

How To: make transitions from right to left and how to train them

What are some fun ways to move the dog from left heel to right heel and vice versa? Still photos don't really capture the moves. A YouTube video of Corabel, Rupert, and Ali demonstrating each transition will be available soon. I'll send you the link as soon as it's ready.

1. Walk around your dog:

Sounds easy but doesn't look great if your dog is moving. Work on keeping the dog still regardless the position. Also, make sure your walk is in the style of the music. Use this as an opportunity to stylize your routine and involve the audience.

2. Conformation turn:

Heel. Turn the dog on the spot while at the same time turning yourself on your spot and proceed in the opposite direction. The dog will be on your right. Use a leash at first.

3. Weave:

Practice a single weave while heeling. Cue the dog ahead of time: "Ready, steady . . . through." Practice repeatedly from left to right. Separately, practice right to left. Practice until the move looks seamless – part of your heeling. (Tough for handler to not vary stride with a big dog, but get as close as you can). Vary mark/treat point. You could start by M/T just as the dog completes the move. Later, M/T when the dog is in good position on the other side. Then, after two strides in the new position. Try this weave in a crawl. If you have a tiny dog, try with dog on hind legs.



4. Weave on an "About Turn"

As you do the about turn, cue the weave and extend the right foot. Mark and treat the instant the dog weaves. Train as you would "3" from both sides. Keep treat close to your body so that the dog doesn't swing wide.

5. Back weave:

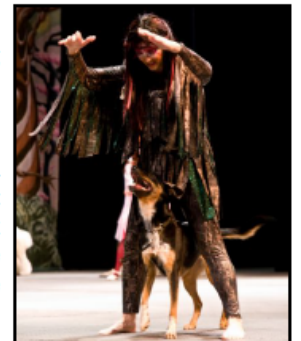
Works best when moving backward or from a pivot. Practice yourself first to be sure you are balanced: pivot, then extend your back leg. Insist on good heel position from the start. Give the dog a tap on the flank to guide it into position once it has done the through-back. Immediately turn away from dog so that dog has to find the correct position. Mark/treat as you would for a forward heel. As with the front weave, try in a crawl or on two legs.

6. Half back figure 8:

Starting in heel position, probably stationary, send dog on a backwards figure 8 (behind the left leg first). Before it has a chance to do the second half, cue dog to heel (now on the right side).

7. Go, back-through, right-side . . . or Go, back-through, heel:

Dog starts beside you in the normal heel position. Have dog step forward, in front of you, then backwards between your legs and forward into right-side heel position. Dogs might be anxious about going forward away from you. Work on one part at a time. Start the dog in front of you, cue "back through" and then cue "right side." Repeat this section. Play a game to have the dog become comfortable and happy with this movement. For the "go" part, use a lure to start. Link the "go" to the "back through" and side.



8. Swing over:

Make sure your dog knows the front position and the right-heel position. Work on front and right positions with a platform or any way you would with left-heel position. Start with dog in left-side heel, cue "front," reward. Repeat until dog is comfortable with this. Then, start dog in "front" and cue "right-side." Repeat until dog is comfortable. Finally, starting from left side, cue "right side." The dog should start in the heel, face you as it is swinging over, and then settle in right-heel position. Work on the same transition going from right to left. Add a pivot to the end move to enforce the direction.

9. Front, back-through, right side:

This variation combines 4 and 5. Start on the left. Cue dog to "front" then "back-through" then "right side." If you've worked on 4 and 5, this comes quite easily and looks really flashy. Of course, try it from right to left as well.

10. Jump over a roll:

First, practice the roll on one side until the dog is consistent. Then, once the dog has committed to the roll, lift your foot beside the dog. Then, once the dog has rolled, place your foot over the dog. Finally (don't start too soon!) jump over the dog as the dog rolls. At first, you might want to start close to the tail end to not spook the dog. Gradually move to the middle of the dog. This is scary but fun!

