

AKC Rally® More Advanced Signs

Back to the Rally signs. This should get more interesting, since most of these remaining signs are not so self-explanatory as the first signs. These are all signs that can be found at the Novice level, as well as in Advanced and Excellent.

I've added notes about the training origin of the Rally exercises, since Rally is based on training "doodles" that have been used for generations to help teach dogs better heeling and to improve other obedience exercises - as well as to make training interesting! You don't want to drill the same thing over and over or you'll both get bored! I think it helps to understand the exercises, if you know something about what they are supposed to DO.

The "Finish" signs - as you recall from the first post in this series, the term "Finish" in obedience refers to the method by which the dog moves from being in front of you (as if he had just come toward you) to your Left side, in heel position. There are two ways: the Right finish, where the dog moves toward the handler's right and around behind the handler, and up on the left; and the Left finish where the dog swings to the handler's left, and turns in to line up with the handler's left side.

Training origin: The finish is a traditional obedience exercise. In regular obedience, there is nowhere that the dog is required to finish on one side or the other - the regs just state that when directed to Finish, the dog

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must move promptly from Front to Heel position. Most dogs will have a favorite way to Finish, one that is easier for them. If you are doing traditional obedience, there is nothing preventing you from just teaching that one finish and leaving it at that. However - since dogs are smart, most of them eventually figure out that when you call them to Front, you are going to ask them to Finish. And they start to anticipate it, and do the Finish without sitting in Front first. You lose big point for that - so if you teach both finishes and randomize when you use them, that helps cut down on the anticipation. It also helps to practice the Finish without calling the dog to you first.

The Rally Finish exercises are based on exercises used to teach the Finish - so some require a Left finish, some require a Right. Some have the dog complete the exercise and sit in Heel position, some don't.



#13 Call Dog Front - Finish Right - Forward

"While heeling, the handler stops forward motion and calls the dog to the front position (**dog sits in front and faces the handler**). The handler may take several steps backward as the dog turns and moves to sit in the front position.

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Second part of the exercise directs the handler to command and/or signal the **dog to change from the front position by moving to the handler's right, around behind the handler, toward heel position.** As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler moves forward before the dog has completely returned to the heel position.

The dog does not sit before moving forward in heel position with the handler. Handler must not step forward or backward to aid the dog as the dog moves toward the heel position. (Stationary exercise)."

For this exercise, and also for #14, note that the Handler **MAY** step back to help the dog come to front position. The only time the dog sits in this exercise - and, again the same is true for #14 - is in **FRONT** of the handler, the dog does **NOT** sit in Heel position either before or after the Finish. The **Bold** phrases in the exercise description above are the essential elements of the exercise - if you don't do those parts, you will be hit 10 points for an Incorrect Performance.



#14 Call Dog Front - Finish Left
- Forward

"While heeling, the handler stops forward motion and calls the dog to the front position

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(dog sits in front and faces the handler). The handler may take several steps backward as the dog turns and moves to sit in the front position. Second part of the exercise directs the handler to command and/or signal the dog to change from the front position by moving to the handler's left, toward heel position. As the dog clears the handler's path, the handler moves forward before the dog has completely returned to the heel position.

The dog does not sit before moving forward in heel position with the handler. Handler must not step forward or backward to aid the dog as the dog moves toward the heel position. (Stationary exercise)."

Very similar to #13, except the dog will finish by moving to the handler's Left. **Remember that the dog does NOT sit in Heel position at all for these two exercises.** The best strategy - to avoid confusing the dog and having him think he's supposed to sit in Heel position here - is to start forward as soon as the dog is out of your way. Don't wait for him! You don't have to dash forward, but go on ahead and encourage the dog to catch up.

Training origin: Actually, that is the reason for these exercises - by moving forward before the dog has completed the turn, you are teaching the dog to move promptly. It's a good training game, since if you do a lot of stationary Finish drills the dog is likely to slow down.

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Also: remember that even though the Handler can step backward a few steps to help the dog come around in front, after that you must NOT move your feet until you're ready to heel forward.

Many of us train the dogs to do the Left and Right finish by stepping back with that particular leg, to help the dogs understand that they should move in that direction. But by the time you're ready to show in Rally, you need to be past that and able to stand still while the dog finishes.



#15 Call Dog Front - Finish
Right - HALT

"While heeling, the handler stops forward motion and calls the dog to the front position (dog sits in front and faces the

handler). The handler may take several steps backward as the dog turns and moves to sit in the front position. Second part is the **finish to the right**, where the dog must return to heel position by moving around the right side of the handler. **Dog must sit** in heel position before moving forward with the handler. **Handler must not step forward or backward to aid the dog as the dog moves toward heel position.** (Stationary exercise)."

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#16 Call Dog Front - Finish Left - HALT

"While heeling, the handler stops forward motion and calls the dog to the front position (**dog sits in front and faces the handler**). The handler

may take several steps backward as the dog turns and moves to sit in the front position. Second part is the **finish to the left**, where the dog must return to heel position by moving around the left side of the handler. **Dog must sit** in heel position before moving forward with the handler. **Handler must not step forward or backward to aid the dog as the dog moves toward heel position.** (Stationary exercise)."

These two exercises are very similar to #13 and 14, except that the dog **DOES** sit in Heel position after the Finish. See the little Stop sign next to the big arrow? That big upright arrow is supposed to indicate the Handler's path, that you are moving forward then step back to help the dog sit straight in Front. The smaller arrow is to indicate the dog's movement. So for #15 and #16, you will stand still from the time your dog sits in front, until the dog finishes and sits in Heel position.

I have had some students who had some trouble remembering the difference between #13 and #15; and

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between #14 and #16. Remember to look for that little stop sign next to the big arrow, to tell you the dog is supposed to sit in Heel position after the Finish:

#13 - no sit in Heel position

#15 - dog sits in Heel position after the finish.

If you have trouble with this, a very good strategy is to go to the AKC website and print out full-size copies of just the signs you have trouble with. You don't have to print them in color, to save your ink. Put one or two signs up somewhere in your house where you see them often. Several times a day, stop and do the footwork for that exercise without your dog - just pretend your dog is with you. After a day or two, you'll know that sign by heart!

#20 Moving Sidestep Right



"While heeling, the handler takes one step to the right, leading with the right foot, and continues moving forward along the newly established line. The dog moves with the handler. The exercise shall be

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performed just before the exercise sign. (This exercise shall be considered a change of direction and the sign shall be placed directly in line with the handler's path requiring the handler and dog to sidestep to the right to pass the sign).

In AKC, Rally, since this sign is considered to be a change of direction, it will be placed in your path. You and your dog will sidestep diagonally to the right to move around the sign. This is one of the few times that you will pass to the right of a Rally sign. In effect, the sign itself will help the dog move over next to you.

Training origin: This exercise is designed to teach the dog to stay close by your left side, even if you drift to the right.



#21 Spiral Right - Dog Outside

"This exercise requires three pylons or posts placed in a straight line with spaces between them of approximately 6-8 feet. Spiral

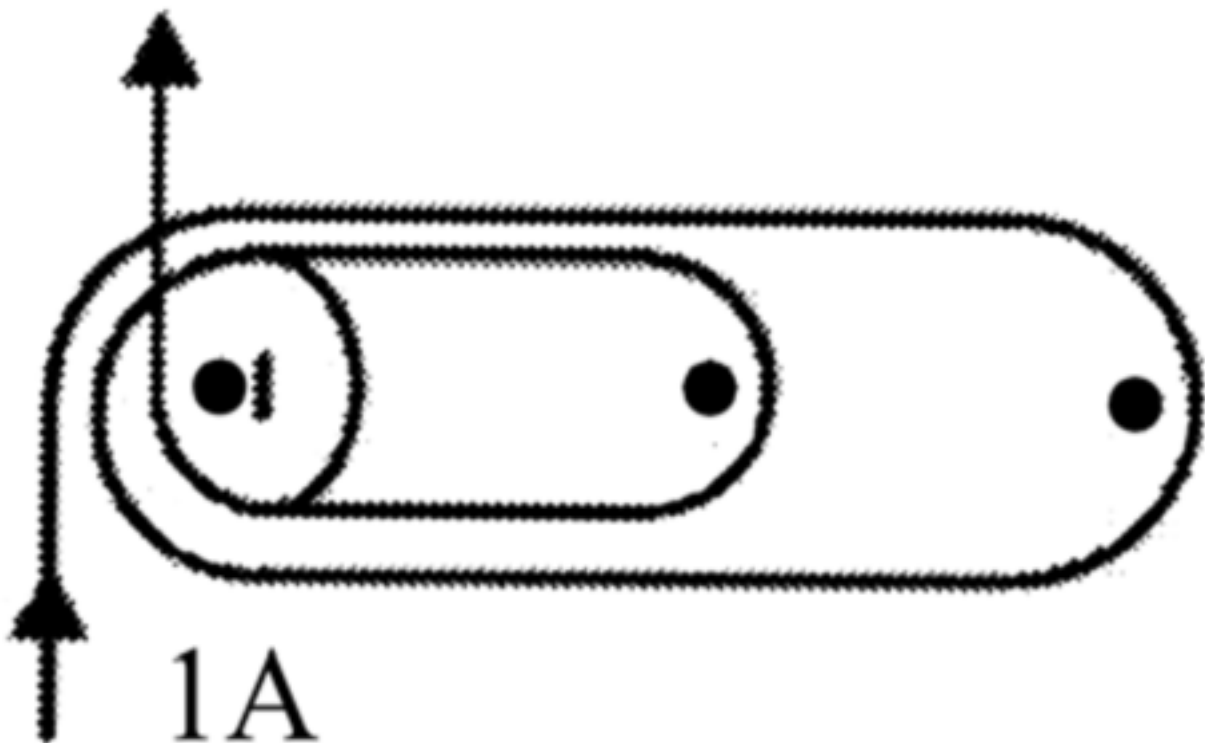
Right indicates the handler must turn to the right when moving around each pylon or post. This places the dog on the outside of the turns . The exercise sign is placed

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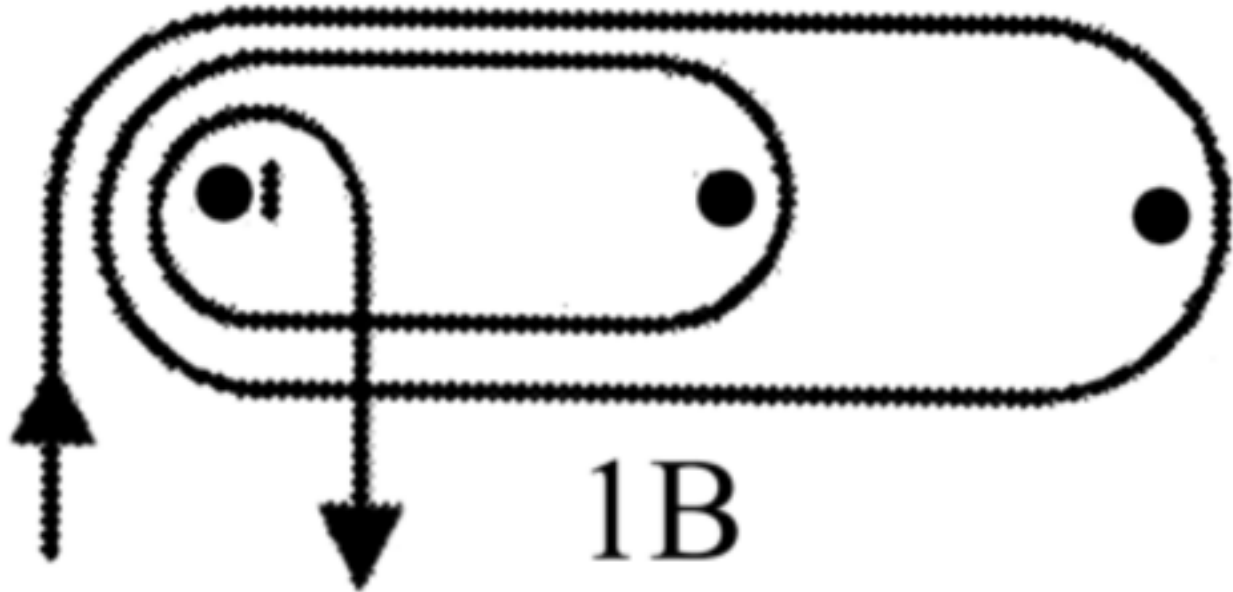
near or on the first pylon or post where the spiral is started."

The trick when doing a Spiral exercise in Rally is to remember: "3,2,1". This means you must circle all 3 posts first; then just the first two (counting from the one with the sign); then finally one circle just around that first post. Depending on the course, you may enter or exit the Spiral in different directions.

Here are some drawings of two common ways to do the Spiral Right:



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You notice that in example 1A, after completing the Spiral you continue on in your original direction, whereas in 1B you have gone back in the direction you came from - done a 180 degree turn.

Here is a link to a video showing the Spiral right, this one results in the team going off at 90 degrees from the original direction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD5vPUgAylQ>

If you search You Tube, you can find lots of videos showing how to do the various Rally exercises.

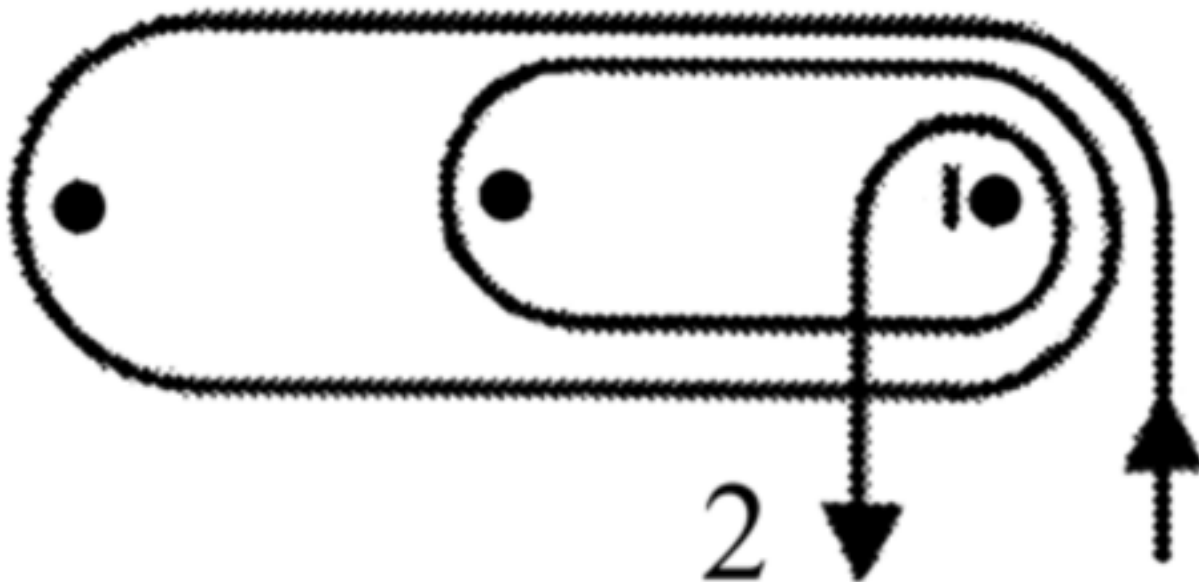
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#22 Spiral Left - Dog Inside
"This exercise requires three pylons or posts placed in a straight line with spaces between them of approximately 6-8 feet. Spiral Left indicates the handler must turn to the left when moving around each pylon or post. This places the dog on the

inside of the turns . The exercise sign is placed near or on the first pylon or post where the spiral is started."

This is just like the Spiral Right, in that you do all 3 posts, then the first 2, then just the first one - but you are constantly turning to the left. And like the Spiral Right, you may enter and leave this in different directions, depending on the layout of the course. Here is a drawing of one way to do the Spiral Left:



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Training origin: Spirals, like circles, help teach the dog to speed up when the handler is turning right, and to slow down when the handler is turning left.

One final word on Spirals: these exercises can be a big cause of handlers losing their sense of direction on a course - in essence, you get lost! When walking a course with a spiral, be sure to notice which way you are supposed to go after the spiral. If you get dizzy when doing the spiral, look UP, either focus on the next cone or look across the room and take a deep breath! Many handlers look down, and often hold their breath because they are concentrating. Remember to Breathe! :-)