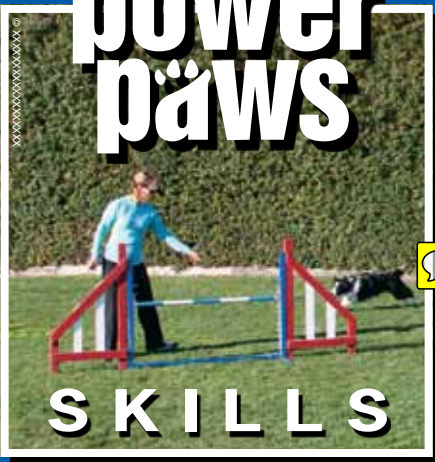
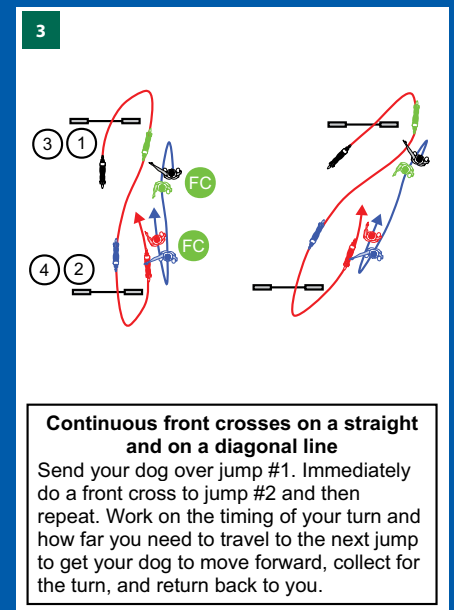
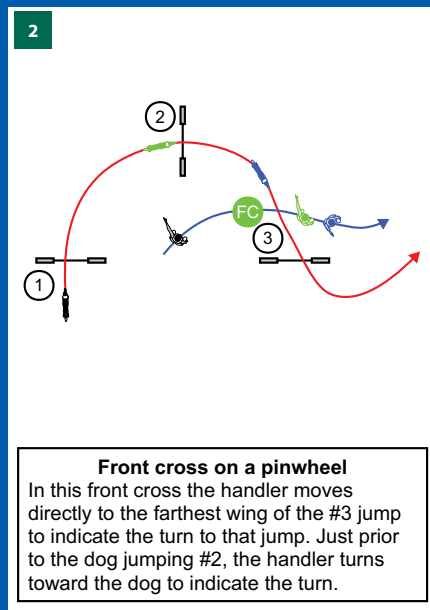
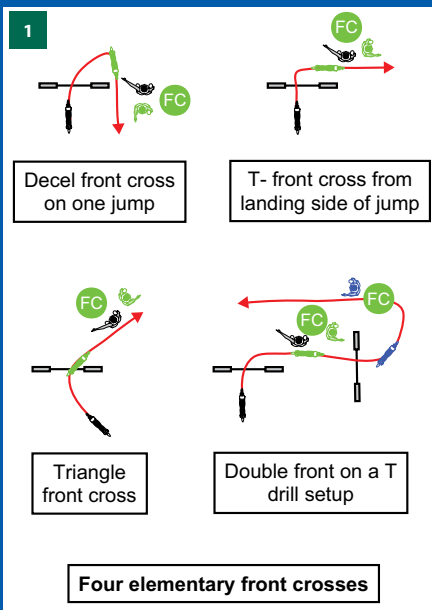


power paws



Front Crosses



What's new with front crosses? Nothing and everything—position cue fronts, deceleration fronts, double fronts, and fronts in all sizes and shapes! Front crosses have had other names in the past, but this is the one that stuck and that most handlers understand. When executing a front cross, in most cases, the handler stops forward momentum in the direction she and the dog are traveling, turns, and faces her dog. Our dogs are taught to respond to our turning cues while they are still in the groundwork phase of agility training by being rewarded for turning toward us when we turn toward them.

If you are a relatively novice handler, I think you will like all the short one-

two-, and three-jump front cross drills. But what if you have never ever done a front cross before? I recently had a lesson with a new student who had just moved to California from another country. She was in the higher levels of agility competition back home. I expected she knew how to handle (she did), but what I did not expect is that she had only learned agility doing blind crosses, not front crosses. She could not comprehend what I was trying to describe to her. Front crosses are one of the most prevalent and natural ways (for me) that we change sides on a course with our dogs. But she only knew to turn away from her dog, not turn *toward* her dog. For those of you

who have never done a front cross with your dog, there are many resources in the form of books and DVDs. My *Alphabet Drills* book would be good to peruse, and Clean Run sells many elementary groundwork and jumping videos that would be a good start as well.

I tried to cover as many of the different kinds of front crosses that we see on both American and European type courses as possible. The elementary ones are separated out individually, and the longer drills have many of these elements combined together. Perfect your front crosses with lots of rewards on the short drills, and then see if you can put them all together on the longer ones. You will notice that the

4

Decel front cross to a second jump

Front cross between the two jumps of a 180

5

Decel front cross
This front cross is executed at the corner of the jump. To get a great turn, the handler should arrive at the jump wing prior to the dog and then stop forward motion. As the dog is committing to the jump, the handler rotates toward the dog to cue the front cross. The most important cue is the handler's deceleration at the jump.

6

Diagonal line front cross
This front cross is executed close to the next obstacle the dog is moving to after the turn. The handler moves to the front cross position with the dog on her left side, timing her arrival in that position before the dog has reached jump #3. The handler rotates toward the dog as the dog is committing to jump #3. When the handler begins that rotation on the front cross, the dog should begin his turn toward jump #4.

7

Front crosses between jumps in a 270
Run both of these drills: 1) Move with your dog to the takeoff side of jump #2 and finish straight ahead to #3a; 2) Run the drill again and put in a second front cross to do back-to-back 270s by taking jump #3b.

8

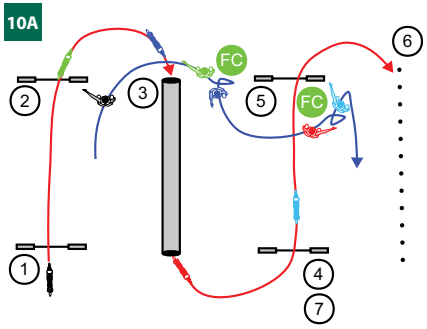
Front cross on a 270
Send your dog out around the 270, jumps #1 and #2, and then move into position for the front cross. This front cross is done on the landing side of #2, close to #3.

9

Push to backside of jump followed by a front cross
Here are two different setups for practicing a push to the back side of a jump, followed by a front cross. The better you can send your dog to the back side of a jump, the easier it is to get into position for the front cross. The exercise on the right has a push to the back of a jump followed by a front cross and then another push to the back.

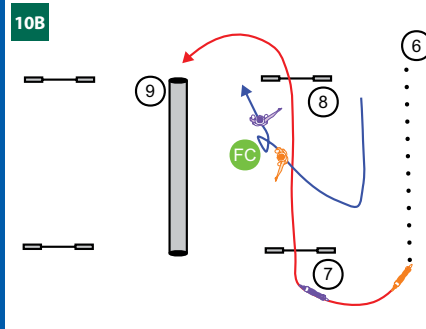
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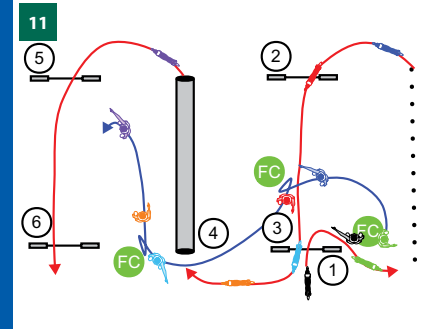
10A

Front crosses on tunnels and weaves
 This exercise uses the front cross for vital side changes. On the front cross from #2 to #3 I like to slide over to the far side of the tunnel just before the dog jumps #2. When the dog is in the tunnel you can wait for him to exit and then indicate #4 from a distance. Work on a timely turn to #5 and collect your dog for the weaves...



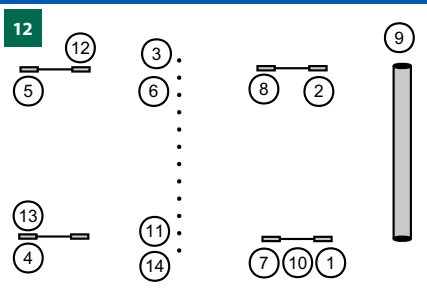
10B

...While the dog weaves you can move into position for another front cross from #7 to #8.



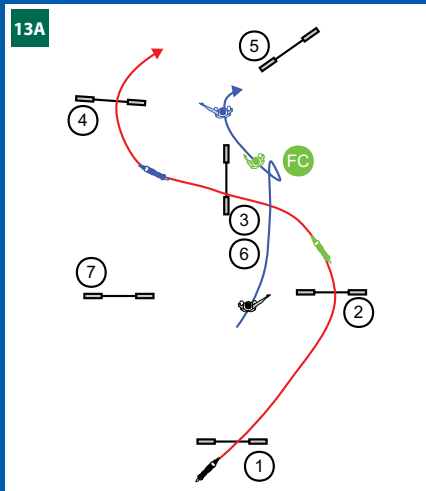
11

Front crosses on tunnels and weaves
 Start with a decel front cross from #1 to #2 and move into position for a front cross from #3 to #4. If you can indicate #3 from a distance you will be able to get a front cross in from #4 to #5, which will make it easier to indicate #6 from the left side of the tunnel.



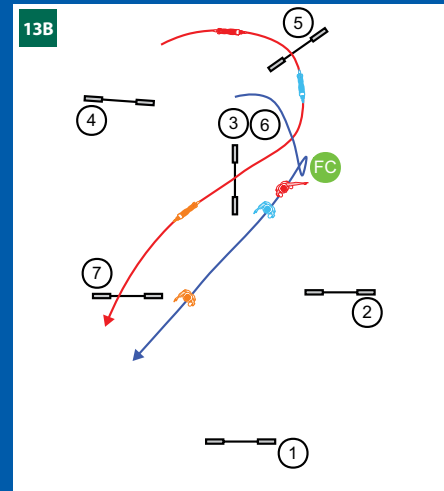
12

Front crosses on tunnels and weaves
 Change the position of the tunnel and weaves. Send to the tunnel, do a front cross from #2 to #3, another from #3 to #4, and send to #5. Before your dog reaches #6, move into position for a front cross at the #7 weaves. Do another front cross from #8 to #9, then do a double front out of the tunnel to #11, and quickly again from #11 to #12. If you are ready for one more, slide across into position for a front cross from #14 to #15.



13A

Move into position for a front cross on the first pinwheel, #2 to #3. Send your dog around the next pinwheel...

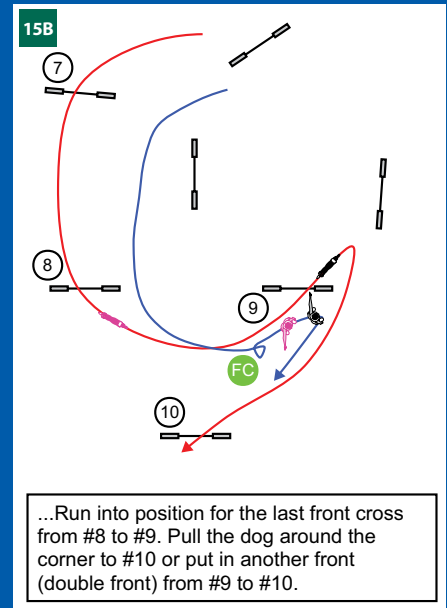
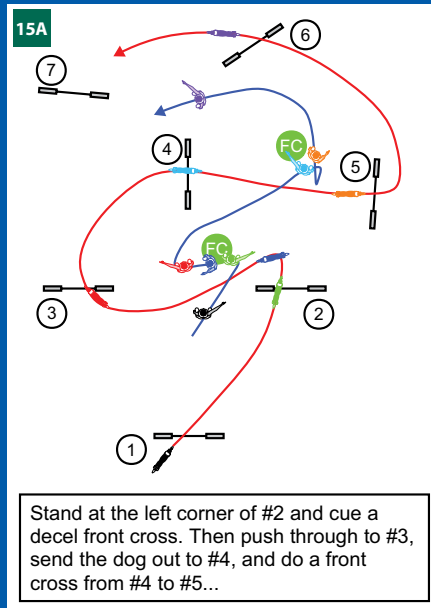
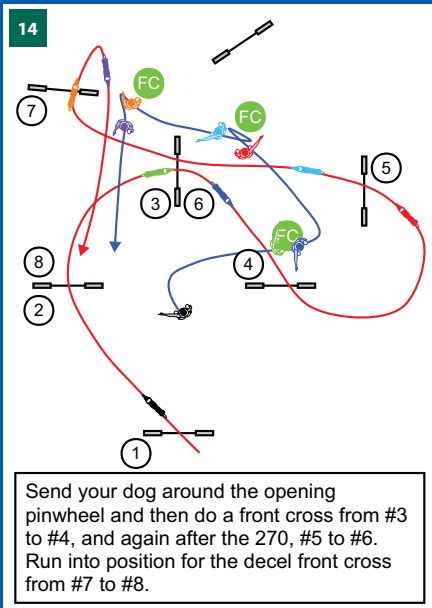


13B

...and do another front cross from #5 to #6. Both front crosses happen in front of the same jump.

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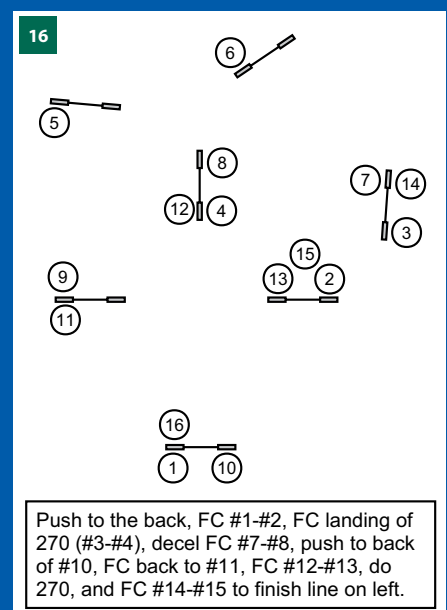


handlers and dogs in the diagrams are color coded so that you can get a better understanding of where the handler is when the dog is in a certain position, (blue handler and blue dog, etc.). However, please note that these are just general ideas for positions—no dog and handler are going to be perfectly

in position as diagrammed, and I am not perfect in my placement of the handler/dog positions. There are too many lines and numbers that interfere with exact handler and dog placement in the diagrams.

Happy front crossing! 🐾

Nancy Gyes and her husband, Jim Basic, run Power Paws Agility in San Jose, California. Nancy has been the AKC World Team Coach since 2006, and has been on the AKC World Team seven times, four years with Scud and three with Riot. Nancy and Riot finished 1st in 2002 and 2nd in 2001 in Individual Agility classes at the FCI Agility World Championships. Nancy also won the USDAA Nationals four years in a row, 1998 to 2001, with three different dogs: Scud, Riot, and Wicked. In 2001 and 2002, Nancy and Riot were the 24" jump height AKC National Champions. Contact Nancy at www.powerpawsagility.com where you can also view other articles and videos.



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