of collar.

“Back” - name of the obstacle when you want the dog to push to the back side

Step - toward the half way point on the path to the back with arm and leg closest to dog

Step 6 Handling into: The two handling behaviors to introduce in this phase are:

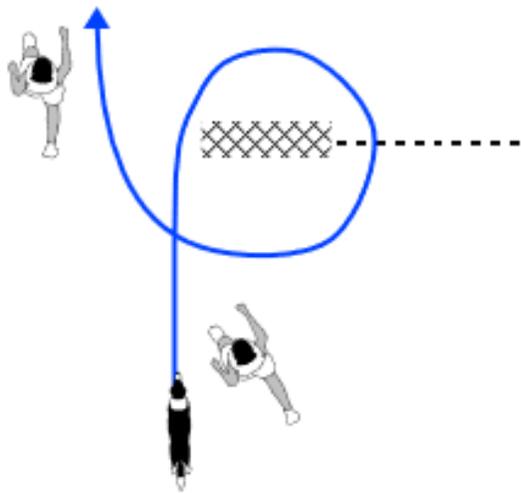
- handler sends dog from their side
- handler sends dog with lateral separation (see 30-30)



Step 7 Handling out of: This is where things get super fun with back sides. The handling behaviors to introduce in this phase are:

- front cross
- post turn
- blind cross
- rear cross (this will have to wait until you have added in the other wing on the jump).

There are so many variations, it would be impossible to draw all the pictures, but here are some examples.

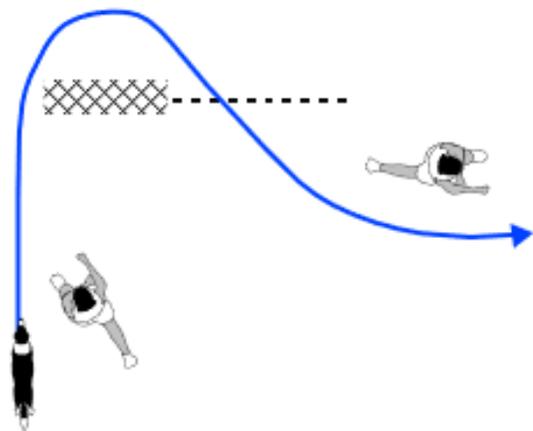


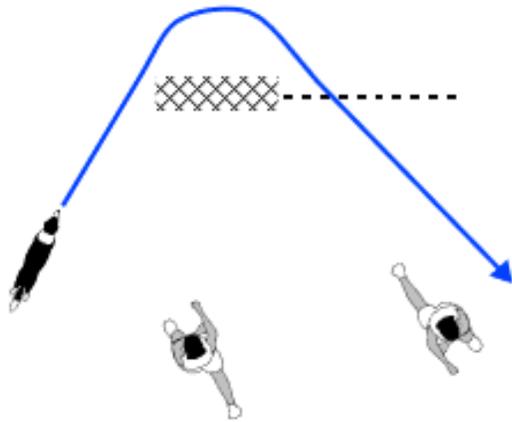
Here is an example of a dog who is practicing the following combination:

- Perpendicular approach angle
- 10 foot send
- From the handler's side
- Front cross (dog starts on left, ends up on right)
- Doing a full circle

Here is another example. When there are multiple handling options, practice them both, in this case, the handler can do both a front cross and a blind cross to change sides while their dog goes to the back side.

- 1) Perpendicular approach angle
- 2) 10 foot send
- 3) From the handler's side
- 4) Front cross or blind cross





One more version. Again there are multiple handling options here.

- 1) Approaching from the left
- 2) 10 foot send
- 3) Handler offset, pushing on path
- 4) Post turn or blind-post turn
- 5) Exit angle to the right

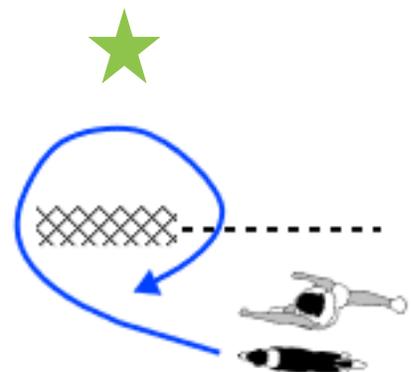
Step 8 In sequence: These are the same exercises you have been doing in isolation in step 7. Particular skills you are working on in this step are exit angles:

- full circle
- to the left
- Perpendicular
- Slice to the right
- Slice to right with "S" turn

Start with a simple jump into the back side behavior and a jump after. Add more speed into it with a tunnel before the lead in jump, and then a tunnel directly into the backside. Also work start line into a backside, stopped contact into it and then finally weaves and running contacts.

Step 9 Distraction: In this step, go back to your single jump and build your dog's commitment to the back side by playing games that create several specific choices.

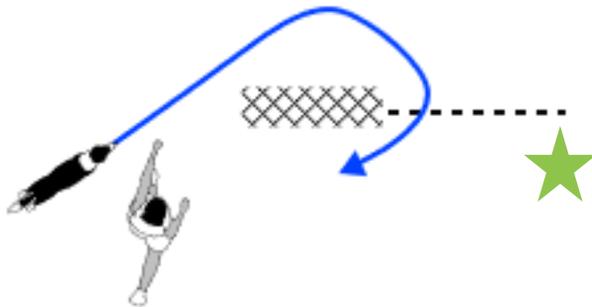
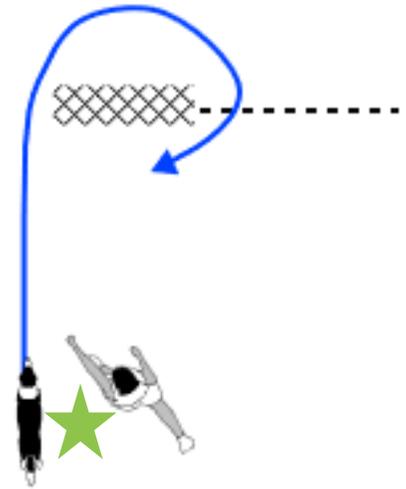
- Tempt the dog not to complete the jump after sending to the back side with a toy (or treats) at the green star.



•

- Tempt your dog not to go to the backside at all with a toy (or treats) at the green star.

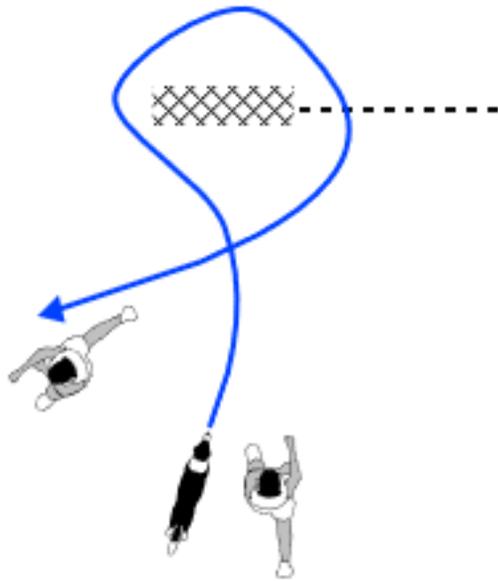
- Tempt your dog not to follow your body language out of the back side by putting a toy (or treats) at the green star.



Step 10 New Situations: Ok its time to take this behavior out of the backyard and into new situations. Be sure to set your dog up for success and work through a few basic training scenarios starting right from the step 1 the first few times you practice in new situations. If your training has been successful, you will begin to notice that your dog quickly advances to sophisticated performance in each new environment.

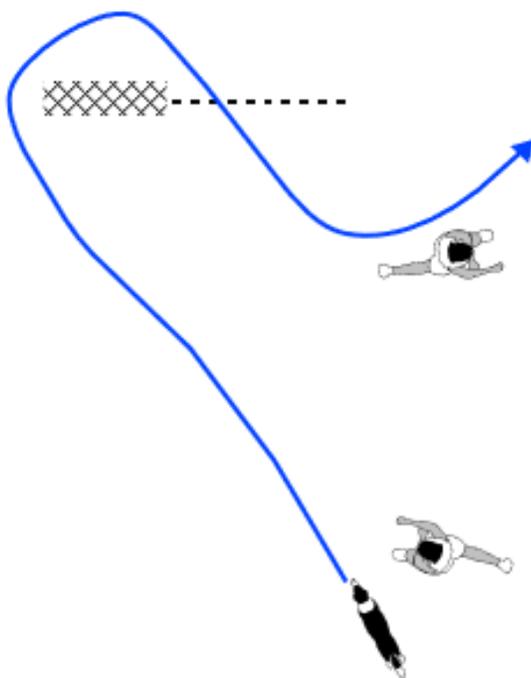
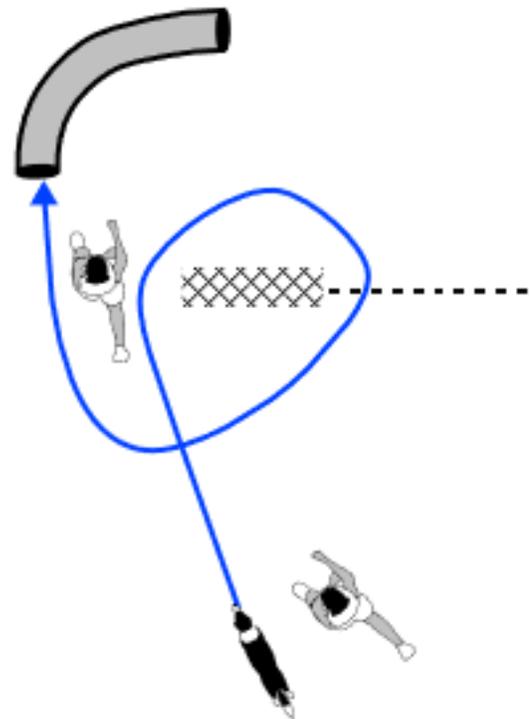
Step 11 Discrimination: This is where things get super fun with back sides. The handling behaviors to introduce in this phase are:

- poor path presentation
- potential off course choices
- temptation to take the bar first
- temptation to fail to go to back side and turn off early
- add in the other wing



Here is an example of deliberately setting up a poorly differentiated approach angle. At this point in your training, a verbal command will be extremely helpful and necessary if you are going to ask your dog to figure this one out.

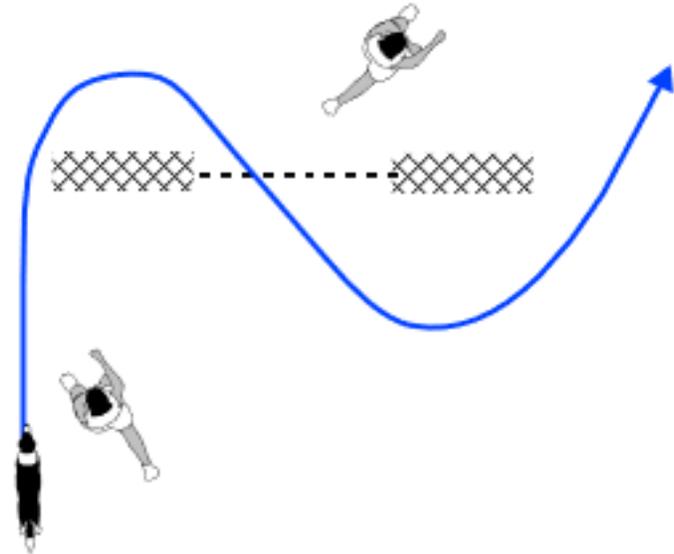
Another distraction is a potential off course obstacle, such as this tunnel entrance (not to scale). Again, note how naming the obstacle you want, such as "Back" helps the dog differentiate between taking the "Back" obstacle vs. the tunnel.



Long approach lines present a nice temptation to take the approach side of the jump, as do certain handling behaviors such as pulling away into a serpentine. Of course when they don't fall for it - reward lavishly!!!! And if they do, then simplify the puzzle and work through it.

The final distraction to add in at this point is the other side of the jump. As soon as you put the other wing in, the discrimination is truly between the approach and back side of a jump. If the training so far has been effective, you should be able to work through the approach angle, distance, relative handler position, and handling of the exit angle challenges with less effort than the first round of training exercises.

In addition, with the other wing, you can now practice handling the “S” shaped path where the dog wraps the other wing coming out of the back side. For example, in the attached picture, the handler is working on sending the dog to the back side, following them around the same side of the jump with a “back-left” behavior. This can be done with front blind and rear crosses on the take-off side of the jump. It can also be shown with front blind and rear crosses on the landing side as well. All of which have various implications that make one or the other a valuable skill to have.



Step 12 Persistence: At this step, practice two categories of exercises:

- perpetual motion drills where you can push to the back side - as in this oval track.
- free form handling where you mix up approach and back side behaviors.

Don't forget to work a push to the right side of the jump as well and I like to teach a pull to the back side as well (not covered in this article).

