



Acceleration/deceleration

The first step toward mastering the mechanics of acceleration and deceleration is to practice without your dog. Your friends and neighbors might think you are a bit strange, but you will be happy with the results. Start by moving slowly, then add more and more speed as you gain confidence. When you are ready, add your dog to he mix. After all, it is your dog who will give you the best feedback about the timing and clarity of your cues! I also recommend that you videotape all of your sessions, so

you can watch your mechanics in action.

Here are 15 sequences that will help you practice your acceleration and deceleration. Several of these sequences can be done entirely in acceleration mode, and several can be done almost entirely in deceleration mode. However, most of the sequences will require you to transition from acceleration to deceleration – then back again to acceleration. This emulates what you'll see on a real course.

Let your body do the talking and try to

work these sequences with no verbal cues (except for releases from start lines and contacts, and calling your dog while he is in the tunnel). By staying quiet when you run, not only will you be better able to concentrate on your mechanics but you will also see how your dog responds to your body cues (rather than relying on verbals). Remember to place your reinforcement wisely to help build your dog's understanding of acceleration mode and deceleration mode.



