

TIPS FOR HIGHER SCORES IN CRO RALLY

You can improve your scores by avoiding common exercise mistakes and by taking advantage of the leash options to help your runs go more smoothly and without frustrations such as the leash tangling in a jump.

STOPS and PAUSES

Please read the exercise descriptions carefully, so you do them correctly. Some are not found in other venues. Others are done differently from other venues.

Also read the opening paragraph(s) in each exercise description document. They explain what "Stop" means in a CRO exercise as well as where pauses are required. The criteria for CRO are not necessarily the same as in other venues. Failure to do a correct Stop or to pause where needed will result in a 10 point deduction.

LEASH OPTIONS

Leashes are optional at all levels of CRO. That means you do NOT need a leash for Level I. It means you CAN use a leash all the way through Level V. When working outdoors in unfenced areas, a leash is always advisable.

Leashes may be used for part of a course or all of a course. You may change the leash during the run, too. You may want to use a long leash for a distance exercise and switch back to a shorter one for the rest of the course. You may decide to take off the leash for jumps or weave exercises and put it back on for other parts of the course.

RIGHT and LEFT SIDES

Dogs may work on the left ("Heel") or the right ("Side") side in CRO. After obtaining the Level I title (CRO-I), you can continue to Level II in either the Performance Track or the Traditional Track, or both. In the Performance Track, dogs work on both sides of the handler. In the Traditional Track, dogs work only on one side (typical in most rally venues).

If you would like to title in the Performance Track, you may find that your dog is not amenable to heeling on the "wrong" side. To get started, use a lure in the hand on the side you want to teach your dog. Start by working with a stand on that side. Reward your dog for holding a stand in the correct position on the new side. Then start moving, teaching the same way you taught the original side. It does not take long for the dogs to get the idea and to discriminate between body and verbal cues for Heel and Side positions.

Most handlers are surprised at how crooked Sits and Downs can be on the new side. Reward the dog in the correct position by moving the dog around with the treat before delivering it. Soon, the dog will understand correct positions, including position changes, on both sides.

SHARED CONES

Many CRO courses have shared cone exercises. Unless the course map says you can choose which cones to use for a particular exercise, you must use the ones designated on the map. Look for the arrow showing the exit path from the exercise and that will tell you which cones to use for the exercise. Cone challenges are fun and they keep us focused, but they can also be a place to lose 10 points for not using the correct cones. If in doubt, ask on the Facebook group or email info@cyberrally-o.com.

SPECIFIC EXERCISES

LEVEL I -

Stop. Down - This exercise is NOT a moving down. There must be a clear Stop in either a Sit or a Stand. Pause, and then cue the Down.

Stop (Stand). Walk Around - The Stop for this exercise cannot be a Sit. The dog must stop in a Stand. After the dog is completely stopped, pause before walking around.

Stop (Stand) - The Stop for this exercise cannot be a Sit. The dog must stop in a Stand. Pause before moving on.

Stop. Leave Dog (3-5 Steps). Call to Heel - The Stop for this exercise can be a Sit or a Stand. Both dog and handler must be stopped at the same time. Pause and then cue a wait/stay and take your steps away from the dog. There are three versions of this exercise. In one, the handler steps forward. In the other two, the handler steps either to the right or to the left.

LEVEL II -

Transition exercises - These only appear in Performance Track courses and they can be done any way you want. They may be moving, stationary, or a combination.

Call Front. Single Weave Finish. Wait/Forward - The weave is done with the leg next to which the dog finishes. For a finish in Heel, the dog weaves through the handler's left leg. For a finish in Side, the dog weaves through the handler's right leg.

False Right Turn and False Left Turn - These exercises have two position changes each. The team starts in Heel (or Side) position, switches to Come Fore position, and then switches back to Heel (or Side) position. There are NO stops in these exercises. The team is in continual motion. The biggest error we see is handlers not staying in the Come Fore position long enough. The dog must turn completely around to face the handler and then the team takes a couple steps in Come Fore position before the handler resumes Heel (or Side) position.

Figure 8 Jump - If the team approaches the station in Heel position, the dog will jump the bar and circle the right standard first. The dog will not come back to Heel position but will come to (approximately) Side position in order to set up for the second jump, after which the dog

circles the left standard and returns to Heel position. If the team approaches the station in Side position, the dog will jump the bar and circle the left standard first. The dog will not come back to Side position but will come to (approximately) Heel position in order to set up for the second jump, after which the dog circles the right standard and returns to Side position. Watch the demo of this exercise. If you do agility, you will already know how to do this exercise properly.

LEVEL III -

Stop. Single Weave to Front. Finish (Circle/Loop). Wait. - If the team approaches and stops in Heel position, the dog weaves through the handler's right leg to come to Front position. If the team approaches and stops in Side position, the dog weaves through the handler's left leg to come to Front position. It is much easier for the dog to come to Front if the handler puts the weave leg far forward (not to the side). The dog will then be moving farther forward for the weave and will have more room to turn into a nice Front position. After the dog weaves, the handler moves the weave leg back to the stationary leg.

Stop (Stand). Back Up 3 Steps (5 Steps and 7 Steps in Levels IV and V) - The Stop for these exercises must be in a Stand. You and your dog must pause before you begin the backwards steps.

Pivots - All the pivot exercises require a STOP (either in a sit or a stand) at the beginning and at the end of the exercise. There are pictures of street stop signs on the CRO pivot signs to remind you to do a stop (and pause) before and after the actual pivot. The pivot exercises all require the dog to move around the handler (either forwards or backwards) while the handler pivots as though standing on dinner plate.

LEVELS IV AND V -

Many of the Level IV and V exercises have multiple parts. Read the descriptions carefully and watch the exercise demos. By the time you reach these levels, you will be very familiar with how to do a Stop and where a pause is required. There is always help in the Facebook group and at info@cyberrally-o.com.

