

PRACTICALLY TRAINING:

Verbal Left and Right Cues, Part 2

By Sandy Rogers



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Last month you decided whether you were going to teach your dog one verbal "Turn" command to change direction or teach him both the verbal "Left" and "Right" cues. We also began to train the ground work.

Once the dog understands the command(s), your ground work is essentially done; you can begin your one-jump work while minimizing the ground work exercises.

Add One Jump

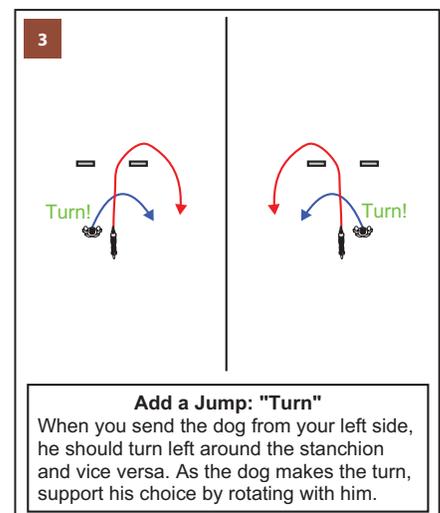
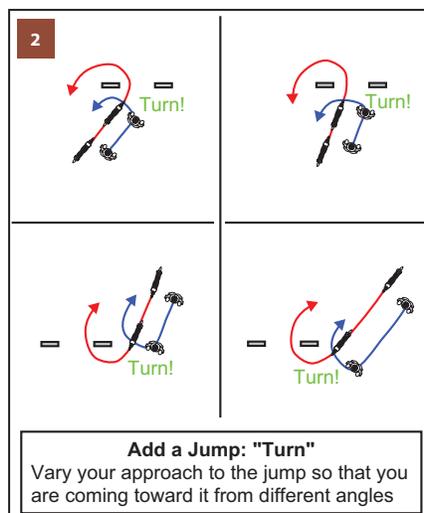
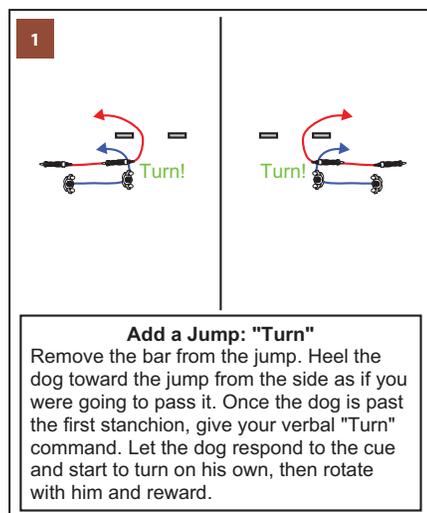
Training a Verbal "Turn" Cue

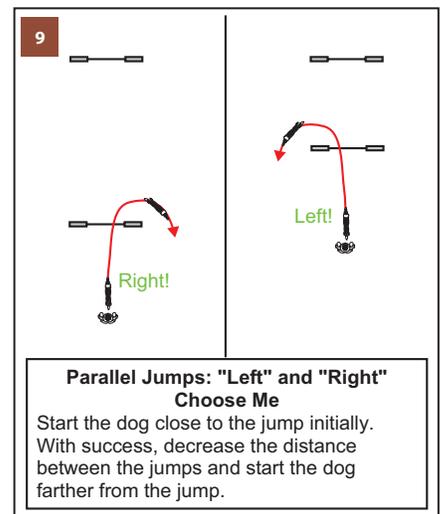
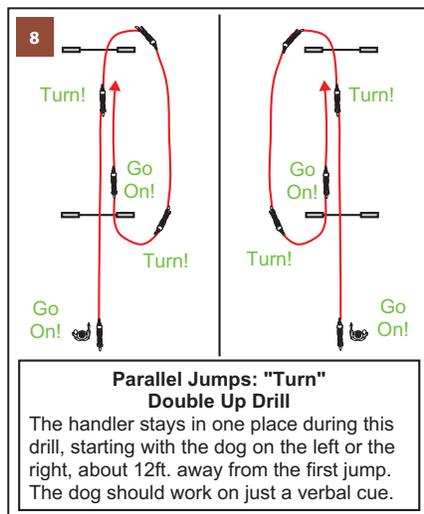
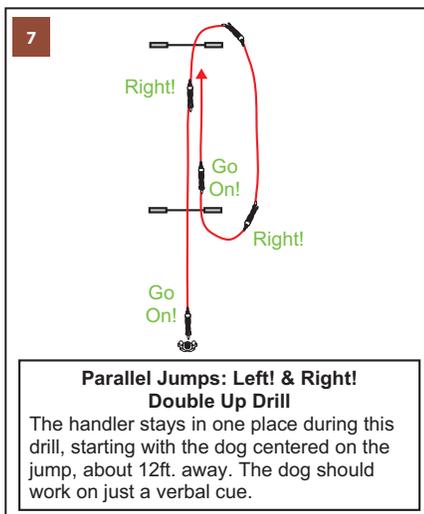
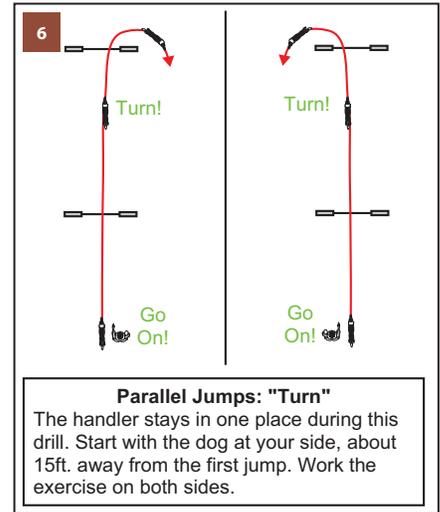
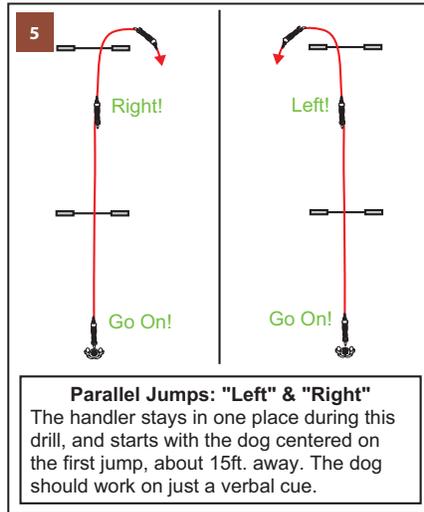
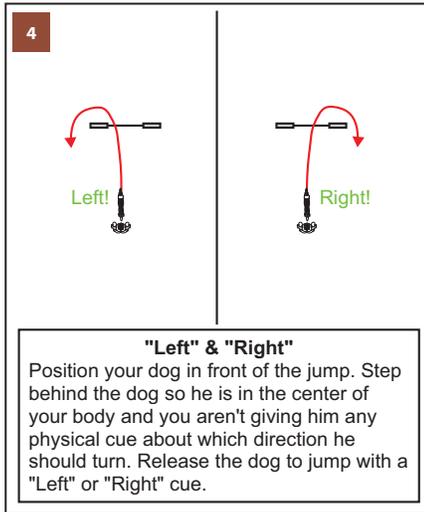
1. Start with no bar on the jump.
2. Heel the dog toward the jump from the side, as if you were going to

walk past it, with the dog between you and the jump. When you are past the first stanchion, give your dog the verbal "Turn" command. Let the dog respond to the cue and start to turn on his own, then rotate with him and reward. You have completed a 180-degree turn around the stanchion; both you and the dog are heading in the opposite direction. See **Figure 1**.

3. Repeat the exercise with the dog on your other side.
4. Progress to jogging then running up to the jump. Remember, you don't want to cue the dog to turn with your body, so no cheating with the shoulders!

5. Now add the jump bar. Raise it slowly based on success.
6. Vary your approach to the jump so that you are coming toward it from different angles. See **Figure 2**.
7. Now you can face the jump and send the dog straight to the jump from your side. See **Figure 3**. When you send the dog from your left side, he should turn left around the stanchion and vice versa. As the dog makes the turn, support his choice by rotating with him. Be careful. If you move too soon you may end up just doing an everyday rear cross.





Training Verbal "Left" and "Right" Cues

1. Start with no bar on the jump.
2. Position your dog in front of the jump. Step behind the dog so that he is in the center of your body and you aren't giving him any physical cue about which direction he should turn. See **Figure 4**. You can restrain your dog by holding his shoulders. Release the dog to jump with a "Left" or "Right" cue.
4. With success, vary the angle of approach to the jump and your starting distance from the jump.
5. Add the jump bar. Raise it slowly based on success.

Two-jump Drills

When adding the second jump, remember to stay true to the criteria you established in the one-jump training. Your homework with two jumps is done on two basic jump configurations: parallel and end to end.

- If you are training a single "Turn" command, always send the dog off one side or the other.
- If you are training "Left" and "Right," vary sending the dog from the center of your body, from between your legs, with sending the dog from your side.

Parallel Configuration

Send the dog over the jumps using your "Go On" command and give your

verbal turn command just before jump #2 as shown in **Figures 5 and 6**. The first jump creates the momentum in the drill.

Change the spacing between the jumps to increase or decrease difficulty. You can also start farther away from the jump to increase the dog's momentum into the sequence, which increases difficulty.

Double-up Drill

Practice the previous drill, but as your dog returns to you, use another verbal turn cue to send him over the first jump again. See **Figures 7 and 8**.

Choose Me Drill

Turn the dog on jump #1 as shown in **Figures 9 and 10**. This will make jump

10

**Parallel Jumps: Turn!
Choose Me**
Start the dog close to the jump initially. With success, decrease the distance between the jumps and start the dog farther from the jump. Work both sides.

11 Go On!

End to End Jumps: "Left" & "Right"
The handler stays in one place during this drill, starting with the dog centered on the jump. The dog should work on just a verbal cue.

12 Go On!

End to End Jumps: "Turn"
The handler stays in one place during this drill, starting with the dog on one side or the other. The dog should work on just a verbal cue. Practice turning both ways.

13

Advanced Proofing: "Left" & "Right"
The handler stays in one position and the dog is told to either "Go On" or turn "Left" or "Right." You can also do this drill with all jumps and no tunnels.

14

Advanced Proofing: "Turn"
The handler stays in one position and the dog is told to either "Go On" or "Turn." You can also do this drill with all jumps and no tunnels.

#2 a trap jump and test your dog's ability to listen and follow his turn commands with an off-course possibility calling to him. Vary the spacing between the jumps to increase or decrease difficulty. You can also start farther away from the jump to increase the dog's momentum into the sequence, which increases difficulty.

End to End Configuration

Send the dog over the jumps using your Go On command and give your

verbal turn command just before jump #2 as shown in **Figures 11 and 12**.

Vary your starting distance from the jump to increase or decrease the dog's momentum. Change the distance between the jumps to increase or decrease the level of challenge.

Advanced Proofing

Make a box of obstacles and send the dog through the middle of the box, as well turning him in each direction.

Start with jumps and then add tunnels as well as shown in **Figures 13 and 14**. This is very advanced work.

Next Time

Have fun with your verbal turn training. Next time we'll look at combining the turn cues for handling sequences and course work. 🐾

Sandy Rogers has been teaching obedience and agility since 1991, and founded ACE Dog Sports in San Francisco, California in 1999. Her dogs have competed in the USDAA and AKC national championship finals multiple times in four jump heights. Sandy and Jack Russell Terrier Quill competed on Team USA at the World Agility Open in 2011-2013, winning individual gold and silver in 2012 and bronze in 2013. Quill won the 2013 USDAA Grand Prix Finals, and placed second at the 2012 and 2014 AKC Nationals. Sandy has two DVDs available: One Jump Two Jump and Feet First. To contact Sandy, email sandyrogers@acedogsports.com.