



Lisa Schmit, PhD, CCFT, CPMP

[inthezoneagility@gmail.com](mailto:inthezoneagility@gmail.com)

[www.facebook.com/groups/IntheZoneAgility/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/IntheZoneAgility/)

Chin Rest as a Connection Game

By Lisa Schmit, PhD, CCFT, CPMP

[www.inthezoneagility.com](http://www.inthezoneagility.com)

I first learned the chin rest in Bobbies conditioning classes. It works great doing fitness to keep your dog focused on the task at hand and not think about food. After seeing how well it worked with conditioning, I began utilizing it in agility as a connection exercise. I use the chin rest to connect with my dog before I run as part of my pre-run routines. I also use it to re-connect with my dog if my dog disconnects from me.

What is the chin rest? My dog places his chin into my cupped hand and keeps it there until released.



Why is the chin rest so cool? When you ask your dog to sustain a behavior, they have to really think about it. Adding Duration to any trick will engage their brain as they will have to THINK about HOLDING the position. That is why I like the chin Rest. Dog has to THINK about holding the position, which changes their mentality and helps them to connect with you. I can see my dog relax in my hand. I can see my dog's eyes soften; I see him take a breath and his posture changes. So if you have a 'higher dog' this helps bring him down. If you have a nervous dog, it helps him to relax. It helps any dog to CONNECT with you and helps create a THINKING dog.

Here is a video working Inspire (16 months old) Ringside: We are working on staying connected while fast dog runs in the ring and his friend walks by! I also let him watch the dog for a second so that you can see how I got him back into the Connection Zone with me. In this video, I ask for chin rests and pop ups. Please realize that Inspire has been doing then Chin rest with him since he has been a very young puppy. So I am absolutely sure that he understands the behavior. PLEASE do not ask for a behavior in a new environment until you have it SOLID at home first.

<https://youtu.be/kpOcMeGYnJ0>

I have been teaching chin rest at my seminars for over a year now and I can see a difference in dogs almost instantaneously. The chin rest is one of my favorite connection exercises.