

Opening Lines Using Lead-outs

The setup in Figure 1 has a few different opening lines that favor lead-out starts to obstacle #2 or #3. I have diagrammed and described how you could handle those openings. You may choose a lead-out that most closely relates to the handling system you use, and, of course, the lead-out you choose will likely vary according to the opening sequence.

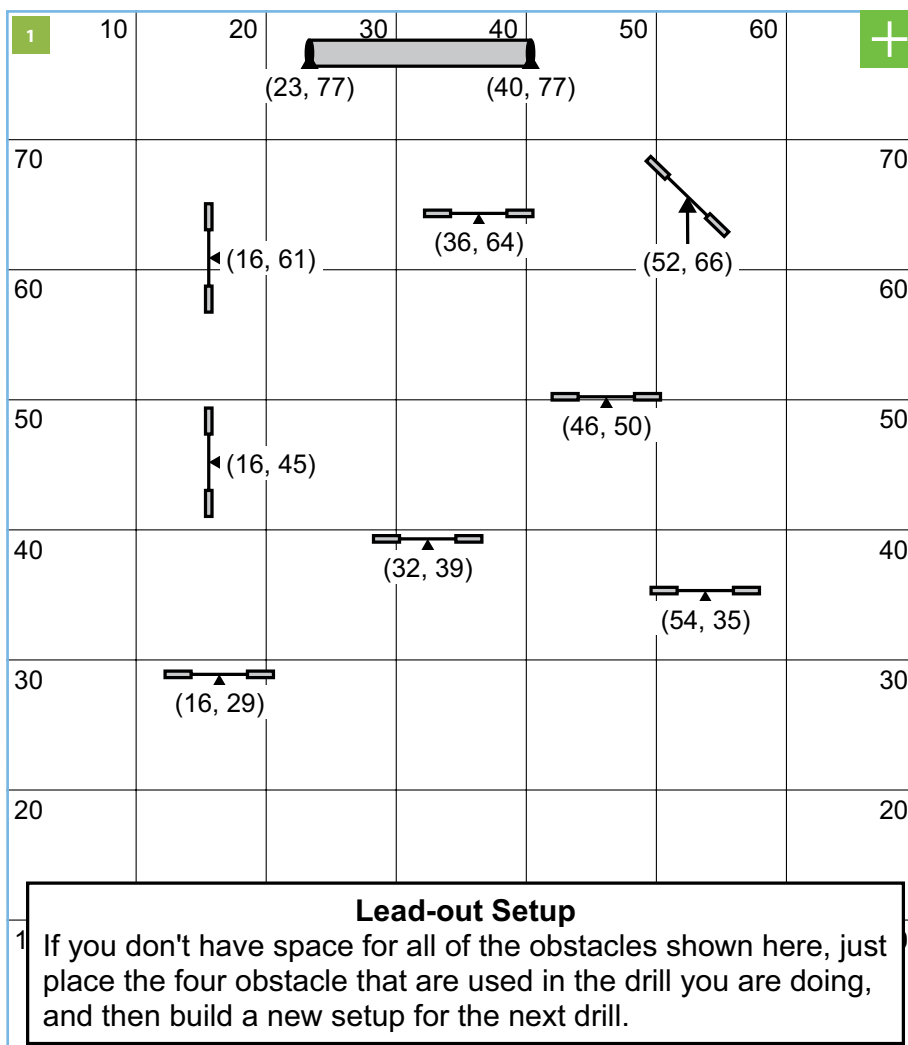
Lead-out Techniques

Lead-out pivot, lead-out pushes, and threadles all use different skills and need to be trained accordingly. In some of the drills, you can also choose to take a shorter lead-out and push to the back of the second jump and then serpentine or finish with a blind cross.

I hope you'll try a few variations of these lead-outs and see which one works best for you.

It really pays to train your lead-out skills carefully. A tricky opening on a course can affect your entire run if you can't get into the correct spot to handle the next sequence after the opening.

Reward your start-lines stays of ten so your dog is happy to stay and yet drives quickly and accurately off the line to you.

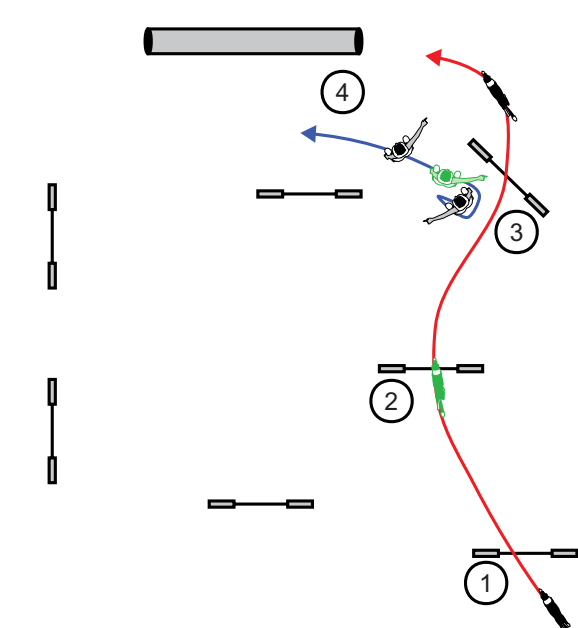


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Lead-out Drills

After you practice the different lead-out techniques, I have numbered some short exercises with different lead-outs.

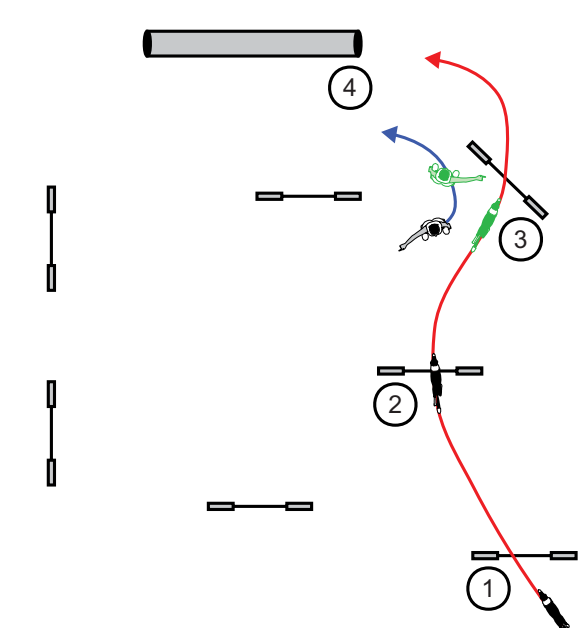
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The diagram shows a dog on a lead starting at position #1, moving to #2, then pivoting to #3, and finally to #4. The dog's path is indicated by a red line. A person is shown at #3, and a dog is shown at #4. The dog is on the person's right side. The person is facing the dog. The dog is on the person's right side. The dog is on the person's right side. The dog is on the person's right side.

Lead-out Pivot Start
Stand close to the left stanchion of #3 and recall your dog over #1 and #2. Rotate to your right side/right hand as your dog is on approach to #2.

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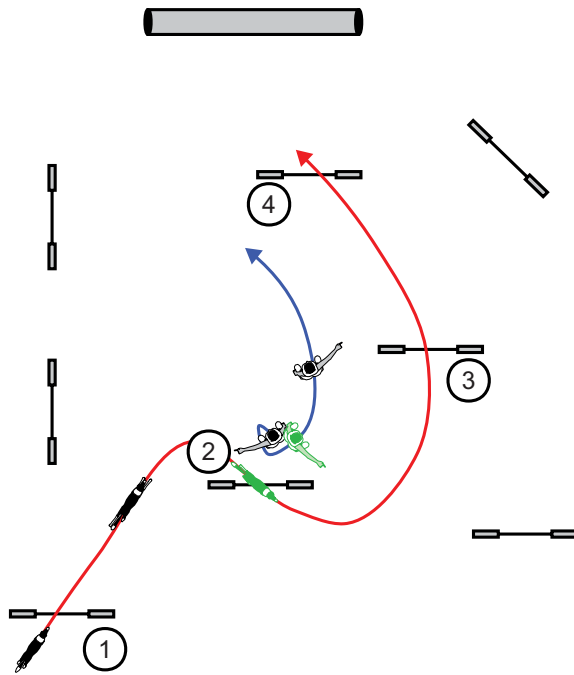
Lead-out Push Start
Stand between #2 and #3 with your dog already on your right side. Rotate with your dog still on your right to take #3. There is not a start that would be considered a threadle though there are other ways to handle this opening. You could run up to the LOP position and do a front cross, or you could start with your dog on your left and rear cross #3.

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Lead-out Pivot

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Lead-out Pivot

A lead-out pivot is just two front crosses executed from the same lead-out position. In this case, the dog is released from the start line on the handler's left side. As the dog commits to crossing to the correct side of the jump, the handler pivots in place to indicate the jump and the side change to the handler's right side.



Opening position on lead-out pivot



Starting position on pivot



Completing rotation on pivot

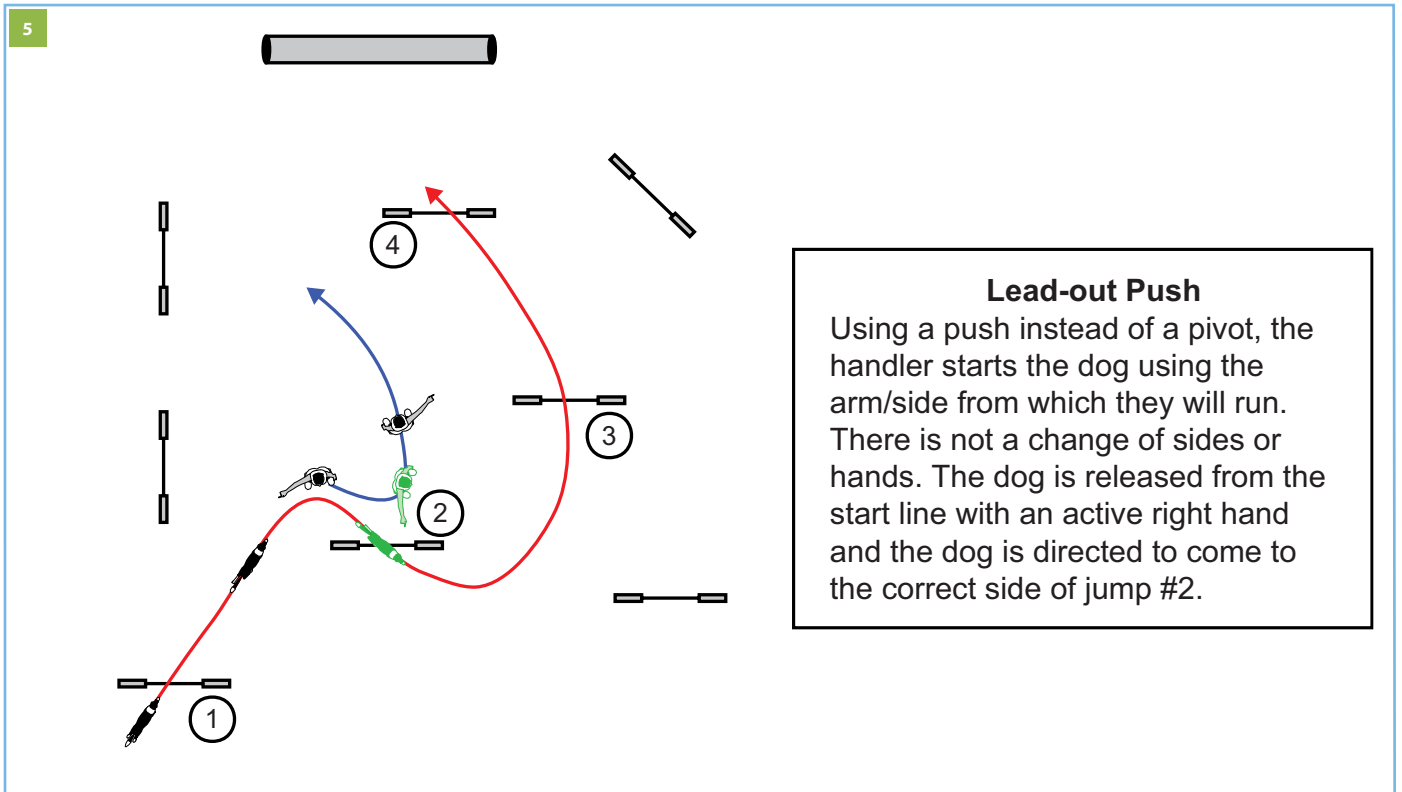


Finishing the lead-out pivot

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Lead-out Push



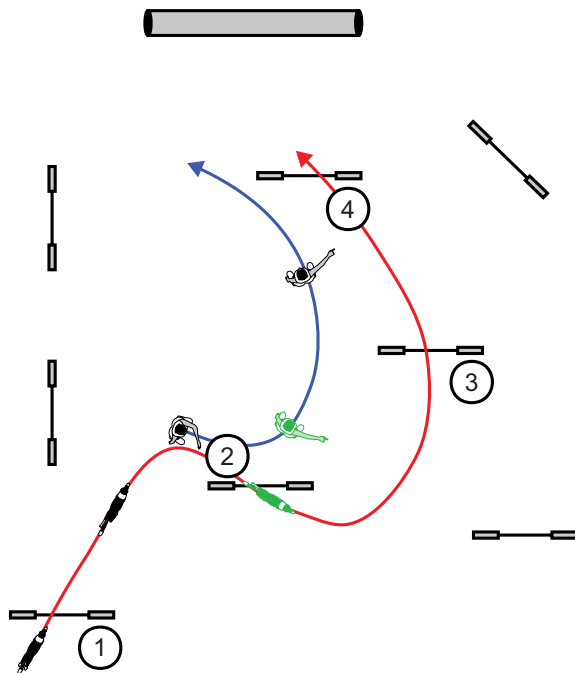
The lead-out push



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Threadle Start

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Threadle Start

Use your inside or outside hand, depending on your system, to indicate that your dog should threadle to the correct side of the jump. Your feet are generally facing the direction the dog will move after he gets to the correct side of the jump. The position is similar to a lead-out push, but you are already facing the new direction. This is usually done with an outside arm change and verbal threadle cue.



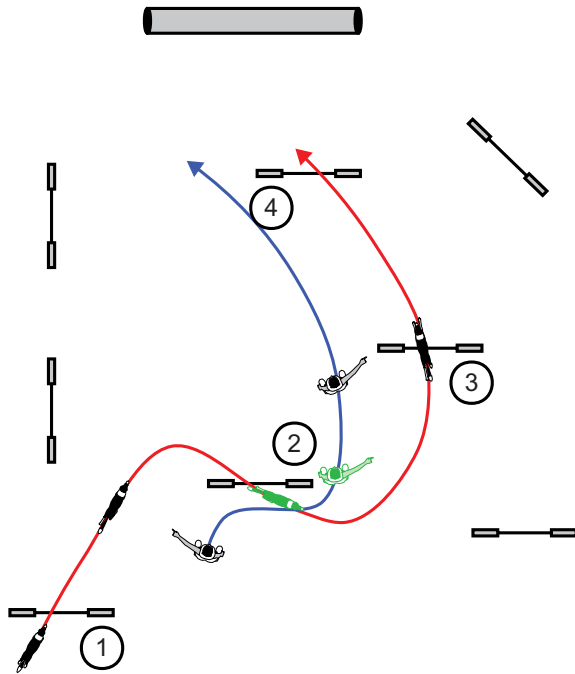
Threadle

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Push to Back Then Blind

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Push to Back Then Blind

This method uses a shorter lead-out. Release your dog from the start line then indicate the back of the jump and slide over to finish with a blind cross.

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Lead-out Pivot Start
 Start with a recall toward you using your right hand for #1, then rotate to your left side at #2 as your dog approaches the correct side of #2. If you want to do a lead-out push instead, you would start with indicating #1 and the pull to the front of #2 with your left hand as shown by the blue handler.

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Threadle Start
 The handler is in a similar location as for the lead-out push or pivot with feet facing toward #3, but is showing the dog their opposite arm and likely using a verbal threadle cue as well.

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Push Back to a Blind
 Commit to the correct side of #2 blind cross so that your dog is on your left side at #3.



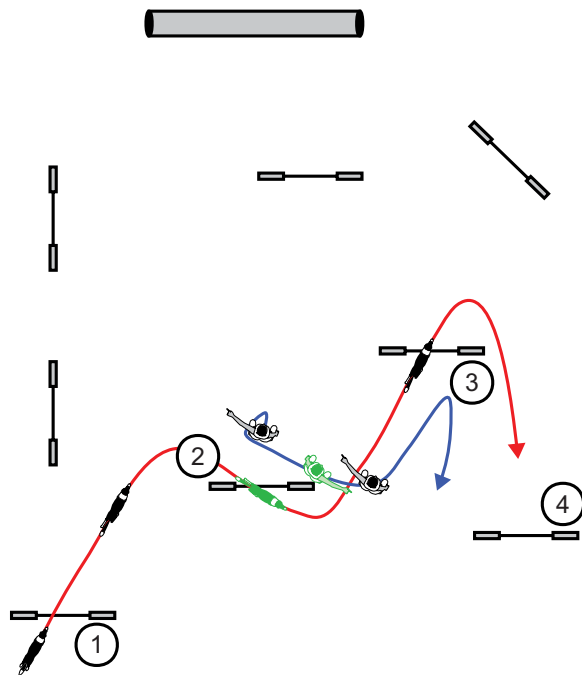
Lead-out pivot



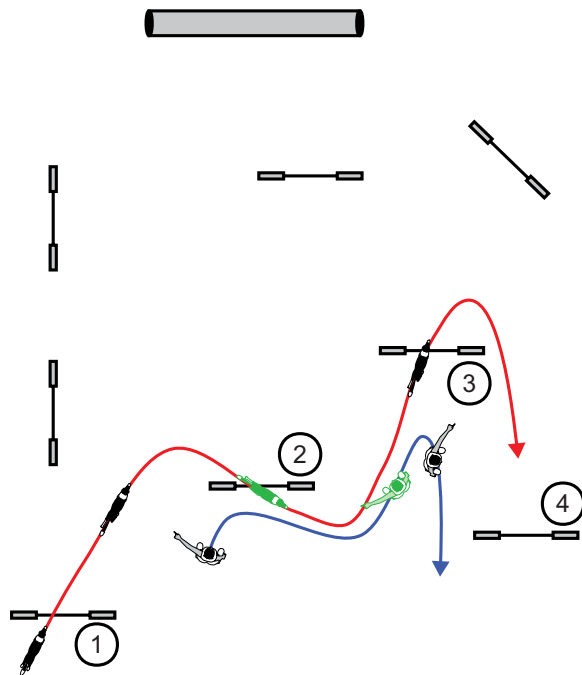
Lead-out push



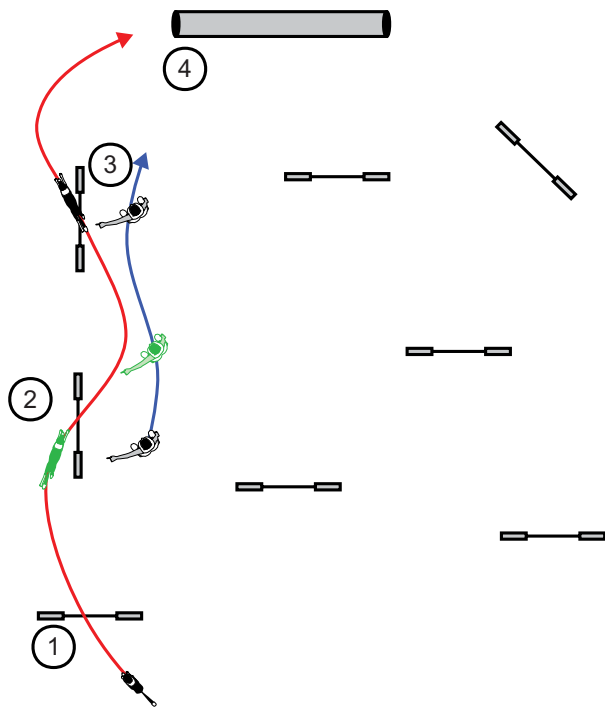
Threadle



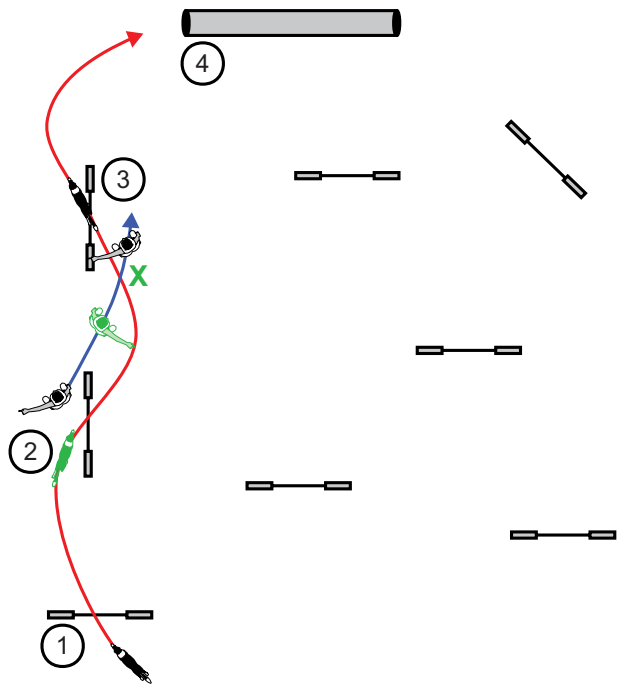
Do a lead-out pivot, push, or threadle start and then front cross. The pivot is shown.



Serp Start
 If the course turned toward the right side of the field, it is likely you could consider a lead-out pivot followed by a front or this serpentine start. Release your dog from the start line then indicate the back of the jump and move into position to push, using serpentine handling to get to #3.



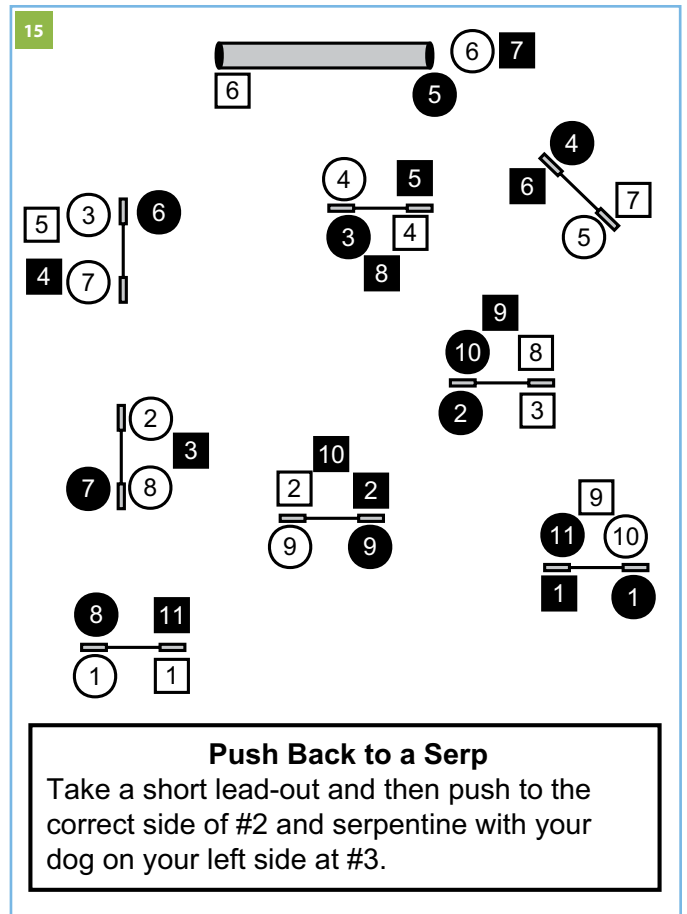
Push Back to a Serp
 Take a short lead-out and then push to the correct side of #2 and serpentine with your dog on your left side at #3.



There are quite a few ways to handle this drill starting on the takeoff side of #2. It's the same exercise as the last one where I diagrammed a push back and serp. This time do a lead-out pivot, push, or threadle from the takeoff side of #2. Do a side change between #2 and #3 at "X." You could do a front, blind or rear cross before #3 or stay on the outside and serp all the way to #4 or do a blind as your dog commits to #3.

You might want to adjust the obstacle distances slightly for the longer sequences shown here, as most of the jumps were placed with nice spacing for the four-obstacle lead-outs, but might be a bit tight in places on these drills. 🐾

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 herself seven times: four times with Scud and three with Riot. Nancy and Riot earned both a 1st and 2nd place in Individual Agility at the FCI Agility World Championships. Nancy won the USDAA Grand Prix Finals four years in a row with three different dogs: Scud, Riot, and Wicked. Nancy and Wicked were also on the winning team at a Dog Agility Masters championship. Nancy and Riot were the 24" AKC National champions twice, and Ace was second in the Championships in 2012. Nancy and Ace represented the USA at the European Open five times and they were the first US duo to make it to the podium, earning a bronze medal in 2011. Nancy shares her life with four Border Collies aged 13 to 2 years. Contact Nancy at www.powerpawsagility.com where you can also view articles and videos.



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