



Atlas Assistance Dogs®

Atlas Trainer Academy Course Syllabus

D9 – Dog Fitness

Last updated May 29, 2023

Course Description

This course is text and video based. It covers basic dog anatomy, training methods, enrichment exercises, foundation exercises and advanced exercises.

Course Objectives

This course will:

- Cover basic dog anatomy including: the senses, skeletal system, circulatory system, internal control systems, and respiratory system
- Describe and discuss dog movement and alignment
- Discuss markers, mechanics, reinforcement, and how to set criteria when training
- Cover various training methods used when training dogs
- Discuss conditioning considerations for puppies and senior dogs
- List fun exercises and enrichments for dogs of all ages
- Identify foundational fitness skills and discuss how to teach them
- Describe how to increase a dog's fitness level in the areas of flexibility, balance, strength, and stamina and endurance

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the basic anatomy of a dog
- Describe how a dog moves and how they are aligned
- Describe exercises to adjust a dog's movement and alignment
- Demonstrate the use of markers, reinforcement, and setting criteria when training
- Demonstrate various training methods such as luring, targeting, capturing, and shaping
- List important consideration when exercising puppies and senior dogs



- Describe at least five fun exercises or enrichment games that they can use with their dog
- Identify foundation skills which are relevant to their learner and be able to demonstrate how to teach them
- Demonstrate exercises in flexibility, balance, strength, and endurance and stamina at a beginning, intermediate, and advanced level

Outline

- Dog Anatomy
 - Senses
 - Skeletal system
 - Circulatory system
 - Internal control systems
 - Respiratory system
- Dog Movement and Alignment
 - How a dog moves
 - Dog alignment
 - Types of Fitness Platforms
 - Measuring Platforms and Foot Targets
 - Adjusting Alignment
- Markers, Mechanics, Reinforcement, and Criteria
 - Markers
 - Mechanics
 - Reinforcement
 - Setting and Raising Criteria
- Training Methods
 - Training and Relationships
 - Luring
 - Targets
 - Capturing
 - Shaping and Free Shaping
- Puppies and Senior
 - Exercising Puppies
 - Exercising Senior Dogs



- Fun Exercises and Enrichment Games
 - Confidence
 - Nosework
 - Tug
 - Novel Surfaces
 - Novel Sounds
 - Pop Up From Sit
 - Lying Down With Front Paws on a Target
 - Remove Feeders
 - Enrichment Stations
 - Setting up Stations and Equipment
- Fitness Foundation Skills
 - Zen Bowl
 - Square Stand
 - Rear Foot Targeting
 - Tuck Sit
 - Rock Back Sit
 - Around
 - Under
 - Straddle
 - Forward Crawl
 - Fold Back Down
- Flexibility Level 1
 - Easy Neck and Spine Stretch
 - Turn or Twirl
- Balance/Proprioception Level 1
 - Planks
 - Wobble Boards
 - Paws Up on Stable Platforms
 - Movement Puzzles
- Strength Building Level 1



- Neck Strength
- Jumping
- Weight Shifts
- Tuck Sit and Kick Back Stand
- Back Up
- Stamina and Endurance Stage 1
 - Tread Mill
 - Swimming
 - Circuit Training
 - Cardio with the Klimb Platform
- Flexibility Level 2
 - Raising the Stretch
 - Bow
 - Tight Turns
- Balance/Proprioception Level 2
 - Balancing on an Object
 - Unstable Platforms
 - Leap Pad Game
 - Scattered Sticks
 - More Planks
 - Movement Puzzles
- Strength Building Level 2
 - Paws Up
 - Back Up onto a Platform
 - Two On and Two Off
 - Rock Back Sit Push Forward
- Stamina and Endurance Stage 1
 - Stairs
 - Cavaletties
 - Building Circuit Training



- Flexibility Level 3
 - Building the Shoulder
- Balance/Proprioception Level 1
 - Stable to Unstable Targets
 - Seesaw
 - Stand and Balance on Platform
 - Pivoting
 - Movement Puzzles
- Strength Building Level 3
 - Rock Back Sit Power Up/Power Down
 - Walking on Back Feet
 - Back Up and Incline
- Stamina and Endurance Stage 3
 - Final Circuit Training
 - Take it Outside

Course Expectations

Please allow multiple sessions of at least one to two hours to go through the course and review the references that will be provided. If the topic is less familiar to you, you may need more time to view references or research the area in further depth.

You will be asked to complete a very brief survey after you complete the course to give us your feedback.

This course includes 3 video demonstrations as well as quizzes at the end of some modules. Videos will typically be about two to four minutes long. More detailed guidelines for the video demonstrations can be found in the assignments themselves.

A grade of 80% or above is required to pass the quizzes. Students have the opportunity to discuss their answers with Atlas faculty as well as retake the quizzes if necessary.