



Get off equipment

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Before you work on “real” agility behaviors and foundation skills, perfect your training approach and mechanics on things that don’t matter so much to you. Train tricks, train helpful household behaviors, train canine freestyle moves. Find out what works best and then you can apply those techniques.

You’ll not only tend to relax more and do a better job training, but your dog will learn how to learn with you and will be that much more proficient when asked to learn agility-related items.

In addition, you will likely find out if your foundation skills are strong enough to apply to your agility training successfully.

For example, go ahead and make tons of training mistakes teaching your dog to wiggle under a towel laid on the floor until just their nose is poking out- oh well, if it isn’t as precise or fast or independent as you would have liked - it was great training practice!

This is especially true as you have specific agility behaviors that you want to build. Find anything that is like the behavior you want and train it away from equipment first. If you want your dog to run really fast, stop in a certain position, facing forward, and stay until you release them (much like a stopped contact) - train them to put themselves into a laundry basket first. Go ahead, click the wrong things, clump too many things together, go too fast, accidentally train them to only work off your left side - its all ok. Throw away the laundry basket and start over with a cardboard box.

Everything good they learn can be taken to the next thing - and you can correct all the poor training so the box behavior is nearly perfect. Nearly exactly what you want. Then when you get to an actual obstacle, all your dog has to do is translate what they have learned over. “So you are telling me this game is exactly like the box game? Awesome!!! I am great at that game”