

## Handling Tips

If possible, never get between the judge and your dog. Be alert and attentive.

Fold the excess lead in the palm of your hand with your hand in a fist. No excess, the leash should never dangle from your hand.

Always keep one eye on the judge. Answer the judge clearly and politely.

If you don't understand a command, ask the judge to repeat it.

Don't talk with those in front or back of you or someone outside the ring.

Dogs may be baited to get their attention if the judge allows bait. Remember not to disturb other dogs in the process.

Avoid fidgeting.

Keep checking your dog's position. If he moves a foot, correct it.

Never let your dog sit or lie down unless the judge has told you to relax your dog.

Practice posing your dog (side, front and rear) in front of a mirror or picture window.



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## Showmanship is for everyone who loves dogs.

**The purpose of the 4-H dog showmanship** class is to emphasize the ability of the handler to show the dog, not the conformation or breeding of the dog. In this class the handler is being judged and not the dog. Regardless of the kind of dog you have (mixed breed or purebred, large, or small, or any other description), showmanship is a good opportunity for everyone. The art of showmanship are the skills and techniques a handler uses to exhibit and emphasize the favorable and strong characteristics of the dog and to de-emphasize the less favorable characteristics.

Though the dog is not being judged, it is a lot easier to show a well-trained dog in good condition than to show one that has been neglected. A good competitor enters a contest as well prepared in advance as possible. This must be done several weeks or months prior to show time.

## Learn About Your Breed

Every breed is different and therefore, it's a good idea to find out how your dog would be shown in conformation before you show your dog. The best way to find out how to show your breed is to do the following things.

Study pictures of your breed of dog. Ask your leader, agent, or show superintendent. They may recommend someone for you to talk to. Talk to a reputable breeder.

Look at how your breed's feet are placed and how the head and tail are held. If you're watching a class of dogs, notice how fast the dogs are moved and how the handler holds the lead. You will need to gait your dog at a speed that makes your dog move its best. If you have a mixed breed dog, choose the breed your dog most resembles and show him as if he is that breed. Learn about that breed.

## More Handling Tips

If you are first in line and the judge signals everyone to gait, glance back at the line and make sure the other handlers are up and ready to follow before moving out. Ask the person behind you if they are ready.

Observe proper spacing. The judge should be able to comfortably walk between your dog and the one in front of or behind you.

Water, exercise, and potty your dog before entering the ring. Remember to clean up after your dog.

Remember the judge will be watching you (and your dog) while the dog is moving and when he stops.

If you can attend AKC shows (AKC dog shows), watch how your breed is shown. Watch the open classes in Junior Showmanship for handling tips.

If you can enter Junior Showmanship at fun matches, do so. Mixed breeds may be able to compete. It's great practice.

Good sportsmanship is very important.

A simple "thank you" is the best response to accomplishment.

Keep a positive attitude. The outcome of each competition reflects that judge's opinion on that day only. If things didn't go well, focus on ways to improve, and look forward to the next time.

Do not take out your disappointment on your dog!



## What you need to know to be ready for Showmanship.

Be sure to study the guide questions to be prepared for the test for your age group.

### *Preparing Your Dog*

The dog must be freshly bathed, be clean, have no matted fur, dirt, or parasites. Coated dogs must be brushed thoroughly and regularly to prevent matting. No artificial coloring is allowed (you may use grooming powder, but it must be completely brushed out). Nails may be cut regularly to prevent the quick from growing too long. They may not be sharp, rough, or touching the ground. If they are too long, they will affect foot position or movement.

Teeth, ears, and eyes must be clean. Clean teeth often to prevent tartar buildup. Keep ears clean to prevent infection. Whiskers, if trimmed, must be done neatly. Trim the hair of the dog's foot between the pads.

Grooming should be done throughout the year. All breeds, even the shorthaired ones, require some trimming of their coat. Ask your leader, agent, or show superintendent, a groomer, or your breeder about breed specific grooming.

### *Choosing a Show Lead*

It is possible to use your obedience leash and collar for showmanship, but it is not a good idea. If you always use a showmanship lead, your dog will learn the behavior that goes with that equipment.

There are several different kinds of show leads. The main difference between them is the amount of control they give you. All of the leads are okay for any breed, although some are more commonly used than others.

*Slip Lead and Martingale* are leash and collar combinations. These leads give a fair amount of control and usually is the best choice for a small to medium dog. It also works well on some big dogs. These leads come in various lengths and colors. On some Martingales, the collar section is made of chain. This gives even more control. When you buy a martingale lead, make sure that when the leash is pulled tight, the two metal rings do not touch.

*Collar and lead* have two separate parts, the collar, and the leash. The collar is a slip collar similar to those used in obedience. It usually is made of fine chain or nylon. Leads come in different lengths and are made of nylon or thin leather. This combination is the best choice for a medium or large dog.

*Humane choke* is a collar that can be used on hard to handle dogs. It is used in combination with the leashes mentioned above. It pulls and releases equally well from both sides.

**When** you choose your leash and collar, try to match the color to the dog. A hot pink or electric blue leash and collar will distract the judge from watching your dog.







## Stacking Your Dog

Whenever you stop in the ring, you will pose or stack your dog. There will be many times you will be expected to "hand stack" your dog (place the dog into position by moving his legs) and there will be times that free stacking can be used (having the dog walk into the proper position and stand still without having his or her legs touched).

Keep in mind that either in hand stacking or free stacking, the appearance and outline of the dog presented to the judge should be the same.

Dogs are hand stacked for the judges' exam. Breeds are stacked on the floor, a ramp or the table depending on the AKC Model. Ask your leader if you are not sure. It is determined by the breed of your dog. Ask your leader if you are not sure for your breed.



## Stacking on the Table

Most small breeds are stacked on the table. Be aware that some judges may want you to wait to table your dog until told. The judge should let you know ahead of time if this is the case.

Practice tabling at home. Before you even pickup your dog, practice squatting and standing several times. Then practice picking up your dog in one of two ways.

After squatting, reach over your dog. Place the palm of your left hand under the chest of your dog. With your other hand, support the bone structure of the lower jaw. Bring the dog in toward your body and pick him up. After squatting, scoop the dog up in your **arms** by placing one arm around the rear legs, the other around the front, and scoop him up into your arms. Carefully place the dog on the table.

After the dog is on the table stack him about 1 inch from the front edge of the table closest to the judge's side.

To remove your dog from the table, pick him up in the same manner you lifted him onto the table. Carefully place him on the ground.

## Placing The Legs

This might seem easy, but if you do not do it correctly, you will lose points. If the judge is standing in front of you, position the dog's front feet first, starting with the front leg on the judge's side.

To position the front leg, hold the leash with your right hand at the point where it joins the collar. Pick up the front left leg at the elbow (never the toes or pastern) and place it straight down so the toes point ahead, and the leg is directly under the shoulder blade.

Then put the leash in your left hand, holding it at the point where it joins the collar. At this point, you can push the dog slightly to the side to shift his weight away from you so you can easily stack your dog's inside front leg (closest to you).

To position the rear legs, grasp the leash where it joins the collar with your right hand. Use your left hand to place the rear leg on the judge's side **first**, grasp the leg either by the stifle or hock, never the toes or pasterns. Place it so the hock is straight and the toes are pointing forward. Do the same with the inside rear leg (closest to you). Make sure the hocks do not turn in or out.

## Stacking Tips

It takes a lot of training to get a dog to stand or stack. Practice every day, gradually increasing the amount of time your dog stands.

Give your dog a stay commands every time you place a foot. This way your dog knows he **must** stay, and you can correct your dog if he doesn't.

Reward your dog with a tidbit after he has stood awhile. This will keep your dog happy.

Place the lead or collar above the throat, but behind the jaw and directly behind the ears.

If your dog stands correctly, do not move the legs.

Bait the dog to get its attention and show that he or she is alert to you. Bait may be tiny pieces of a favorite food, a small squeaky toy or other noise. Do not disturb other dogs in the process.

Practice stacking your dog-side, front, and rear-in front of a mirror or picture window.

Even if your dog has conformation faults, you should attempt to stack him correctly. You will be judged on your effort.

Make sure the leash and collar are on the same side of the dog's head as you are.

## Gaiting

Dogs should move at a brisk trot, not walk, or break into a gallop. Puppies as young as five weeks may start this training. After the puppy is accustomed to wearing a soft collar, take him outside (if possible), fasten a show leash to the collar, and let him go where he wishes at first. If he balks, try putting a dish of food 5 feet away and walk him toward it. When he walks well, give him an upbeat command such as, "Let's go!" "Gait!" or "Trot!" Do not use the obedience command "Heel!" Remember, you do not want your dog to confuse his schooling classes. Likewise, if you always use his show collar and leash in showmanship practice, he will eventually learn the behavior that goes with the equipment. Teach him to gait on either side of you. If he breaks into a gallop, give quick command and leash correction. As soon as the dog is back under control, say, "Good boy (girl)!" Remember, most important in any dog training is praise. Soon your dog will be moving proudly, with head up on a loose leash. There is more to gaiting than to simply take off running. To make it less complicated, let's look at each aspect of gaiting.

### Courtesy Turns

Before the exhibitor does the pattern, he may do a courtesy turn in front of the judge by making a circle to the right, with the dog on the left. This helps to line up the dog for the pattern and move the dog into proper gait. However, if a courtesy turn is cumbersome and awkward to begin the pattern, it's better to proceed without it.

## Speed

Your dog must move at a fast trot. This is the gait at which the dog looks its best. Each handler must work with his dog to determine how fast he must move. Remember, the bigger the dog, the faster you must go. With a small dog, you can walk. It is helpful to have someone watch you gait your dog and tell you which speed your dog looks best. If you go too fast, your dog will gallop (run); too slow and he will pace (legs on the same side moving together). At the proper speed, your dog will move smoothly with little bounce, his legs reaching forward efficiently.

The next step is to get your arm in the proper position. The leash is always held in the hand closest to the dog. Gather the leash so that it goes in a straight line to the dog's head, make sure the excess lead is hidden in your hand. Do not hold the leash so tight that it chokes the dog. Work with your leader and club members to develop a natural arm position that looks good for you and your dog and keeps your dog slightly away from you.

When you gait your dog, he must stay in the proper position, away from your body and slightly ahead of you. Usually, holding your arm out from your body is enough to keep the dog away from you. If your dog crowds you, reach down with your free hand and push **him** away. You are allowed to do this in the show ring. Many dogs do not like to trot fast and will lag. This makes it look like you have a tight lead. If your dog lags, snap the leash and pat your leg to make him go faster. You can do this in the ring.

## Hand Changes

The rule of showmanship is keep the dog between you and the judge, except on the down and back. This means if you change directions while gaiting, or if the judge moves, you must change to the other side of the dog. Most dogs are accustomed to staying on your left side because of obedience training. You should practice gaiting your dog on your right side so he will get used to it. When he gaits equally well on either side, you are ready to start learning hand changes.

There are two methods to get to the other side of your dog. First, when you change directions, reach across in front of your body and take the leash in your free hand as you slow to a stop. Turn toward your dog (and the judge). Make sure your dog's head **turns** toward you. Move out in the new direction. Do not worry about your dog; he will turn on his own as the lead tightens.

Secondly, when the judge moves and the dog is in front of you, change hands by stepping around behind your dog. Change hands about halfway around. Your dog should keep trotting straight ahead. Most dogs want to turn with you when you move. If your dog tries this, push his head away and say, "No." If the judge is behind you and you must change sides, (for example: turning of corners,) turn towards your dog, pass in front of the dog to the other side, face forward, and continue around the ring. Never step over your dog. Do not pass the leash behind your back.

## Basic Patterns

**Down and Back** is executed by moving directly away from the judge. At the end of the ring, do a tight about turn away from your dog to the right. Go back the way you just came. Make smooth, calm, and quick movements. Upon returning to the judge, the dog should be free stacked. Then present your dog to the judge.

**The "L"** is executed by moving directly away from the judge. At the end of the ring, make a 90-degree turn to the left (toward your dog). Continue to the opposite side of the ring. Change hands on the leash, *turn* the dog's head toward you, pivot toward the dog and move back the direction you just came. Continue back across the ring until you are directly across the ring from the judge, turn and gait back to the judge. Again, upon returning to the judge the dog is to be free stacked. Make smooth, calm, and quick movements. Present your dog to the judge.

**"Triangle "** is executed by moving away from the judge to the other side of the ring. At the other side, make a 90-degree turn with your dog and move to the end of the ring. When you reach the end of the ring, make a right circle turn toward the judge, lining your dog up with the judge and move across the center of the ring back to your original starting point. Make smooth, calm, and quick movements. Upon returning to the judge, the dog is to be free stacked. Then present your dog to the judge.

