

Review:

Success with One Jump

A DVD by Susan Garrett

By Martha Faulk

Given the title of Susan Garrett's DVD, you might think it's about how to successfully perform only one jump. But it's much more than that. The "one jump" idea is really a vehicle for Garrett to illustrate many of her proven training methods for handlers whose activities are limited by space considerations. Garrett is well qualified to talk about success in agility, having accumulated a total of 16 National and International Championships covering different jump heights from 8" to 26". Most recently, Garrett and her mixed breed, DeCaff, won the Individual All-Around and Biathlon Gold Medals at the 2006 IFCS World Championships held in the Netherlands.

In her two earlier books, *Rough Love* and *Shaping Success*, Garrett writes about the reward system she uses to reinforce desired behaviors and the training consistency needed to urge dogs toward their agility performance potential. Here, the DVD format gives her the opportunity to illustrate many of her concepts and discuss in some detail the training philosophy behind them. The filming was done indoors at Garrett's Say Yes! training facility in Ontario, Canada, during a workshop featuring many different types of dogs. It's especially helpful to watch Garrett instruct workshop students as they practice with their young and inexperienced dogs the methods she has just illustrated with her experienced dogs, Encore and DeCaff. All her younger dogs, Garrett explains, have benefited from the exercises demonstrated on the DVD.

Early on, Garrett tells us that over 20 different exercises using one jump and sometimes even no jump will be demonstrated and explained. To get the greatest benefit from the exercises, Garrett says that four assumptions are relevant:

- You will be using food or toys that your dog just loves.
- Your dog has an understanding of how to jump.

- You have been doing some shadow handling, meaning that your dog knows to follow your body around in a circle without jumps present.
- Your dog knows how to retrieve a toy and return it to you, then release it.

Garrett also explains that your dog *must* know how to hold a sit before taking the jump to get the benefit of the 20 exercises. She does, however, offer many helpful suggestions to get your dog to hold that starting position. Your dog's ability to hold a sit before the jump is critical to performing all the training sequences that follow.



At the same time that we're learning how to teach the dog useful turns and changes of direction, Garrett is also teaching us to always play with our dogs before asking for behaviors and to reward those behaviors when the dog gets them right.

The sequences are organized into four sections: Focus, Reinforcement: Building Value, Crosses and Turns, and Understanding.

In "Focus," Garrett shows us how to get the dog to find the line he's going to take instead of focusing on the handler. Using a toy first placed at the handler's side and then later beyond the jump, she shows us how to use a release to the toy to get the dog to drive forward. Also in this section, Garrett illustrates how to use your arm to tell the dog to "look at the line." Then she demonstrates how to get the dog to change directions when you change arms.

"Reinforcement: Building Value" is about making your dog eager to take the jump and receive the reward. You are going to build value Garrett says, by associating the jump with the reinforcements your dog loves most. Once your dog understands the reinforcement pattern, you can use

rewards to build value from a distance and can move farther and farther away from the jump. You can teach your dog to "go long" and to "jump short," as well as many other handling maneuvers.

"Crosses and Turns" helps you to teach your dog how to recognize and execute front and rear crosses as well as how *not* to cross behind you in what is called a blind cross. Garrett illustrates the ground work necessary to help your dog recognize the body language for a front cross, with your arm raised and eyes focused on the dog as he turns over the jump. The rear cross ground work in this section is especially helpful because Garrett illustrates how to show your dog that you are going to cross behind him beginning with the dog in a sit position in front of you. Using just one jump, Garrett also demonstrates how to get your dog to recognize the handling cues and body positions to teach serpentines and threadles, or pull-throughs.

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In the final section, “Understanding,” we learn how to build lateral distance from the dog as he goes over the jump. Garrett further illustrates how to prevent the blind cross by proofing it in three “Anti-Blind-Cross” drills. Explaining that your dog should understand *never* to cut in behind you to take a jump or an obstacle, she illustrates how to get your dog to turn tightly around your body and to pay attention to your shoulder and arm positions.

At the same time that we’re learning how to teach the dog useful turns and changes of direction, Garrett is also teaching us to always play with our dogs before asking for behaviors and to reward those behaviors when the dog gets them right. I enjoyed the leisurely pace of this two-disc set and the way all the training exercises were broken down into easily understandable steps. Watching Garrett’s students try the exercises is beneficial because we can see Garrett coaching them toward the correct positions. And finally, listening to Garrett reward her dogs’ good performance with her voice will encourage us to be quite demonstrative with our praise for good performance. *Success with One Jump* is helpful for both novice and more experienced handlers, as well as providing proven training and teaching tips for instructors. 🐾

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four little legs...

ONE BIG ADCH

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Joyce, Martha, Keesha, Riggs & Mieka • Louise Wetzel
Patty, Dorothy, Skippy & Jade • Janet York & Dazzle • Jill Bambrick
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