



Excelling in Agility **Without** Coupling

By Sarah Rogers

If you or someone you know loves agility but is on the fence about competing, I'm writing to you. I see folks suffer needlessly about all that competing is or isn't or should be or could be. I also see dogs that love agility but don't love the trial environment. So I decided to write this to give someone out there needed or wanted to have some ideas and energy over deciding if competing is going to be or continue to be in their future or not. I hope to provide some encouragement and support to anyone who is dreading about not competing in the first place or who may be discovering some good reasons to consider no longer competing.

Competition Virgins

If you have not done it before you are a virgin. Most schools and clubs are made up of people who have no one across or another built their time around agility trials. When you say you are not sure if you want to compete or not, they laugh and give you gas as if you have just said you are considering not showing to such someone. I myself have been known to say "Sure, that's what they all say." This is true in all sports. You will go about 11 obstacles in sequence, work freely under your belt, may not only be over thinking of competing when your classmates will start the bounding "Go" they say, "what ya gonna start showing!" You won't hear that question just once.

They mean well, they are excited for you, they don't want to miss seeing the exciting one when they were virgins. The next step, the big one, comes later. This is when your instructor says you are ready to start "showing" your dog going to teach others to run the course. This is the official graduation to the competitive world. It's funny you don't remember ever telling your instructor that you wanted to compete. It just seemed to have been assumed, from about the time you had given roughly a great no choice. This relaxed approach is actually one of the