



An **obedience trial** is a dog sport in which a dog must perfectly execute a predefined set of tasks when directed to do so by his handler.

Training a dog to participate in an obedience trial increases a dog's understanding and reliability in responding to commands such as "sit", "down", "stay", "come", and "heel." At a trial, the dog and handler will perform various predefined obedience exercises, which will be evaluated and scored by a judge. The dog must demonstrate basic proficiency in order to achieve a completed test, but must show a far greater level of accuracy and style in order to receive enough points to win their class.

The exercises the dogs are required to display include...

Heel – Following commands of the judge, the dog and handler team walks a predetermined pattern that must include at least one left, one right, and one about turn, as well as a fast and a slow section in the higher levels, and at least one halt. During this entire exercise, the dog must maintain 'heel position' and automatically sit quickly at heel whenever the handler stops.

Recall - The handler leaves the dog in a sitting position at one side of the ring, walks to the opposite side, and turns to face the dog. On the judge's command, the handler calls or signals the dog to come. The dog must come directly to the handler at a brisk trot or gallop, and sit squarely in front, close enough that the handler can touch the dog's head without bending or stretching, but not between the handler's feet. On the judge's order, the handler commands or signals the dog to "finish". The dog must go briskly to 'heel position' and sit squarely at heel.

Dumbbell Retrieve - The handler stands with the dog sitting in heel position facing the open ring. On order from the judge, the handler commands the dog to stay, then throws a dumbbell about 10 metres. On the judge's order, the handler commands the dog to fetch. The dog must go straight to the dumbbell at a brisk trot or gallop, retrieve it, return directly to the handler, and sit in front as in the Recall. The dog must not mouth or play with the dumbbell. Upon order from the judge, the handler gives the release command and takes the dumbbell. The judge then orders the handler to have the dog finish as in the Recall.

Scent Retrieve – The dog must perform a retrieve as with the dumbbell, but instead this time the dog must select a small square piece of cloth that has either the scent of the dog's handler or the judge on it from a collection of other cloths that may include decoys that have the scent from other people.

Stay – Both a Down and Sit stay (sometimes Stand in the higher tests). Depending on the level of the dog as to the level of difficulty ie. Length of duration, handler in sight or out of sight, added distractions. The dogs are all placed in position in a row inside the ring and instructed to leave their dogs by the Judge who times the exercise. Dogs loose points if they move too much or if they leave their position eg. Lying down in their Sit Stay.

Distance Control – Found only in the highest test ‘Test C’ the Distance Control exercise is considered the hardest of all. The dog is placed in a Stand position, the handler leaves the dog and moves about 10 metres, turning to face the dog. The handler is then instructed to command the dog to move into a set pattern of multiple predetermined positions (stand, sit, down) without moving its front feet with one command for each move.

There are 5 levels of competition at an Obedience Test. Special Beginners, Novice, Test A, Test B and Test C. At a Championship Obedience Test, the winner of ‘Test C’ so long as they gain enough points from the Judge, are awarded ‘Challenges’ that go towards a dog having the right to be called an Obedience Champion.

Obedience competition provides an opportunity for a person and a dog to work as a highly tuned team. Training for obedience trials can provide much needed mental stimulation and physical activity for a bored housepet, and provide a fun and challenging hobby for the dog's owner.