

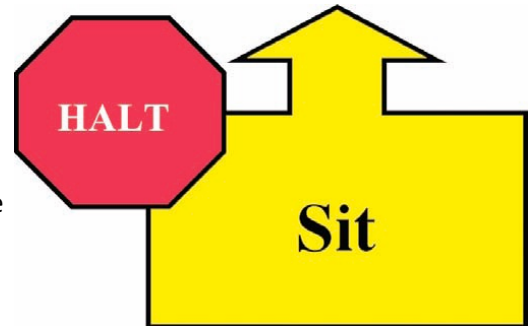


Rally-O Homework • Week 1

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Welcome to Rally-O!

The newest sport offered by AKC (American Kennel Club) and APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) combines elements from basic obedience training, competition obedience, freestyle dance and agility. Much of Rally is heeling! In this course, you will learn how to navigate your dog through a series of obedience signs. Whether you are here to have fun or to start competing in trials, Rally-O offers a great opportunity to work with your canine companion in harmony and have a great time doing so!



Things to know

Remember this is a fun sport! Stay relaxed and try to navigate the course as smooth and free flowing as possible. Remember to always start walking with your left foot first when you want your dog to heel with you, and start with your right foot first when you want your dog to stay in place. Try practicing this in as many places as possible.

Always walk the course with the signs on your right hand side unless the sign indicates a change of direction. When you first enter the course, wait to start until the judge has asked if you are ready to begin. If you are entering a cone obstacle, your dog should enter with his left shoulder to the cone. When you see the "Halt" sign this will always indicate a sit in the heel position.

Tips on Loose Leash Walking

It is a great idea to practice heeling after you have exercised your dog. If your dog is pulling you, then stop. Ask him to get back into the heel position and reward him next to your leg. Try practicing with your dog next to a wall or in a hallway so he learns to stay close to you. If your dog is sensitive, only try this for short sessions so you do not overwhelm him. Pat your hand against your leg to encourage him to be next to you. This is allowed in trials!

Front Finish

While your dog is in front of you, bring both of your hands together with treat at his nose level, take a few steps backwards, and lure him in a sit. You want him to line up in front of you as straight as possible. Try leaning backwards a little, so you don't appear to be invading his space. Jackpot* him when he is lined up straight. Once you get this down, try with your dog starting in heel position. Lure him in front of you, take a few steps backwards, and ask for a sit. In the novice level, you are allowed to take as many as three steps backwards before asking him to sit.

*Jackpot is when you give your dog multiple treats when he has successfully completed a task!

If your dog knows how to Front Finish while you take steps backwards, try challenging yourself and ask him while you are standing still. Introduce this by holding your left foot out in front of you so he has to walk around it. He will be more likely to approach you head-on. Remember, never move on to the next

level of training until you and your dog have mastered the level you are working on. Your dog will be much happier if he is confident with what he is doing. Always try to set him up for success.

Right Finish (or Swing Finish)

Place a low value treat in your right hand and a high value treat in your left hand. With your dog sitting in front of you lure him with your right hand behind your back and meet up with your left hand. Continue luring him with your left hand until he is in the heel position and ask for a sit. Try this in stages and don't forget to treat him after every successful step he takes.

Left Finish (or Flip Finish)

With your dog sitting in front of you place a treat in your left hand. While luring your dog take a step back with your left foot so he ends up behind you on your left side. Now step back into place, still luring him and ask for a sit. Your dog should have made a mini u-turn at your side. Remember to practice in stages and treat him throughout the process. After awhile you should be able to stay in place using only a hand or verbal signal (or both) to get him to join you at your side.

Sit, Down, Stand

You will see these commands throughout Rally-O and may be asked to walk around your dog while he is in a stay. If your dog is uncomfortable with you walking around him while he is in a down-stay, try putting a treat in front of him so he has something to focus on. As you get back into position, pick up the treat and reward your dog with it. Try practicing stand while you walk away from your dog so he gets used to staying in place even if he is not sitting or lying down. Walk back and reward your dog, then release him.

Next week we will be incorporating Finish commands in our courses so be sure to practice as much as you can. Make each session short and fun so you don't bore or frustrate your dog. If you would like to learn more about Rally-O try visiting the American Kennel Club or American Pet Dog Trainers website. Here you will find out how to sign up for trials and find a complete list of signs with their descriptions.

www.akc.org

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