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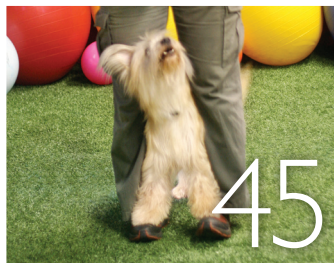
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Training to Your Weakness: Exercises for Dogs with Straight Rears

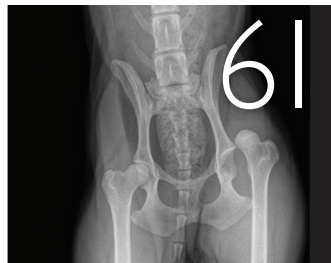
Straight rears are common in the conformation of certain dog breeds, but any dog may have a rear that is too straight in relation to their breed standard. Preventative stretching and strengthening exercises are critical for dogs with straight rears.

By Dr. Debbie Gross Saunders



Fit to Be Tricked: Feet on Feet

Walking with the dog's feet on yours is a simple, easily taught trick for most food-motivated dogs. This trick fosters rear-end awareness and coordination. It is an excellent trick for warming up at busy trials and keeping the dog focused on you as the dog's position keeps it well out of the way of surrounding activity. By Frankie Joiris



Hip Luxation Treatment in the Agility Dog

There are several methods of treating luxation of the hip, but one particular method offers agility dogs the most hope for regaining their original level of athleticism and the greatest chance of avoiding re-luxation.

By Peter Lotsikas, DVM, Diplomate ACVS

Features

5 Editorializing: Why Can't You Be More Like My Last Dog?

Do not place the expectations of your "perfect" last dog on your next canine partner. Instead, identify what is wonderful about your new dog and what makes him individual.

By Angela Schmorow-Zuckerman

34 Power Paws Drills: Obsessing on Four Jumps

Obsession sessions are where we obsess on the finer details of handling. This isn't agility training where you get through the numbered drill at all costs, whether it's pretty or not. This is "get through the drill perfectly." If you want to obsess on your threadle for 10 minutes, and train and reinforce until it is flawless, then that is what you do. By Nancy Gyes

38 Agility Mind Gym: Passion, Excellence, and Dreams

Have you ever had that special moment when everything went perfectly and you felt completely connected with your dog? Would you like to be able to do that more consistently?

This series presents exercises that are designed to help you get to that special place more often. By Kathy Keats

39 Analyze This!

Challenges from international courses are making their way into US courses with increasing frequency. This month we look at an Agility course that has some great challenges in it. Course designer and judge Lee Gibson is one of Great Britain's top judges. By Greg Derrett

53 What's in Your Toolbox?

Many times in class situations we only have time to execute a sequence in one particular way. In reality, there is usually more than one way that sequences can be efficiently and effectively executed. In this series we'll review how to select and execute various strategies for the same sequence. By Mary Ellen Barry

57 Building Blocks: Equalizing the Value of Food and Toys as Reinforcers

The focus of this month's exercises is to equalize the value of food and toys as training reinforcers. You will also work on building your dog's confidence on different types of surfaces, and improving your dog's focus through tricks.

By Rachel Sanders

Columns

6 Tip of the Month By Elizabeth Evans

7 Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Agility... By Brenna Fender

8 Backyard Dogs By Sharon Freilich

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Cover

12 Teaching Your Dog to Bend

Why teach your dog to bend? It can improve your dog's balance and general athleticism while negotiating obstacles. As the dog practices using the muscles required to bend his body, the dog becomes stronger and more physically capable. By Anne Andrie



21 Harmony in My Head: Using Hypnosis for Mental Management

Many famous athletes have used hypnosis to improve their mental game. There are many uses for hypnosis in agility, such as reducing stress, getting into the "zone," enhancing visualization techniques, expanding or contracting time, and increasing confidence. By Elaine Fletcher, CH, SH

26 The New Obstacle Performance Standards

Years ago *Clean Run* published obstacle performance standards. Now nearly a decade later it is time to see how the sport has evolved. Have the standards improved? What obstacle times does your dog need to achieve? The answers may surprise you. By Kathy Keats

50 Why Knowledge Equals Speed

My dogs have taught me that if I inform them of where they are going on a course early, they can do that course *really* fast. Dogs shouldn't need to wait until after they have taken off for a jump to get the next piece of information from their handlers. By Dawn Weaver

Cover Dog

Zabelle d'Erodur EAC, EJC, TN-E, TG-E, WV-O, OCC, PD1, CLR-3, CGC, TDI, a.k.a. Vee, an 11-year-old Belgian Laekenois owned by Diane Patterson of Connecticut. Photo by Lesley Mattuchio, www.pbases.com/lesleylou.

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