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Re: WAAG Starters Pack Enclosed

Thank you for your enquiry regarding starting agility training with WAAG. We have enclosed a Starters Pack including "Starting Agility with a WAAG", our club ground rules, a membership application and a starters course booking form.

WAAG Agility Dog Club Inc is an affiliate of the Agility Dog Association of Australia Ltd- otherwise known as ADAA. Our grounds at James Overall Park, Brighton Parade, Southport are shared with the Eagles rugby club. The park is designated as a dog off-leash park and has its own small dog beach for swimming in the Nerang River. Feel welcome to come early and exercise your dogs to take an edge off their excitement but please remember the two golden rules.

1. You must be in control of your dog at all times. If off-lead, your dog needs to return to you when called even with distractions.
2. You must clean up after your dog. Poo bags and bins are provided.

At WAAG we enjoy agility using reward-based training methods and strongly believe that dogs should have fun when learning agility. To keep it fun for them we break the obstacles and exercises down into small do-able segments and reward each of these simple behaviours until we can build up to the full exercise. We also use a device called a clicker to mark correct behaviours by the dog. We condition the dog to understand that the sound of the clicker means that a reward is forthcoming. This then helps them understand when they are doing something right. This method has been used in training dolphins, seals and many zoo animals for a number of years and is very successful in accelerating dogs learning too. The dogs you see in movies and TV commercials are usually trained using this method.

We welcome all starters who are willing to embrace these reward-based methods of training. You will be asked to reward your dog with food, toys or both. Please note that if you are uncomfortable with using these forms of rewards in your dog's training then the WAAG Starters' courses may not be suited to you.

While we believe agility should be fun for the dogs, we also believe it should be rewarding for the handlers. We want to help you learn lots of new training tools that will help you teach your dog a wide range of behaviours. To be successful with these methods we ask that you put in "homework" with your dog each day. A maximum of five minutes is all we ask- some days that may be 30 seconds as you are feeding your dog, other days you may find the time to put in the full five minutes to develop a new exercise. The great thing about training dogs to do agility is that no training session should ask the dog to concentrate for more than five minutes at a time, so as trainers we don't have to find large blocks of time each day to devote to learning these new skills.

You will find more information about our training methods, the structure of our courses, dates and pricing within the enclosed pack. We also have a website with more information on the club at <http://www.waagagility.bravepages.com>. Please feel free to contact us with any further queries or to ensure there are still vacancies within the next Agility 1 class.

Cheers

Tracey Harrison-Hill
WAAG Secretary



Starting Agility with a WAAG !

Positive and Fun Training Methods

Starting agility at WAAG is structured so that you and your dog learn this sport in a safe and fun environment. We have broken the basis required to learn agility into three eight-week courses: Agility 1, Agility 2 and Agility 3.

The first course, Agility1, teaches the foundation skills required for your dog to safely and efficiently complete agility obstacles. At the end of agility 1 your dog will have great rear-end coordination and strength, will be able to complete tunnels and planks with confidence and will be confident with movement underfoot. Most importantly though you and your dog will be learning to work as a team, your dog will have lots of enthusiasm and you will have learned how to shape your dog's behaviour. The second course, Agility2, focuses on building solid contact and weaving behaviour as well as learning how to execute turns to direct your dog around simple sequences of hurdles. At the end of the third course, agility 3, your dog will be able to successfully complete each individual piece of equipment and you will be able to direct your dog safely around short agility courses at speed.

Across the three eight-week courses we use positive reinforcement methods within our training- this means we teach you the handler how to shape your dog's behaviour using rewards. This is easiest with food and toys (if your dog likes food and toys), but can be achieved using whatever your dog finds rewarding. To start with make the food yummy little bite-size pieces of their favourite treat (roast chicken, sausage, cooked liver) and bring their favourite toy. We will teach you how to "mark" a correct behaviour from your dog using a clicker (provided at the first lesson). So where you would normally say "good dog" we will use a click and then reward. The clicker is more neutral than our voice, and is consistent, so it is easy to pair with a reward for the dog. After the dog has learned the behaviour we start to ask for more repetitions before clicking and rewarding which acts to wean down dependence on food for performance. We also teach you how to encourage your dog to play with a toy with you, which easily replaces food as a reward in agility. This form of reward-based training can also be used to teach your dogs tricks or obedience.

We welcome all starters who are willing to embrace reward-based methods of training. You will be asked to reward your dog with food, toys or both. Please note that if you are uncomfortable with using these forms of rewards in your dog's training then the WAAG Starters' courses may not be suited to you.

So when can you start training?

We don't start training dogs over jumps or contact equipment until they have grown. So at 6 months we will permit dogs into our Agility 1 class but 12 months is the minimum age we allow a dog into Agility 2 or Agility classes. If you have a large dog you would be wise to wait until 15 months before commencing in our starters' courses. You may think "but my dog jumps around and on things all the time, I'm sure he'd be okay". However the type of training we do is repetitive and can place strain on growing joints and developing muscle tissue, so we don't want to cause problems later in life such as arthritis, ligament damage or spinal damage. Best to be safe. In the meantime you can help prepare your dog at home by giving them a creative environment: such as running through a box/kid's tunnel, or walking along a plank on low bricks, or on a large square board with a golf ball under the center so that it tips. It is always great to teach them the basics of come, sit, drop, and stay too.

How obedient does my dog need to be?

Much of our training in the starters classes takes part off-lead, so you need to be able to trust your dog to stay close and focussed on you when off-lead and have them come when called, and your dog needs to be well socialised around other dogs too. That is the basic requirement of the class, though you will find that the training tools we use will enhance your dogs' responsiveness and obedience. Reward-based training applied with consistency will help you build a strong relationship with your dog.

How fit do I need to be?

You do not need to be a sprinter, marathon runner or triathlete to enjoy agility. Agility handlers come in all sizes, shapes and levels of fitness. If you are over 10 year of age and able to run short distances you can enjoy agility. An 80 year old handler with a lovely Kelpie recently earned some agility titles in Northern Queensland. Importantly though, your dog does need to be an athlete to compete in agility, so it is important that they are fit and healthy. Overweight dogs place extra strain on joints when jumping and weaving, which can result in arthritis and other injuries. So please note that we may refuse entry into Agility2 and Agility3 if your dog is overweight.

How much does the course cost?

Agility1 is an eight-week course that costs \$55 plus you need to add an annual membership with WAAG. Membership starts from \$15 a year, the regular membership is \$25 and there are also dual and family membership rates. See the membership schedule for pricing details. The Agility 1 course price includes eight weeks tuition, your clicker, some training aids, your training folder, homework sheets and your graduation certificate.

Agility2 is an eight-week course and will advance the skills learned in Agility 1 until you and your dog are able to complete individual obstacles with safety and speed. You need to have successfully completed Agility1 before you can start in this course. The Agility2 course costs \$65 for the eight weeks, which includes tuition, some basic equipment to take home and practice with, your homework sheets and your graduation certificate.

Agility3 is an eight-week course and teaches you how to direct your dog around an agility course with speed and accuracy. It costs \$45 for the eight weeks, which includes tuition and your graduation certificate.

Participants may save money by packaging Agility1 and Agility2 together with an individual WAAG membership for \$120 or by packaging all three starters' courses with an individual WAAG membership for \$150. To participate you need to complete a booking form and send it with your class fee before the closing date. It is always advisable to contact Sam, our secretary, to ensure that the next course has vacancies. Places cannot be reserved without the booking form and course fee.

Upon completion of the three starters' courses you may continue into intermediate classes where we charge a \$5 nightly ground fee per handler to cover light costs. Your annual membership also gives you the opportunity to take part in agility demonstrations to the public and compete in the monthly fixtures of the WAAG Dog of the Year competition. You will also receive club newsletters.

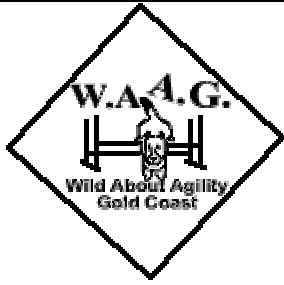
What do I need to bring to class?

To be well prepared for your first week of the Agility1 class you need to bring:

- Your dog on a flat collar or a halter (not a check chain),
- a lead,
- lots of yummy treats in an easy to access pocket or bumbag,
- a ball / kong / squeaky toy / tug toy etc,
- a bowl for water
- a pen to fill in your notes sheets.

Next step...

Fill in the Application for Starters' Courses Booking Form, selecting the package that best suits your needs. Complete the WAAG Membership Application form and send both forms to the address on the forms. You may want to phone the secretary on 5573 3702 to alert her to your interest and to get the next available starting date. We start a new Agility 1 class every second month.



Application for Starters Courses at WAAG Booking Form

About Me

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Number: _____

Email: _____

I am already a member of WAAG **or** I have attached a WAAG membership application form

About My Dog

Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Date of Birth: / / Or estimated age if DOB is unknown: _____

Breed or Cross: _____

Council Registration Number: _____

Date of last Vaccination: / / I have attached a copy of my dog's latest vaccination certificate

My Preferred Starters Package *(please tick the appropriate box)*

- I am applying to complete **Agility 1** at a price of \$55 (please add WAAG membership to this price)
- I am applying to complete both **Agility 1 and Agility 2** at a price of \$120 (this price already includes WAAG membership and is saving me up to \$25)
- I am applying to complete **Agility 1, Agility 2 and Agility 3** at a price of \$150 (this price already includes WAAG membership and is saving me up to \$35)
- I have completed Agility 1 and am applying to complete **Agility 2** at a price of \$65
- I have completed Agility 1 and am applying to complete **Agility 2 and Agility 3** at a price of \$100
- I am applying to complete **Agility 3** at a price of \$45
- I am an **Existing WAAG member training my next dog** and am applying to complete Agility 1, Agility 2 and Agility 3 at a special price of \$100.

Things I agree to in undertaking the Starter Courses at WAAG

- I have read the WAAG ground rules and agree to abide by these rules.
- I understand that participating in agility requires helping to set up and pack up the agility equipment.
- I understand that WAAG offers no refunds on course fees after the booking closing date for that course.

Signature: _____ Date: / /

Please forward form to WAAG- ADC Inc, 4 Polo Close, Wongawallan, 4210

Office Use

Secretary:

Date Received: / /

- Received Payment
- Verified Membership
- Verified Vaccination
- Added Booking
- Attached Confirmation Letter

Initials

Treasurer:

Date Received / /

- Receipted Payment
- Sent Confirmation Letter and Receipt

Date Sent: / / Initials



Application for Membership to WAAG Agility Dog Club Inc.

Annual Membership Valid from July 1st until June 30th.

If applying after April 1st then membership is valid till June 30th the following year.

Type of Membership Application *(please tick the appropriate box)*

- Individual Membership**
\$25. Full voting rights.
- Dual Membership** for two people from the same household.
\$40. Both members have full voting rights.
Please fill in a separate membership form for each member and submit both forms together with the dual fee.
- Family Membership** for unlimited members from the same household.
\$50. All members over 18 have full voting rights.
Please fill in a separate membership form for each member and submit all forms together with the family fee.
- Junior Membership** for those 10 years and under 18 years of age.
\$15. No voting rights. Please have a parent or guardian sign the membership form.
- Concessional Membership** for people on a pension.
\$15. Full voting rights.

Member Details

- I am a renewing member of WAAG or I am a new member of WAAG

About Me

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Number: _____

Email: _____

- Please add me to the WAAG-agility email discussion list at Yahoo groups.

About My Dogs

First Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Date of Birth: / / Or estimated age if DOB is unknown: _____

Breed or Cross: _____

Council Registration Number: _____

Date of last Vaccination: / / I have attached a copy of my dog's latest vaccination certificate

Second Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Date of Birth: / / Or estimated age if DOB is unknown: _____

Breed or Cross: _____

Council Registration Number: _____

Date of last Vaccination: / / I have attached a copy of my dog's latest vaccination certificate

Third Dog's Name: _____

Dog's Date of Birth: / / Or estimated age if DOB is unknown: _____

Breed or Cross: _____

Council Registration Number: _____

Date of last Vaccination: / / I have attached a copy of my dog's latest vaccination certificate**What I agree to as a member of WAAG**

- I have read the WAAG ground rules and agree to abide by these rules.
- I understand that WAAG offers no refunds on membership fees.
- I understand that participating in agility requires helping to set up and pack up the agility equipment.
- I apply for membership to Wild About Agility GoldCoast- Agility Dog Club Inc (WAAG - ADC Inc). In the event of membership admission, I agree to be bound by the Memorandum and Articles of Association and Regulations of WAAG - ADC Inc. for the time being in force.

Signature: _____ Date: / /

Guardian's signature if under 18: _____

*If mailing forms, please forward to: WAAG-ADC Inc, 4 Polo Close, Wongawallan 4210**Office Use*

Date Received: / / Initials:

- Received Payment
- Verified Membership
- Verified Vaccination
- Receipted Payment

Secretary: Entered in Membership database Initials:



WAAG - ADC Inc

Ground Rules

- There is to be no harsh handling during or within the precincts of our training sessions. Harsh handling may constitute physical contact with your dog, yelling or swearing at your dog, threatening body language and any other behaviour that in the opinion of the Chief Instructor would make spectators or members of the public "cringe" on witnessing an event. If you need to correct your dog you must do so in a non-threatening way, such as quietly picking up your dog and removing it from the equipment.
- All dogs, unless training, need to be on leash or crated by 6pm and until all equipment is cleared away.
- All handlers are responsible for their own dogs. This includes tethering dogs in a position that is safe to both members of the public and other dogs and handlers. In the interests of creating an amenable training environment, and to maintain good relations with local residents, this also means taking all steps possible to **minimize the barking of dogs** not practicing on equipment.
- All handlers are to help putting up and clearing away the equipment.
- All dog faeces anywhere on the grounds must be picked up by the handler and placed in the appropriate bins.
- No check chains or slip collars are to be used whilst under instruction and no collar, other than fixed, or a halter, may remain on a dog whilst using agility equipment, unless approved by the Chief Instructor.
- No equipment is to be practiced on except whilst under instruction. In the interest of safety, this includes before and after classes and it includes equipment that is not a part of the training exercise that is being worked on by your class. If you wish to train individually on a specific piece of equipment you need to get the approval of your instructor.
- Children are to be supervised at all times. Children under the age of 10 years are not permitted in the training area whilst agility classes are being conducted.
- We reserve the right for a dog to be muzzled.
- No bitches in oestrus on the grounds during training.
- Suitable footwear is to be worn, no thongs or bare feet. We recommend running shoes or touch football shoes.