

Quick guide to...

Fun Things to try with your dog!

Type these into YouTube to find competition footage, and lots of 'how-to' clips.

Agility

This involves jumping over obstacles, running through tunnels, negotiating raised platforms, and weaving in and out of poles. You can just do it for fun in your garden, or join a club. 'Canine urban agility' (using things in your environment – can also be in parks and woods) is a separate thing – but you need to ensure your dog's safety with the things you do.

Heelwork to music

There are different elements to this including just heelwork (or dressage), and freestyle, which involves tricks as well. The music helps you to keep a beat, and keep track of where you are in a routine, but it also helps you to create a story as well. You only need a couple of tricks and a bit of heelwork to start – so get creative and have a go!

Obedience

Other than training the basics (sit, down, come, stay, leave, heel), you can also try advanced obedience training. There are many areas of this including competition obedience (what you would see at Crufts) and Rally Obedience, which is less formal. 'Scent work' is also part of this, and is a good thing to try separately with your dog.

Flyball

The fast and furious sport where teams of dogs run over hurdles, grab a ball, and run back. You can get seriously involved and compete every weekend, or just do it for fun in your garden! Watch footage of the finals at Crufts to see the experts in action.

Treibball

This is a sport originally created for herding breeds, like Border Collies, and basically involves 'herding' large Pilates balls! Balls have to be brought back (from a distance) in a particular order, and through/ over obstacles. The first thing you have to teach your dog is how to push the ball with his nose – not his teeth!

Trick training/ brain training for dogs

These things are a lot of fun to watch if you find a good clip on the Internet, and are also fun to train as long as you give your dog plenty of motivation (e.g. sausages!). There are few limits to what you can achieve – only your imagination stands in the way! Brain training is very useful when you have a dog who's not allowed to exercise, but needs to be worn out mentally!