



IT'S YOUR TURN!

CUE #3: THE FRONT CROSS —PART 1

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The front cross is a turn the handler makes in front of the dog in order to change sides. Front and rear crosses are the most vital positions of agility handling, yet many handlers strongly prefer one over the other. This is because they typically find themselves either ahead of behind their dog on a regular basis. The trouble comes when the handler is not in that familiar spot and has to execute the cross that is not in her comfort zone. I think every dog deserves a handler who can execute both the front and rear cross well, that's why I'm going to encourage you to do what it takes to get some killer front crosses into your bag of tricks.

THE SUCCESSFUL FRONT CROSS

When it is said and done your front cross should have accomplished the following:

- Put you on the other side of the dog's path
- Put you on the correct path to the next obstacle
- Created an opportunity for your dog to accelerate, or told your dog to collect and turn tightly

What do you need to achieve this goal?

- Consistent cues to produce well-trained behaviors
- A dog that has already learned the back of motion cue
- A training program to routinely strengthen the behavior
- Strong understanding of the flow of the course
- Ability to identify where the turns are on the course
- Good timing
- The physical ability to turn correctly while moving

THINK! TIPS

I wish I had a trick for every time I heard a handler tell me that she takes front crosses. If you do agility, taking front crosses is an art with having to draw breath. You need to be able to do front crosses at least once in a while, so you might as well take the bait and learn to do them well.

One reason some take hate front crosses is the difficulty they have with the mechanics. Turning while running isn't easy for many of us, it takes both balance and coordination. If you are a bit short on either of those skills, there is good news. It is easy to get better at both, really easy. You don't have to transform yourself into a former athlete, you just have to improve enough to make your front crosses a little bit easier for you. Very little effort will make a significant dif-