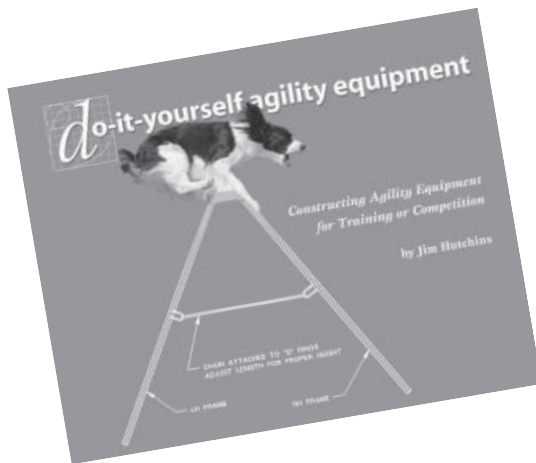


Review:

Do-It-Yourself Agility Equipment

A book by Jim Hutchins

By Martha Faulk



Do-It-Yourself Agility Equipment is an invaluable resource for all agility enthusiasts. Its design is attractive, the text thoughtful, and the advice about what to make, buy, refurbish, or order from a commercial supplier is available nowhere else. Make an investment that will make your agility equipment wishlist a reality.

Sooner or later, most agility enthusiasts build some kind of equipment for practicing at home. We may have started with a broom handle placed on cement blocks, but we eventually acquire a keen interest in the varieties of PVC pipe available. At some point, most local agility groups either build or have built training or competition equipment. When the time comes, knowing how to build or whether to build your own equipment can be a real advantage.

Do-It-Yourself Agility Equipment: Constructing Agility Equipment for Training or Competition is a must-have book for those involved in agility in their own backyards and for groups that train or sponsor competitions. The book provides 27 detailed construction plans, previously published in *CleanRun* magazine and created by the author, Jim Hutchins, with assistance from the *CleanRun* staff. The plans featured in the book contain modifications based on feedback from the magazine readers.

You'll find plans for making competition-worthy equipment for an AKC, USDAA, or NADAC trial. If you need training equipment, you'll find plans for contact training hoops, an adjustable seesaw, a training tire, and training weave poles. There's even a section for refurbishing your old wooden A-frame.

The author provides descriptions for making the equipment to each of the three venues' specifications. Let's say, for example, you need a spread jump for practice but you might allow your club to use it in competition. In the "jumps and hurdles" section, you'll find plans for an AKC triple jump, a USDAA spread jump, and a USDAA extended spread jump (yes, there are that many choices). You'll learn that triple jumps aren't used in NADAC,

and be forewarned that "there is really no way to make a spread jump that is legal for both AKC and USDAA competitions, so you will have to choose."

The layout of the book is a delight for do-it-yourself types. Hutchins formats the essential information about "materials needed" and "tools needed" up front for each piece of equipment. Most plans also contain an estimated cost for materials. Then each section of the construction process is broken down into easy-to-follow steps with helpful comments.

For those of us who always dread the "instructions included" pages, rest assured that Hutchins makes it simple. Each piece of equipment in the book has extensive diagrams and many have photos showing the finished product. When necessary, the author provides useful photos and drawings of small sections, such as the photo of the Versa-bar and hammer position for removing old slats on a rotting A-frame. It's as if Hutchins is right there with you anticipating your next question: *How do I get these old slats off? And, what should I do with those little holes that remain?* Hutchins has the answer: "If necessary, you can patch small goofs with wood putty before attaching the new slats to your A-frame."

The author has also included information about finding a welding shop. Why might you want to do that? Hutchins explains the best A-frame skeletons are made from steel or aluminum, but there are often many problems with shipping, especially the cost. Once you've located your local welding shop by following his suggestions, there's even a small section with "Special Notes for the Welder".

Recently, I needed to paint some contact zones on our animal shelter's training

The Barb Davis Contact Trainer



Practice contacts in small areas! When the snow flies, work on your contacts indoors!

6 ft. bridge ramp and 3 ft. A-frame ramp approximate the angle of the full size contact obstacles.

Lightweight and folds for easy storage.

"My contact trainer gets a great deal of use even though I have a full set of equipment. If I'm short on time, I can work dozens of contacts and tunnel/contact discriminations in five minutes." —Barb Davis

\$140.00 plus S&H (S&H ranges from \$35-\$65 in the U.S. depending on location. Please send us your zip code to determine S&H costs.)

**Built by Barb's husband, Jeff Davis. Contact him at:
E. 22202 Vanetta, Newman Lake, WA 99025
PowerWM300@aol.com or 509-924-3110**

equipment. In the "Contact Obstacles" chapter, I found the section on painting contact obstacles and a convenient chart showing the size of the contact zones for the A-frame, dogwalk, and seesaw for all three agility organizations. I could have found the same information by checking the regulations for AKC, USDAA, and NADAC, but I appreciated the time saved by the chart and the advice about how to sprinkle the sand and paint the zones.

From the viewpoint of a more experienced builder, I asked a staff member at the shelter where I teach beginning agility classes to make a training tire for us. He found the estimated cost for the "trombone tire jump" to be accurate, and the directions clear and easy to follow. The five drawings illustrating everything about the tire from the top view, front view, rear view, and completely disassembled view were readily comprehensible. There was even a "toggle bolt assembly" drawing. The only thing our staff member would have liked was a photo of the finished product.

About those varieties of PVC pipe... Hutchins has suggestions for their selection, too. He says, "You can use the schedule 40 PVC plumbing pipe that is readily available from home stores and hardware stores," but, "in the long run, you may be happier with furniture-grade PVC pipe and fittings." Wish I had known about furniture-grade before I bought my PVC!

Do-It-Yourself Agility Equipment is an invaluable resource for all agility enthusiasts. Its design is attractive, the text thoughtful, and the advice about what to make, buy, refurbish, or order from a commercial supplier is available nowhere else. Make an investment that will make your agility equipment wishlist a reality.

Editors' Note: Do-It-Yourself Agility Equipment is available from Clean Run Productions, LLC through the website at www.cleanrun.com or by calling (800) 311-6503. Price is \$29.95.

The Dog Department Store

- Do you have a litter to advertise?
- Or dog related business?
- Looking for your next puppy?
- Or the latest in dog toys?

**agilityflyballdogsforale.com
(204) 328-5382**

Reach 1000's of
dog minded
people
affordably.

Visit this month's
featured business:

- Pet portrait artist!



Martha Faulk, a lawyer and author who lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, became interested in agility after adopting Molly, a dog with many behavior problems, from the local shelter. Although Molly didn't start competing until age six, her agility success in AKC, USDAA, and NADAC exemplifies how adult dogs can be trained for agility. Martha is president of the Larimer Humane Society Board of Directors and teaches agility at the shelter. She may be reached at marthfaulk@aol.com.