

Discrimination Training Tip
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I just finished presenting 4 days of agility seminars. It was a great time!! One of the topics we discussed was discriminations so I thought I would share a helpful discrimination training tip.

When you are training discriminations, make sure that you reward each one equally. We may think that dogs love tunnels so we don't need to reward that obstacle.... NOT TRUE! Because we spend so much time training and rewarding contacts, we sometimes forget to reward the tunnels also. So sometimes, no matter how we cue our dogs, they will choose to take the contacts because that is the obstacle that has been rewardedover and over again and the tunnel has not been rewarded. So why take the tunnel? If I (human) got a piece of chocolate every time I did a contact and didn't get anything for doing a tunnel...let me tell you... I would do contacts no matter what you told me to do 😊 I love chocolate!!! Dogs feel the same way... if they get rewarded for doing contacts..but not for doing tunnels...why take the tunnel?? So it is really important to reward the tunnels as much as we reward the contacts. This means that

we need to reward the tunnel as soon as the dog comes out of the tunnel after a discrimination...not a few obstacles later but the tunnel itself 😊

I recently was filming lessons for my contact retraining class (which is always available BTW). So for a few training sessions, I rewarded the heck out of my contacts because that was my focus on my training. Well, the next trial I went to, I had a heck of a time getting my dogs to do the tunnels. One of my dogs almost ran me over to get on the contacts as I charged toward the tunnel. I honestly was shocked because my discriminations skills are very good. Then my wise sister says to me, well you have been training a lot of contacts lately for your class. YUP..... I was training and rewarding contacts...but not tunnels. So the moral of this story is that even with seasoned dogs, we need to reward the obstacles equally as well as with beginning dogs!

If you would like to learn more about discrimination training, I have an online class at <https://www.bobbilyonscaninecampus.com/p/agility-discriminations>. Step by step instructions, videos and assignments are given. Multiple videos with different dogs will be shown including her young pup Inspire. During this class, you will see videos of Inspire learning discriminations from the start! So you will see the very beginning stages of training as he learns these skills. This class will start with the groundwork exercises to teach discriminations without equipment and move on to working with hoops/jumps, tunnels, and contacts.

