

Which Drill When?

The simple drills we will explore in this book are based on patterns from letters of the alphabet. Their purpose is to help you become more imaginative when setting up practice drills for yourself or your students, and to familiarize you with the common obstacle patterns seen on agility courses.

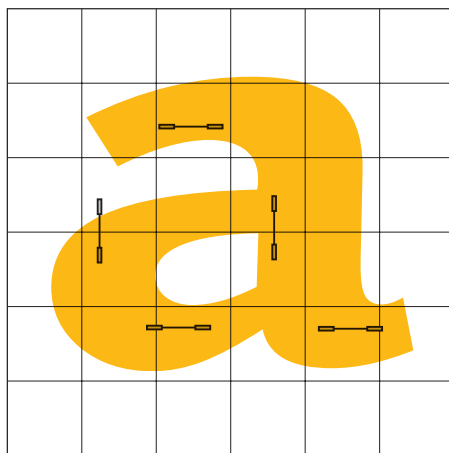
The alphabet drills were *not* created in order from the simplest to the most complex; for example, the letter “Z” and the jump-around-the-clock drill that go with that letter are great *elementary* exercises. And, the letter “V,” which shows you how to transition from using a 180 jump setup into training the 270, is another important beginning drill. You can use the pinwheel end of the letter “E” to introduce your dog to the basic pinwheel pattern, and you can use the letter “O” to teach your dog to travel around a four-jump circle. The letter “J” is one of my favorite elementary exercises; you don’t need to join both ends of the “J” together, just practice the bounce curve or the diagonal line as separate exercises. Letter “K” will help you work on straight lines, and “E” and “H” are great setups for practicing all the side changes.

The drills for each letter include both simple and technical exercises; for example, the letter “O” is simple when used

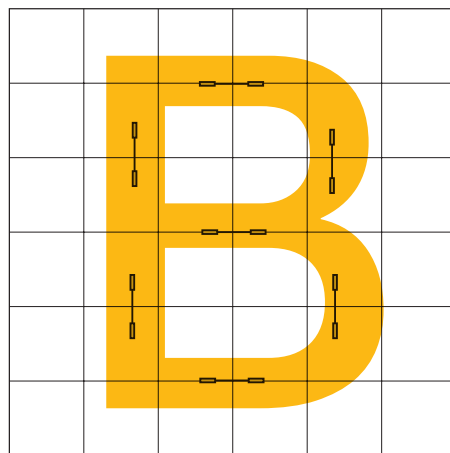
as a four-jump circle, but it’s much more complex when you’re doing the front-cross cloverleaves. And, the letter “V” includes basic 270 work as well as putting side changes before and after the 270, which is more advanced work. By doing the exercises in the order presented for each letter, you will perfect the easier two- and three-jump drills before you start the longer and more advanced drills. And, always remember that any of the alphabet drills can be broken down to small portions and reinforced until your dog is comfortable with the basics.

I find myself constantly referring to specific letters during seminars and classes as homework exercises for skills the handlers need to perfect. Problems getting your dog in the correct entrance of the tunnel? Do “R” drills for a week. Wide front crosses or problems with lead-out skills? “T” has your drills and look at the appendix for lead-out skill training ideas. For dogs that cannot tolerate rear crosses without spinning in the wrong direction, I always refer to “J” drills before the handler tries to solve the problem with handling exercises.

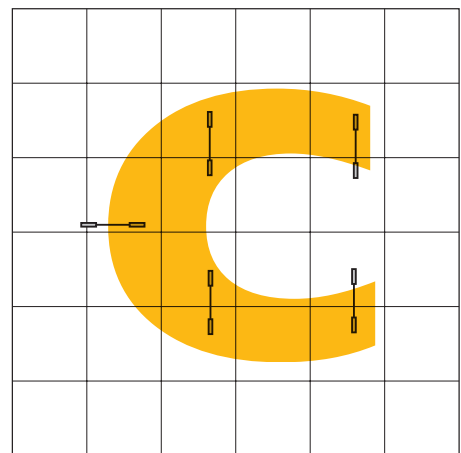
To help you locate ideas for working on specific handling drills and decide what letter to work on during a training session, I have created the following review of each letter.



A: Beginning box work; simple front and rear crosses; wraps; lead-outs; threadles on corners; 270s

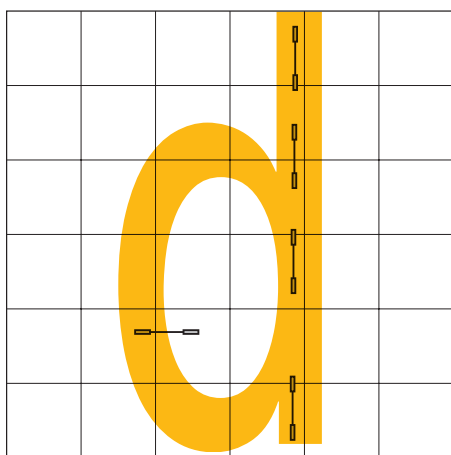


B: Advanced box work; straight and diagonal lines; 270s, front and rear crosses, 270s with side changes before and after; backsides and threadles; simple lead-out skills

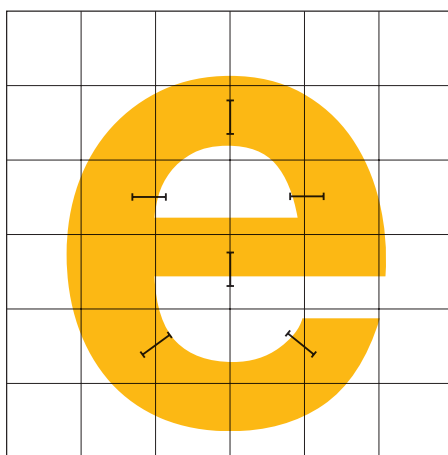


C: Open circle to develop drive and Go On cue; changes of side on 180s; and fronts and rears

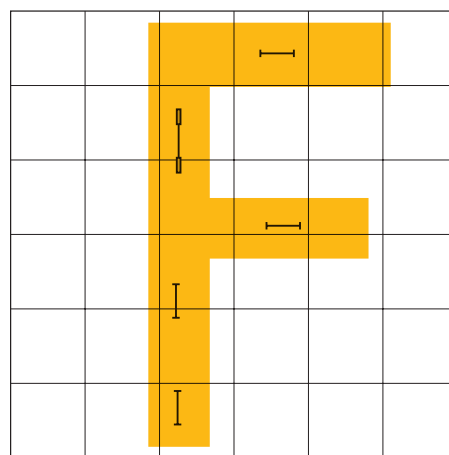
Pick the alphabet letter you will train on with a thought for what you are trying to achieve. You can pick a letter that has a specific training focus, or you can pick a letter because you want to be exposed to a skill or pattern that you have not tried before.



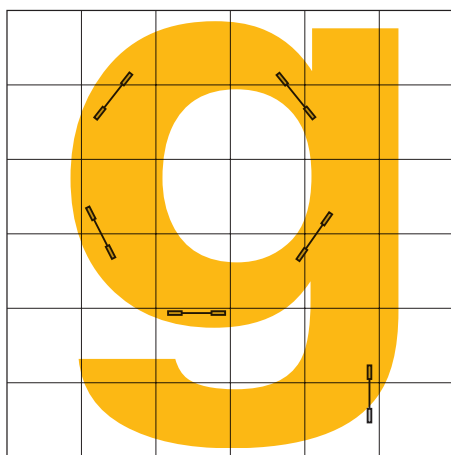
D: This letter focuses on serpentine but includes some front crosses and a layering option on one of the drills



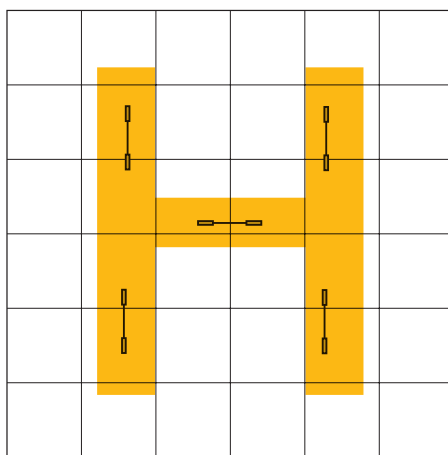
E: Figure-eight pattern that can be repeated without stopping to practice side changes; pinwheels; diagonal line work on lead-outs



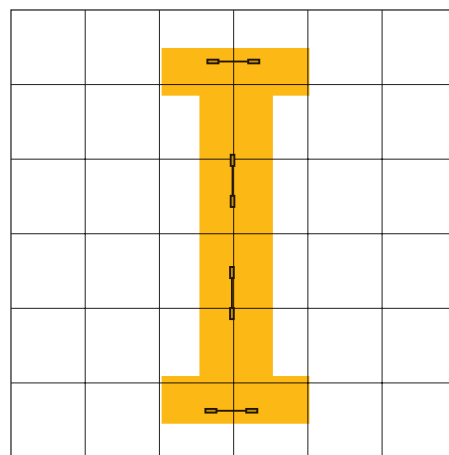
F: Start lines and line-ups; lead-out pivots; modified box work with 180 front crosses; serpentine; backsides and threadles



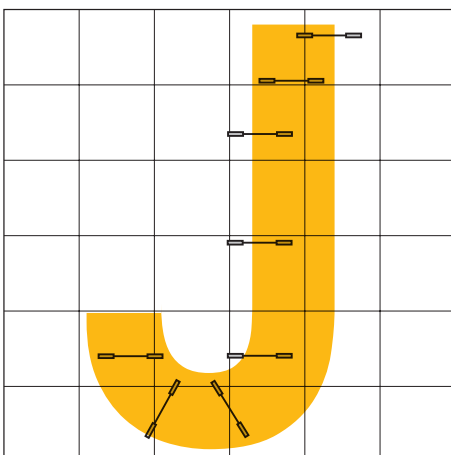
G: Serpentine and threadle handling; front and rear crosses through the pentagon; pull-throughs and push-throughs



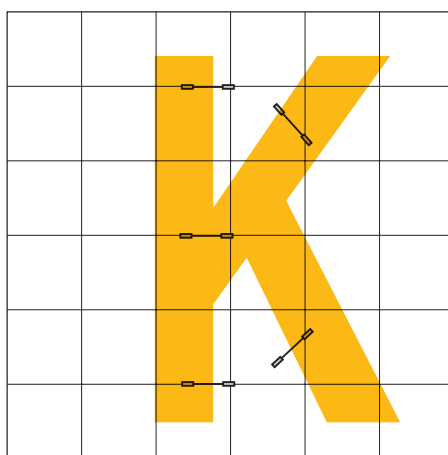
H: There are lots of side changes on this letter as well as 270s and a reminder: Got 270?



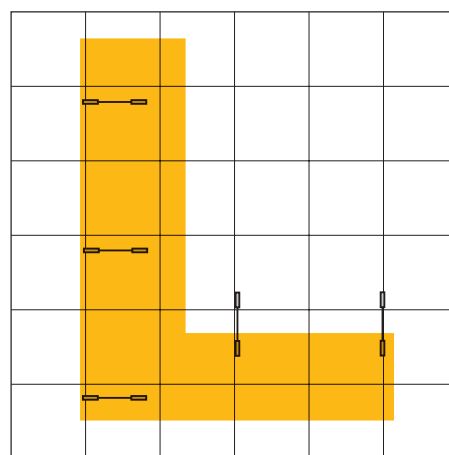
I: Pull to the front of a jump or push to the back of a jump; serpentine work; lead-outs; angled jumping



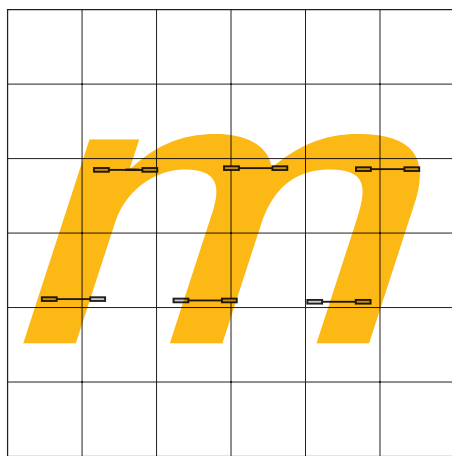
J: Jumping skills; teaching rear crosses; bounce jump and bend work on an arc and diagonal; lengthening and shortening stride into and out of patterns



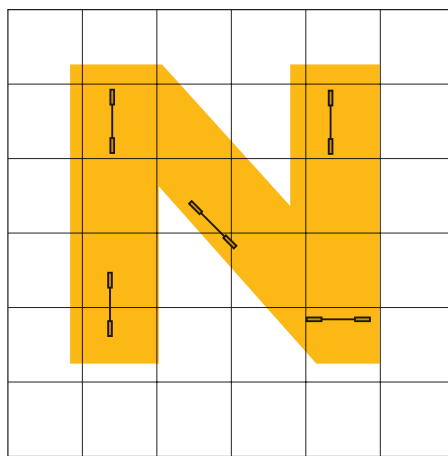
K: Teaching the dog not to cross your path; *Go On* cue; straight lines; side changes on a V; lateral distance on a lead-out



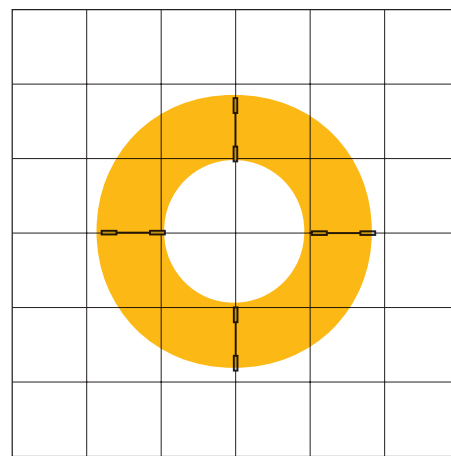
L: Straight-line dog path examples; pushes; lead-outs; front crosses; 270s



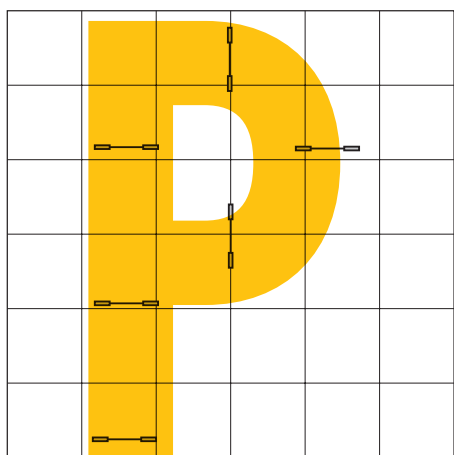
M: Front cross pull-throughs and threadles; serpentines; 180 front crosses; rear and blind crosses



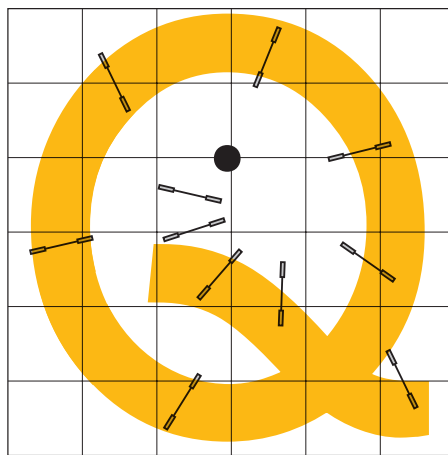
N: Lead-outs; front crosses; some serpentine work; 180 front crosses; pushing to the back of a jump



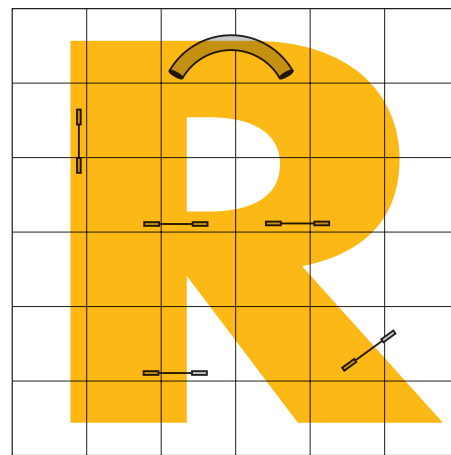
O: Star pattern to teach push-throughs and cloverleaf handling; circles; 180 front crosses; bounce jumping on a circle



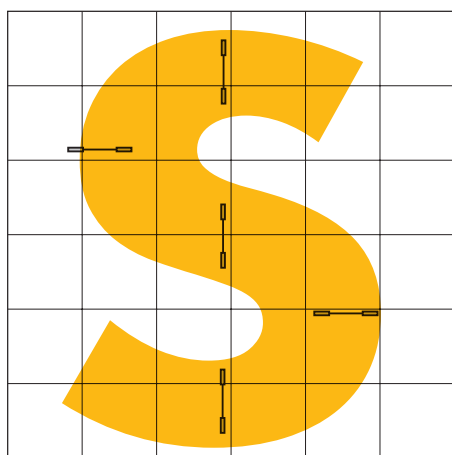
P: With two extra jumps added to the O, you have a speed line into the star pattern; *Go On* cue; side changes



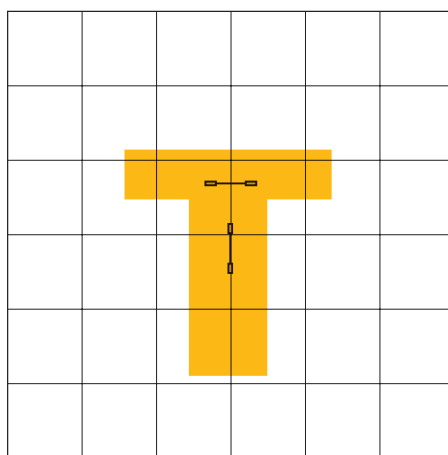
Q: Jumping skills: dog must shorten his stride between jumps until he is bouncing the last few jumps into the tunnel, and then lengthen his stride between jumps to finish



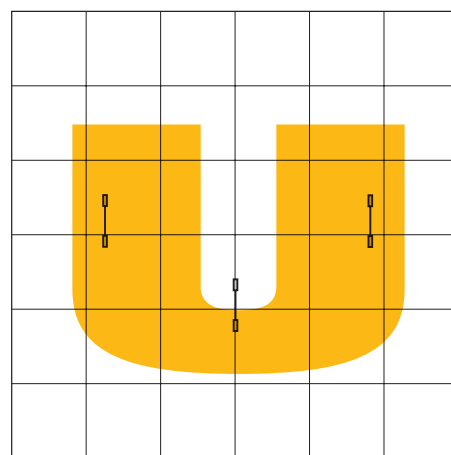
R: Tunnel drills; pulling or pushing to the “wrong” end of the tunnel with side changes and threadles



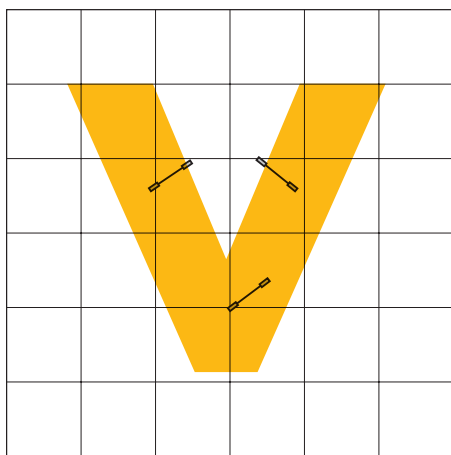
S: Dog jumping skills; rear crosses on arcs; bounce jumping



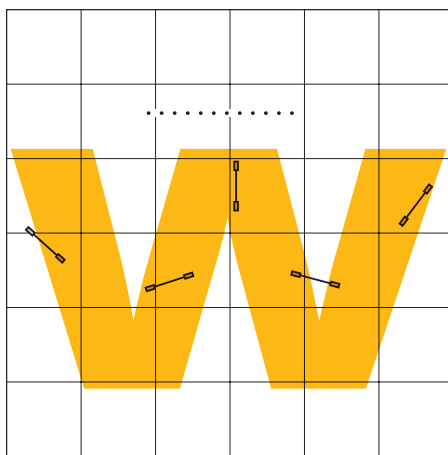
T: Front crosses and lead-out pivots and pushes; pushing to the back of a jump



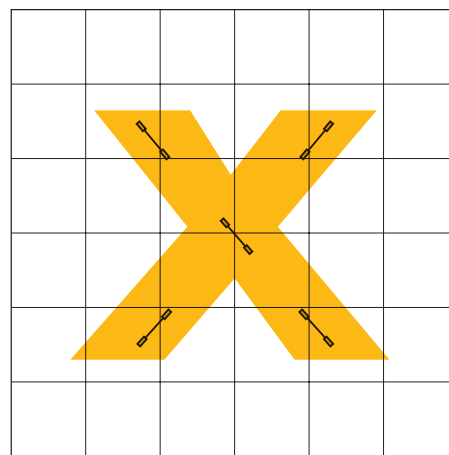
U: Pushing to the back side of a jump with a trap directly on dog’s path; wrapping and serpentine handling in and out with the dog on the back side of a jump; side changes



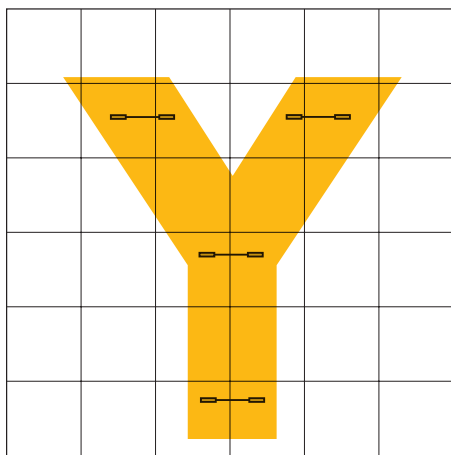
V: 270 pattern with a lead-in jump; exercises for after you teach the 270



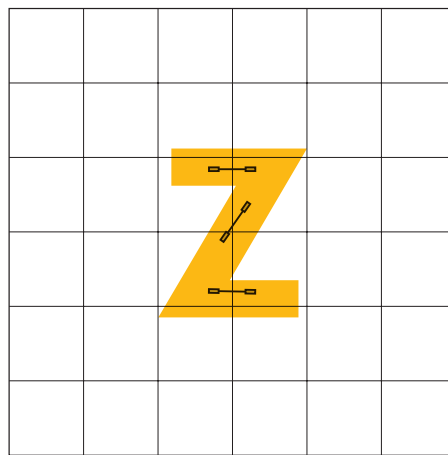
W: Weave pole drills: 90° entries; front crosses into and out of weaves; rear cross entries; pushes at exits



X: Threadles; serpentines; lead-outs and start lines; front crosses; pushes to backside of a jump



Y: Front and rear crosses into a 180 pattern; backsides; lead-outs; threadles



Z: Jumping skills: bouncing on angled jumps; jump around the clock