

## **Things to do with your dog during COVID (and beyond)...**

The pandemic has made it really difficult for many people to socialize and train their puppies. Because I do much better at training my dogs when I have goals like upcoming events, competitions, and classes, I've made a list of virtual training and titling options in the hopes it will help others find ways to give their dogs the physical activity and mental enrichment they need. Good dogs take work. Good dogs don't happen by accident.

The majority of "difficult," "stubborn," poorly behaved dogs, and dogs with behavior problems could be fixed with:

### **1) Structured exercise**

- This means things like "we're going for a 5 mile off leash hike at X location today and 4 miles at Y location this weekend"
- This does NOT mean "he has a 1 acre fenced backyard to play in with my other 3 dogs"

### **2) Structured training**

- This means a specific 5 minute to 60 minute time frame set aside at least 5 days a week to work on specific commands or exercises.
- For most owners, this also means a private or group CLASS you attend with your dog at least once a week.
- This also means more than one or two classes for your dog in his/her lifetime. One 6 week course when the pup was 4 months old is not enough to make him/her a well behaved dog for the next 12 years.
- This means your dog is continually learning new things.
  - Classes should start with basic things like sit and walk on a loose leash, but if you don't advance with your dog to anything else -- eg sit at a distance, heel off leash, respond to the first command not second or tenth, learn scentwork, retrieving, dock diving, or agility -- it's like an 18 year old person who repeated the 3rd grade for 10 years. Or a person who's been on COVID quarantine for 5 years. They'd be bored out of their mind, right?
- This does NOT mean that your dog will sit in the kitchen after 3 commands and being shown a cookie. Bribery plus multiple commands isn't training and a dog who responds to it is not a trained dog.

So with that in mind -- here are ways to provide physical and mental exercise for your dog, set some goals, and pass a specific standard (cool certificates and bragging rights).

The AKC currently has virtual titling options:

Virtual Rally Obedience (Novice and Intermediate) - <https://www.akc.org/sports/rally/rally-virtual-entry-pilot/>

Virtual Agility Course Test (ACT1 and ACT2) - <https://www.akc.org/sports/agility/act-program/act-virtual-program/>

Trick Dog Testing (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Performer) - <https://www.akc.org/sports/trick-dog/>

Virtual Home Manners - <https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/akc-family-dog-program/virtual-home-manners/>

Future -- Virtual Beginner Novice and Novice Obedience (coming March 2021)

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn-origin-etr.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/23115013/AKC-Virtual-Obedience-Test-Regulations-1120.pdf>

AKC article on virtual options: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/sports/akc-titles-programs-can-home/>

NADAC has virtual titling options.

Agility - <https://www.nadac.com/video-runs/>

The AKC has a non-titling competition for youth over 13 - <https://www.akc.org/public-education/akc-canine-and-me>

The Canine Good Citizen program is still available - not virtual, but just find an evaluator in your area!  
<https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/>

Places to find instruction so your dog can pass these things (or other sports of choice):

Find a club in your registry of choice:

AKC - <https://webapps.akc.org/club-search/>

NADAC - <https://www.nadac.com/find-a-nadac-club/>

ASCA - <https://portal.asca.org/#!/resources/clublist>

UKC - <https://www.ukcdogs.com/club-directory>

CanKC - <https://www.ckc.ca/clubs/default.aspx>

USDAA - <https://www.usdaa.com/join-the-fun/getting-started/Getting-Your-Dog-Started-In-Agility.cfm>

Etc

Kids between 8 and 18 years can participate in 4H - the quality of instruction will vary depending on the leaders' skills and knowledge, but it's a great way to get kids involved!

Find a 4H Club: <https://4-h.org/find/>

Registries' event searches (there are events still being held - find a local one, go watch, and meet the local club and instructors)

AKC - <https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/>

UKC - <https://www.ukcdogs.com/show-ops-events-calendar>

CanKC - <http://www.ckc.ca/event-calendar/default.aspx>

ASCA - <https://www.asca.org/asca-calendar/>

ABCA - <http://americanbordercollie.org/>

IABCA - <https://www.iabca.com/calendar.html>

NADAC - <https://www.nadac.com/trial-calendar/>

USDAA - <https://www.usdaa.com/events/event-calendar.cfm>

NACSW - <https://www.nacsw.net/>

NADD - [northamericadivingdogs.com](http://northamericadivingdogs.com)

DockDogs - <http://www.dockdogs.com>

Venue specific Facebook groups such as:

Ring Tested Obedience - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/169515619911670>

Competition Dog Obedience - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5762103470>

Dog Agility and Training Discussion - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1731838783713999>

There are some breed-specific groups also (eg if you have a border collie, there are Facebook groups just for BCs running agility, or just for retrievers running hunt tests!)

YouTube - yes! there really are useful FREE instructional videos on YouTube for competitive dog training.

Some of the top people in the obedience world who have great videos include

Janice Gunn - <https://www.youtube.com/user/tntkennels>

Connie Cleveland - <https://www.youtube.com/user/DogTrainersWorkshop>

Catherine Zinsky - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMAZP96I2uPPtFODfz2avzg>

Ward Faulkner - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NWFALKNER>

Petra Ford - <https://www.youtube.com/user/petraford1>

Online classes eg Fenzi Dog Sports - <https://www.fenzidogsportsacademy.com/>

Agility resources can be found at places like:

One Mind Dogs - <https://www.oneminddogs.com/>

Clean Run Agility - [https://www.cleanrun.com/category/dog\\_training\\_books\\_and\\_dvds/index.cfm](https://www.cleanrun.com/category/dog_training_books_and_dvds/index.cfm)

Some venues have organizations for trainers and instructors:

Professional Retriever Trainers Association (PRTA) - <https://www.pрта.net/>

National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors (NADOI) - <https://nadoi.org/>

Videos of passing rally, agility, obedience, and trick dog tests can be found on YouTube also. It always helps me to visualize what the exercise looks like when done right.

Rally Novice - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZPgPpOwJo8>

Rally Intermediate - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-N5C3SlvWc>

Rally Advanced - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxm1Z6aXh7M>

Rally Excellent - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuAERfcx7yo>

Obedience Beginner Novice - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INWlw1vGjUg>

Obedience Novice - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uZmCjAPw08>

Obedience Open - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2A-OduUEG8>

Obedience Utility - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNXwDITCc2g&t=28s>

Agility Course Test 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyWYnPzlwvk>

Agility Course Test 2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwrLOwtsVy4>

Agility Course Test info - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFfgHYdqMuw>

Agility Novice Standard/JWW - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42YQkhrtn3A>

Agility Open Standard - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QFsqtxqjOs>

Agility Master/Excellent Standard - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47iwSrHY4As>

The Rules & Regulations book for each registry and venue has all the information on what the "finished product" should look like.

AKC Obedience Rules - <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>

AKC Rally Rules - <http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/ROR001.pdf>

AKC Rally Rules - <http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/REAGIL.pdf>

Other registries have these posted as well -- just search their websites.

All competitions require your dog to be registered, but if s/he isn't yet registered, there is hope!

AKC Purebred Alternative Listing (purebreds) - <https://www.akc.org/register/information/purebred-alternative-listing-pal/>

AKC Canine Partners Program (mixed breeds) - <https://www.akc.org/register/information/canine-partners/>

UKC, NADAC, ASCA, DockDogs, and many other registries also have options for registry of dogs that didn't come with registration papers so you can compete. Just go to their websites and check!

Have fun training! Life is better with a well trained dog. :)

C Klatt DVM

12/29/2020