

Wind Sprints

While it is important to teach our dogs to work away from us, most of the time in agility you are going to be *running with* your dog. Since most dogs will run only as fast as their handlers, this poses a problem for you. You're going to have to work a little harder to get the necessary speed out of your dog.

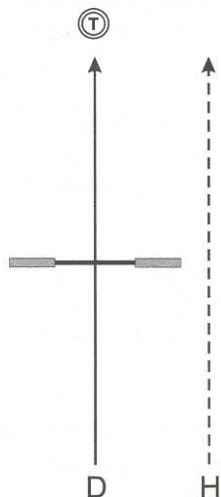
The following game will help you get used to running with your dog and will also help you push the dog for more speed. All you need for the initial stages of the game are a bunch of your dog's favorite treats and a plastic container (without a cover) that will be readily visible to the dog in the grass. A 1 lb. deli container like the ones that they put potato salad in at the grocery store works very well. The best time to play this game is before your dog eats his regular meal, since he'll be hungry and extra motivated for the food.



- 🐾 Turn the container upside down and place a food treat underneath it. Allow your dog to see you doing this. You may also want to talk to your dog while you're placing the treat to get him even more excited-"Look what I've got here for you! Do you want to get it!"
- 🐾 Take the dog and walk about 30' away from the container in a straight line. Hold the dog by the collar, point to the treat again (hopefully, the dog is lunging towards the container by now!), say "*Ready! Ready! Go!*" and release the dog. As you let the dog go, you take off with him towards the container.
- 🐾 The first one to the container wins. If the dog gets there first, he gets to knock the container over and get the treat (help the dog tip the container if he's unsure). If you win, pick up the container and show the dog what he missed out on-hold him by the collar and let him sniff the treat and get excited, but don't let him have it. You'll take the dog back and try it again.

- 🐾 After a couple tries from 30', start the race 50' back from the container.

NOTE: The purpose of this game is to motivate the dog and get both of you running hard. However, there are some handlers who are much faster than their dogs even when the dogs are running at top speed. This is particularly true in the case of very small dogs who have to take a lot more strides to keep up with their humans. If your dog is trying his best and you're getting better speed out of him in this racing exercise, but you're still consistently beating him to the container, then let him win a race every now and then. You don't want to teach the dog that he can never win, as this will discourage him from putting his best effort into the race.



If this game is going well over the course of the week, add a jump halfway between the starting line and the container. The rules remain the same. Then add two jumps.