

AKC Trick Dog

**PARTICIPANT
and
EVALUATOR GUIDE**



May 2022

Dear AKC Trick Dog Participants and Evaluators,

Welcome to the AKC Trick Dog program. In AKC Trick Dog, dogs and their owners can have fun learning tricks together.

There are 5 levels of titles in AKC Trick Dog:

- AKC Novice Trick Dog (TKN)
- AKC Intermediate Trick Dog (TKI)
- AKC Advanced Trick Dog (TKA)
- AKC Trick Dog Performer (TKP)
- AKC Trick Dog Elite Performer (TKE)

AKC Approved CGC Evaluators observe the tricks and sign as evaluators for the Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Performer and Elite Performer Trick Dog titles.

In a trick dog class (e.g., a 6-weeks course), evaluators may sign off on tricks as handlers learn them each week for Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Performer. Evaluators may also evaluate Elite Performer Trick Dog routines.

Recent updates

- As of January 2022, handlers only need to have their dogs do each trick one time. However, Evaluators may ask that a trick be done again.
- Elite Performer required an audience when the title first began. During these times of covid, an audience is no longer required. In cases where it is possible to have an audience, the handler may choose to have an audience present during the performance.
- As of January 3, 2022, AKC no longer grandfathered trick titles from other organizations.

FOR TRICK DOG TITLE APPLICATIONS AND CHECKLISTS, SEE:

<https://www.akc.org/sports/trick-dog/resources/trick-dog-applications/>

NOVICE LEVEL

Guidelines

For the **Novice Trick Dog** title, the dog must:

- 1) perform 10 tricks, or
- 2) have the CGC on record at AKC and perform 5 tricks.

In the **Novice** Trick Dog test, handlers:

- **May** use food/toys as a lure (unless otherwise indicated for a specific trick).
(Lures are used to guide the dog into position).
- **May** use lures, hand signals and/or verbal cues unless otherwise indicated for a specific trick.
- **May** use food as a reinforcer and **may also use** clickers to mark behaviors.
(Reinforcers come after the behavior to tell the dog the behavior was done correctly).

As of January 2022, in the Novice level, the dog must do each trick 1 time. (The exception is that the Evaluator may request to see a trick a second time).

CGC Dogs and Trick Dog Titles

If a CGC certificate or title is on record at AKC, the dog only needs to perform 5 tricks to earn the Novice Trick Dog title.

CGC + 5 Tricks = the AKC NOVICE TRICK DOG TITLE

The CGC will count as 5 tricks because the dog has already been tested on foundation behaviors (i.e., sit, down, come, stay and walk on a leash).

CGC dogs can earn the Novice Trick Dog title by performing 5 additional tricks for the CGC Evaluator.

CGC and Trick Dog titles may be earned on the same day, however, handlers should send both CGC and Tricks title application in the same envelope so that AKC can enter the CGC on the record first. If the dog needs an AKC Canine Partners number, this application can also be sent in the same envelope with the CGC or Tricks title applications.

Handlers are advised to keep a copy of tricks submitted at each level. They can easily take a photo with a cell phone to record their tricks.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Guidelines

For the **Intermediate Trick Dog** title, the dog must:

- 1) perform 10 tricks from the Intermediate tricks list.

In the **Intermediate** Trick Dog test, handlers:

- **May NOT** use food/toys as a lure (except in tricks where this is specifically permitted – e.g., crawl on belly and weaves).
(Lures are used to guide the dog into position).
- **May** use food as a reinforcer and **may also use** clickers to mark behaviors.
(Reinforcers come after the behavior to tell the dog the behavior was done correctly).

As of January 2022, in the Intermediate level, the dog must do each trick 1 time for the Evaluator. The exception is that the Evaluator may request to see a trick a second time.

Tricks performed in the test for Novice may not be repeated in Intermediate.
A more advanced version of the same trick may be performed.

Handlers are advised to keep a copy of tricks submitted at each level. They can easily take a photo with a cell phone to record their tricks.

ADVANCED LEVEL *Guidelines*

For the **Advanced Trick Dog** title, the dog must:

- Perform **10 tricks** from the Advanced tricks list.
- Tricks must be Advanced and not previously submitted for other titles.

In the **Advanced** Trick Dog test, handlers:

- **May NOT** use food/toys as a lure.
(Lures are used to guide the dog into position).
- **May** use food as a reinforcer and **may also use** clickers to mark behaviors.
(Reinforcers come after the behavior to tell the dog the behavior was done correctly).

In Advanced Trick Dog testing, the dog will do each trick 1 time for the Evaluator.

Handlers are advised to keep a copy of tricks submitted at each level. They can easily take a photo with a cell phone to record their tricks.

PERFORMER LEVEL

Guidelines

Agility and obedience equipment may not be used in the Performer level (or for Elite Performer). However, handlers can design their own equipment (e.g., “Superman” jumps over buildings made of cardboard, or the dog does a scent exercise with toys, shoes or household items).

For the Performer Trick Dog title, the dog will:

- 1) perform a total of 10 tricks. **At least 3 Tricks must be from the Performer level.** The remaining tricks can be from the Performer, Advanced or Intermediate levels and must be tricks not previously submitted for other titles.
- 2) **At least 3 tricks must use props.** Props are objects used by performers to tell the story.
- 3) The list of Performer tricks in the Evaluator Guide will be added to over time. Handlers may contact AKC at trickdog@akc.org to ask if tricks not yet on the list will qualify for Performer.

For the Performer level, tricks may be done as either 1) 10 unrelated tricks done one after the other or 2) as a part of a routine with a theme/story.

An example of a **theme** is “Bruno plays sports”. An example of a tricks routine with a **story** is, “This is Princess. Princess loves to go to school. When she goes to school she 1) takes a nap, 2) gets a book, 3) goes outside and plays ball,” etc.

A helper may be used to read/narrate the story as a way of prompting the tricks for the handler, the handler may tell the story as the dog performs, or the handler may provide the evaluator with a written copy of the script/story (optional for Performer).

While a theme or story is not required for Performer, these can be very entertaining and useful for dogs who are working in schools and therapy settings.

In the **Performer** Trick Dog test, handlers:

- 1) **May not** use food/toys as a lure.
(Lures are used to guide the dog into position).

- 2) **May** use food as a reinforcer and **may also use** clickers to mark behaviors.
(Reinforcers come after the behavior to tell the dog the behavior was done correctly).

In the Performer level, the dog will do each trick 1 time for the evaluator.

Handlers are advised to keep a copy of tricks submitted at each level. They can easily take a photo with a cell phone to record their tricks.

ELITE PERFORMER

Guidelines

The Elite Performer is AKC Trick Dog's most advanced title.

Taking Your Show On the Road

Elite Performer dogs are truly an elite class. Elite Performer requires that the handler and dog have demonstrated the ability to "take their show on the road." This means having a script or story that could be used in performances for children, adults in residential settings, or spectators at dog shows and other events.

Because of covid, performing for an actual audience is now optional.

In cases where the the handler and dog perform for an audience:

- This can be at a school, assisted living facility, park, dog training class for other students in the class, at a dog show, etc.
- If at a facility with residents, clients or children, adhere to confidentiality rules if you take photos. Photos of the audience may be of backs of heads so you can not see the clients.
- When you are performing at a public place, photos are usually allowed.

Elite Performer testing requires that the dog:

- Perform 10 tricks, with at least 5 from the Performer level
- At least 5 of the tricks must have props*
- No agility or obedience equipment may be used, however, props may include jumps or other equipment that has been created by the handler.
- There must be a script/story. The handler may tell the story during the performance or have it written so someone else can read it to narrate the story.
- Music may be used; no costumes are allowed for dogs.
- No lures may be used in Elite Performer, however, food, praise and clickers may be used as reinforcers.

*A **prop** is an object used by performers to tell the story. Elite Performers who are "taking their show on the road" should be prepared to bring their own props. A small, lightweight utility wagon or crate dolly can be used for moving props. (type "utility wagon" into www.google.com for sources on wagons). Props include objects such as toy pianos, basketball hoops, beds, handler created jumps, etc. A treat (food reward) is not a prop, nor is a toy that is given as a reinforcer.

For help writing a script or story, see the materials at: <https://www.akc.org/sports/trick-dog/resources/>

NOVICE LEVEL

Trick Descriptions

All tricks may be done 1 time unless the Evaluator requests to see the trick again. (Exceptions #17, # 18-dog will do these 2 times)

1. Balance Beam

The dog will walk on a low balance beam or board a few inches off the floor. The board should be approximately 6-ft. long.

- The board should be stable.
- Handler may be beside the dog for safety.

2. Bark on Cue

When the handler says, "Bark!" or "Speak!" (or another chosen verbal cue), the dog will bark.

- The handler may also choose to use a hand signal for "speak." The hand signal may be given alone or along with a verbal cue.

3. Crawl

The dog will respond to the handler's cue to crawl by getting in the down position and crawling on his/her belly at least 3 body lengths.

- In the Novice level, the handler may instruct the dog to "down" in preparation for the crawl.
- The handler may use a lure.

4. Fetch it

The handler will throw an object such as a favorite toy or ball for the dog to retrieve. The dog will fetch the object, and will bring it to the handler within 2 feet.

- The dog will fetch the object from at least 10-feet.

5. Find it

A treat (or scent item) will be hidden under one cup, object, or container and the dog will be told to "find it." The dog will touch the cup/object/container with its nose or will turn the cup/object over.

[At the Intermediate level, this trick will be done with 3 cups].

6. Get your ____.

When told by the handler, “Get your__” [may be a brush, toy, name of specific toy, etc.], the dog will get the object from at least 5-ft. away and will bring it to the handler.

The “Fetch it” trick involves the handler throwing the object. In “Get your ____” the object has been placed at least 5-ft. away from the dog.

7. Get in (the box or container)

When the handler tells the dog, “Get in,” the dog will jump or step into a box.

- The box will be big enough to hold the dog
- The sides of the box may be trimmed so the box is only several inches high.
- A box lid may also be used if the lid is several inches tall.
- All 4 paws will be in the box.

7.b. Sits in box/container on cue [This is an optional separate trick]

When the dog is in the box/container, the handler will cue the dog to “sit” with a verbal cue or hand signal.

8. Get on (low platform or step, etc. with 4 paws)

When the handler tells the dog, “Get on,” “Hup,” or any other preferred cue, the dog will jump or step onto a low platform. This can be a wide step for the dog to stand on with all 4 paws, an agility pause table, or a trick dog pedestal.

- Remember that whenever the dog is jumping onto something, the object should be stable.

9. Hand signals (Choose one: sit, down or come)

The dog will respond to one of the hand signals for sit, down or come. If a hand signal has not already been taught, we suggest using the hand signals for AKC obedience if the handler is interested in obedience training. This trick tests the dog’s ability to respond to a hand signal.

- Lures and verbal cues may not be used for this trick.

10. High five

In the high five trick, when cued by the handler, the dog raises one paw into the “high five” (chest height) position. This trick can also be called “wave hello,” or “wave goodbye.” At the Novice level, the dog may simply raise the paw and does not have to wave or paw at the air.

11. Hold (at least 3-seconds)

For the Novice Trick Dog “hold”, the dog will hold an object given to it by the handler for at least 3-seconds.

- The object may be a favorite toy or ball. For an obedience dog, the handler may wish to have the dog demonstrate holding a dumbbell.
- Objects at the Novice level are held at least 3-seconds
- Other objects could be a basket (handle), a stuffed animal that could be worked into a trick dog routine (“take the cat outside”), a letter, etc.

12. Jump (through a low hoop or over a low bar)

When instructed to, “Jump!” by the handler, the dog will jump over a low bar (a few inches from the floor) or the dog will jump through a low hula hoop.

- In Novice, a lure may be used to get the dog through the hoop or over the jump.

13. Kennel up (go in crate, stay in until released)

When told, “Kennel up,” “Crate,” or “Get in your crate,” etc., from 3 to 5 ft. away, the dog will go into the crate and will stay there (quietly and with no resistance) with the door closed for at least 10-seconds.

- The handler will open the door after 10-seconds and will release the dog.

14. Kiss (handler’s cheek or back of hand)

The handler will turn his/her cheek (or offer hand) to the dog, say “Kiss,” or “Give kisses,” etc. The dog will kiss the handler’s cheek or back of hand.

15. Paws up (2 front paws on low footstool or step)

When told, “Paws up,” by the handler, the dog will step up and place his/her two front feet onto a step, stepstool, upside down wooden box or other raised surface.

- Stools, pedestals, and other surfaces should be stable so that they don’t slide when the dog steps up.
- A practical example of this skill is in therapy settings when the dog needs to raise its head so a patient in a bed can reach it for petting.

16. Push-ups (sit, down; sit, down; sit, down)

Push-ups are a good exercise for puppies who are learning tricks.

- In Novice, a lure may be used to guide the dog into a sit. From sit, the dog is instructed to “down,” then sit again, then down.
- **The dog will perform the sit/down sequence 2 times.**

17. Shake hands

When the handler says, "Shake," "Paw," or "Shake hands," the dog will raise her/his paw chest high so the handler can 'shake hands.

- Remember that you can reward the dog with food in Novice.

18. Spin in circle

When told, "Spin" or "Circle," the dog will spin in a full circle.

- The dog may circle to the right or left. More advanced trick dogs can learn to respond to the verbal cues "circle right" and "circle left."
- The handler may use a lure in Novice to get the dog to spin.
- The dog should spin **at least 2 times** in a circle.

19. Touch it (hand or target stick)

The touch is the foundation for a lot of trick training. When told, "touch," the dog will touch the handler's hand or target stick.

- Say, "touch" and present the object to be touched to 1) the right of the dog's head, 2) then to the left, then 3) in front of the dog (so the dog will demonstrate it can do this in 3 positions).
- For this exercise, we encourage handlers to learn to use a clicker if they haven't already. In training, click and reward each time-- the instant the dog does the behavior correctly. First click, then treat.
- By the time handlers get to the Trick Dog test, they may or may not have faded some of the clicks.

20. Tunnel (agility or child's tunnel)

In this Novice trick, the dog will go through a tunnel.

- The handler may guide the dog into the tunnel at the entrance.
- Remember that agility and obedience equipment is no longer permitted in Performer and Elite Performer.

21. Other: Handlers Choice

For the Novice title, the handler may choose up to 2 Handler's Choice tricks. This is to accommodate handlers who have taught tricks not on this list. If the trick is more difficult than a Novice trick, the handler may wish to save this trick for a more advanced title. Tricks may not be repeated from one title to the next.

22. Other: Handlers Choice

See #21.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Trick Descriptions

All tricks may be done 1 time unless the Evaluator requests to see the trick again. (Exceptions #9, #11, #18 - dog will do these 2 times)

1. Balance treat on nose or head (e.g., dog biscuit)

The dog will balance a treat (such as a dog biscuit) on his/her nose or head for at least 5-seconds.

- The handler may give a verbal cue such as, “Stay,” while the dog is balancing the treat.

2. Carry (such as a basket or other object)

The dog will hold and carry an object (such as a basket).

- The dog should walk at least 15-ft. carrying the object.
- The handler may walk beside or ahead of the dog.

3. Catch (soft toy, soft ball, treat, etc.)

The handler will toss an object (such as a soft toy, soft ball) to the dog and the dog will catch it.

- The handler may give a verbal cue such as, “catch.”

4. Crawl (dog on belly, crawls at least 5 body lengths; may use food or toy lure)

From the down position, the dog will crawl on its belly at least 5 body lengths.

- The handler may use a lure for this trick (in Novice and Intermediate).
- If this Trick was submitted for the Novice title, may not repeat for Intermediate.

5. Fetch it (20 ft. away and deliver to hand)

The handler will throw an object (such as a ball, dumbbell, toy) and the dog will fetch it from 20-ft.

- The handler will give the dog a verbal cue such as, “fetch it.”
- The dog will fetch the object and return it to the handler so the handler can take the object.

6. Game (dog manipulates interactive canine game or treat dispensing object to get a treat)

The dog will manipulate a canine game, puzzle or treat dispensing object to get a treat.

7. Go find (handler hides, dog goes and finds)

The handler will hide. The dog will go and find the handler.

- A helper will say, "Go find___," and the dog will find the handler.
- The handler may hide behind a screen, around a corner, behind furniture, etc.

8. Go to your place (to bed/mat, crate from 10 ft.)

The dog will go to his/her place when given a verbal cue such as "Place" or "Go to your place."

- The place may be the dog's bed, mat or a crate.
- The dog will go to his/her place from 10-ft. away.

9. Hand signals (sit, down, come, stand- total of 3 in any order)

The dog will respond correctly to at least 3 hand signals (no verbal cues) selected by the handler. (2 times for each sequence of 3. Example: sit, down, come. Then repeat: sit, down, come).

- Hand signals may include any 3 of sit, down, come, or stand.

10. Jump through - handler's circled arms

This trick is for small or medium-sized dogs. The handler will hold her/his arms in a circle (to the handler's side) and will give a cue such as, "Through" or "Hup" to signal the dog to jump through the handler's arms.

- The handler may bend over, or do this trick from a kneeling position.
- Large breeds that do not fit through the handler's arms may jump over the handler's leg.

11. Leg weave (weave around handler's legs)

In this Intermediate trick, the dog will weave around the handler's legs.

- The dog will go around each leg at least 2 times.

12. Paws up (on handler's arm)

In this trick, the dog will jump up and place the front paws/arms on the handler's arm.

- With larger dogs, handlers will stand and the dog will stand on its hind legs.
- For smaller dogs, the handler can bend over or kneel.

13. Pulls a toy/bag on a string or rope

The dog will respond to a cue such as, "Pull" or "Pull it."

- The dog will pull a toy at least 5-ft.

14. Push button/key on sound toy, noise button, etc. to activate sound.

The dog will push a button/key at least 2 times on a toy/object that makes a sound.

15. Rollover

For this Intermediate level trick, the dog will respond to the handler's cue, "Rollover."

- The handler may tell the dog to "down" as the first step.

16. Shell game (find treat or scent item under 1 of 3 cups, objects or containers)

In the Novice version of this trick, the dog found a treat/scent under 1 cup/container. For this Intermediate level trick, the dog will find a treat or scent hidden under 1 of 3 cups/containers. The dog will indicate the correct cup by touching it with its nose, or pushing it over.

- For a performance, the handler can tell the audience the dog will guess which cup hides the treat, but, this is simply a scent exercise.

17. Sit pretty (sit up or sit with head tilted)

There are two ways to do the sit pretty: 1) the dog will sit up with its paws off the floor or 2) the dog will sit and simply tilt its head to the side.

- Large dogs may have a difficult time sitting up and balancing so they can "sit pretty" by tilting their heads and holding the head tilt for at least 3-seconds.
- Small and medium-size dogs can sit up with their paws off the floor for "sit pretty."

18. Wave good-bye/hello

In the Novice trick called High-five, the dog raises his/her paw at least chest high. In this Intermediate good-bye, the dog raises the paw and paws at the air, as in waving good-bye.

- The dog should "wave" at least 2 waves.

19. Weave poles (6 weave poles) May use food or a lure for this trick.

In this Intermediate trick, the dog will correctly go through 6 weave poles.

- While the Intermediate Trick Dog level does not permit food used as lures, there are a few exceptions and this is one of them. In Intermediate weave poles, a lure may be used to guide the dog through 6 weave poles. [Agility equipment can no longer be used in Performer or Elite Performer].

20. Wobble Board (or rocker board)

The dog will step onto the rocker board or wobble board and will balance for at least 10-seconds.

- Wobble boards get the dog used to a moving surface and build balance and coordination.

21. Other: Handlers Choice

For the Intermediate title, the handler may choose up to 2 Handler's Choice tricks. This is to accommodate handlers who have taught tricks not on this list. If the trick is more difficult than an Intermediate trick, the handler may wish to save this trick for a more advanced title. Tricks may not be repeated from one title to the next – if the trick has been done in Novice, it may not be repeated in Intermediate or Advanced.

22. Other: Handlers Choice

See #21.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL INTERMEDIATE TRICKS

Ideas for Other Intermediate Tricks

Any time handlers or instructors have creative ideas for their own tricks, they can contact AKC Trick Dog if there are questions regarding approval.

Ideas for other Handler's Choice tricks:

Balance Ball

Close drawer

Close door

Flyball (run to box, push, get ball)

Head down

Heeling with automatic sit

Open door

Open drawer with cloth pull added

Peek-a-boo. Dogs starts in front of handler and moves around to between handler's legs.

Ring doorbell (can be mounted on wood, etc.)

Run and get ball from flyball box

Remove object from box/ mailbox

Teeter totter (in Intermediate, may use agility equipment)

Touch lamp- turn on touch lamp with nose

ADVANCED LEVEL

Trick Descriptions

1. Back up

When given the cue (verbal, hand signal, or both) to “back up” the dog will walk backwards at least 5 body lengths.

- The handler may give multiple cues (e.g., tell the dog more than once).
- At the Advanced level, the handler should not be walking into the dog to get it to back up.

2. Balance treat on nose, flip to eat

The handler will place a treat on the dog’s nose (muzzle). A cue may be given such as “stay” or “hold it.”

- The dog will hold the treat for at least 5-seconds, then the handler will say something to indicate the dog can flip and eat the treat (e.g., “Get it!”)

3. Barrel

The dog will either 1) roll a barrel with 2 front paws or 2) will stand with all 4 paws on the barrel and will roll it at least 5-ft. Can also use exercise peanut.

4. Bow

The dog will bow as in “take a bow.” This looks like a play bow, with the rear end up, front paws out, and head down.

5. Circle right, circle left

In this Advanced trick, the dog responds to verbal cues or hand signals for “Circle right” or “Circle left.” (1 time in each direction).

- Handler may use verbal cues and hand signals (either or both).
- Lures may **not** be used for this Advanced trick.

6. Cover your eyes (paw over eyes)

The dog will begin in the down position and will respond correctly to a cue such as “Cover your eyes,” “Hide your eyes,” or “Don’t look.”

7. Cover up with blanket

The handler will give the dog a verbal prompt such as “Cover up,” or “Time to go to sleep.” The dog will cover itself with the blanket.

8. Go hide

The handler will signal the dog to “go hide.” The dog may be directed to get under a table, behind a screen, etc.

9. Head down

Beginning in the down position, the dog will put his/her head down so the chin is on the floor.

10. Hide your head

The dog will hide her/his head by putting the head only under a blanket, pillow, etc.

11. Jump into handler's arms

Starting with the dog several feet away, when given a verbal cue such as, "Up!" or "Hup!", the dog will come and jump into the handler's arms.

12. Jump over the handler's back

With the handler kneeling on all fours or on one knee with the upper body bent forward (crouching down), the dog will jump over the handler's back.

13. Light (turn on)

The dog will activate a pressure sensitive button or light in response to a verbal cue from the handler such as, "Lights on."

14. Open (door of mailbox, toy refrigerator, get object)

The dog will open the door of a mailbox, refrigerator, etc. and will get an object such as a bag, small box, can, etc.

- The mailbox or refrigerator may be a toy version.
- A handle may be added to the door so that the dog has something to pull.

15. Play dead (faint, go-to-sleep)

In response to the handler's cue, the dog will fall to the floor and play dead.

- Other options are "He fainted!" "Good Night!" or "Bang bang!"

16. Scent articles (choose from 5)

The dog will find a scent article (with the handler's scent) and will return the article to the handler. This trick is basically the scent discrimination exercise in obedience.

- In a performance, the handler can say, "My dog (name) can read—go and find the dumbbell that says "4" on it."

17. Sit or down at a distance

From 15-ft. away, the dog will respond to a verbal cue or hand signal to sit or down.

In this trick, the handler will choose either a voice command or hand signal (not both) to cue the dog to sit or down (handler chooses sit or down).

18. Tissue out of box

The dog will take a tissue from a box and will bring it to the handler.

- The handler will tell the dog to get the tissue.

19. Toys

The dog will pick up a toy, take it to a toy box and will drop it in the box.

20. Weave poles (6 poles – no food or lures)

In the Intermediate version of this trick, handlers were permitted to use a food lure. In Advanced Trick Dog, the dog must go through 6 weave poles correctly with no lures.

21. Other: Handlers Choice

For the Advanced title, the handler may choose to do up to 2 Handler's Choice tricks. This is to accommodate handlers who have taught tricks not on this list. Tricks may not be repeated from one title to the next – if the trick has been done in Novice or Intermediate, it may not be repeated in the Advanced level.

22. Other: Handlers Choice

See #21.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL ADVANCED TRICKS

Ideas for Other Advanced Tricks

Any time handlers or instructors have creative ideas for their own tricks, they can contact AKC Trick Dog if there are questions regarding approval.

Ideas for other Handler's Choice tricks:

Basketball – drop ball into hoop

Bed—make your bed

Dance/moonwalk

Embarrassed (act embarrassed)

Hoop—jump through with streamers or cut paper. Solid paper = Performer.

Identify toy by name out of a group of 3 toys

Jump onto handler's back (handler crouches down)

Lassie pose- sit pretty plus add on bent paw on cue

Leg weave moving – handler walks while dog weaves between legs

Make your bed

Pay for it (dog goes and fetches money, brings to exchange for treat)

Pick pocket

(remove object from box = Intermediate. Here, the dog takes handkerchief out of handler's pocket as handler moves)

Pivot – dog places paws on disk and moves back legs in a circle

Pulls a bag with objects (harder than the Advanced trick because this adds some weight)

Remove handler's slipper, shoe

Retreat – crawl backwards (can also alternate "crawl" forward)

Retrieve flat item from a flat surface (e.g., credit card from floor)

Reverse circles around handler

Say your prayers

Shake (as in to shake off water, "shake your booty" or "show me Elvis")

Sing/talk

Sit pretty, add Lassie bent paw pose

Smile

Smooch – dog presses face on plexiglass to make a funny face (an advanced version of target touch)

Sneeze

Under handler (handler on hands and knees; dog goes under)

Walk on hind legs (paws may be on handler's arm)

PERFORMER LEVEL

Trick Descriptions

1. Buried under toys

Handler covers the dog with stuffed animals. Given a cue such as, "Where's Buddy?" the dog will lift its head out of the toys.

2. Carry stuffed animal on back

The dog will carry a stuffed animal that has been placed on its back for a distance of at least 15-ft.

3. Dig (pretends to dig)

Given a hand signal or verbal cue such as "dig" or "where is it?" the dog will pretend to dig.

4. Gets in suitcase and closes lid

Get in a box or container such as a suitcase is a Novice Trick. The key feature of this Performer trick is for the dog to close the lid after getting in.

5. Jump through tissue hoop

Jumping through a hoop is a Novice trick. This Performer trick requires the dog to jump through a low hoop that is covered with soft tissue (wrapping paper).

6. Jump up and down or wiggle with excitement

The trick begins with the dog having a neutral demeanor. Given a verbal cue such as, "He was so excited!" the dog wiggles or jumps up and down. The dog must respond to a verbal cue or hand signal; the handler should not be jumping up and down or squealing to get the dog excited.

7. In bed, turns so that belly is up

Get in your bed or crate is an Intermediate trick. In this Performer trick, the dog gets in the bed and responds to a verbal cue to "turn over." The dog remains on its back for at least 5- seconds.

8. Limping

The dog will pretend to limp at least 5-ft. when given a hand signal or verbal cue such as "limp" or "hurt foot."

9. Nod or shake head (yes/no)

The dog will either nod (head up and down) or shake his head from side to side, as if to indicate a yes or no response. A hand signal or verbal cue may be used.

10. Pulls (drags) bag of objects, etc.

This trick is similar to the Intermediate trick, pulls a toy on a string or rope. The difference is that this trick involves a bag that has some weight to it. The bag can contain the dog's toys, a small foam bed, supplies needed for a Performer routine, etc. The dog will pull or drag a bag at least 5 body lengths.

11. Runs circles around human or post

This trick contains elements of the Advanced level Circle-right, circle left and the Intermediate level Leg weaves. Given a verbal cue or hand signal, the dog will complete at least 3 circles around a human or post.

12. Sit pretty while holding something with paw/front leg wrapped around item

This is a two-part trick where the dog 1) is cued to sit pretty (dog sits up) and then, 2) is given something to hold by wrapping its paw or front leg around the object. The object can be a flag, toy baseball bat, etc. Verbal cues or hand signals may be used to prompt both the sit pretty and "hold it." The dog should hold the object at least 3-seconds.

13. Barrel

The dog will either 1) roll a barrel with 2 front paws or 2) will stand with all 4 paws on the barrel and will roll it at least 10-ft.

(In Advanced Trick Dog, the barrel trick requires the dog to roll the barrel 5-ft.)

14. Cart or baby stroller

The dog will push a cart (such as a toy grocery cart), toy baby stroller, or similar object with wheels for a distance of at least 5-ft.

15. Computer/phone

The equipment for the computer or phone can be a child's working computer, or a phone or keyboard that is not connected. This equipment can also be a prop designed by the handler (e.g., a large cardboard computer) When given a cue by the handler, the dog will use a paw to push the keys (at least 3 times) as though it is typing.

16. Paints

The dog will hold a marker or paint brush in its mouth and will make a mark on paper. The handler will cue the dog, "Paint."

17. Piano

The dog will push the keys on a toy piano at least 4 times to make a sound.

18. Rides in child's car, wagon or handler designed bus, etc.

The dog will sit in a car or another vehicle with wheels. The handler will push or pull the vehicle at least 10-ft.

19. School desk

Following the handler's cue such as "get in," or "time for school," the dog will get into the seat of a school desk. This may be a child's desk.

20. Skateboard

The dog will get on and ride a skateboard at least 5 body lengths.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL PERFORMER TRICKS

Additional Performer Tricks

At the Performer level, there will be many tricks that handlers can create that are specific to props they have created or repurposed from other items.

Examples:

- Answer questions - (Do you like __?) Dog “answers” by barking, wiggling, etc. If no (Do you like cats?), dog turns away or no response.
- Ball into small cone – deposit ball into cone with small opening
- Blowing bubbles (in a dish of water)
- Crawl under the length of a tunnel
- Cross paws, one then the other
- Figure 8 – dog does this without handler
- Head in the hole—start with a painting of a clown, etc. There is a hole in the painting where the face would be. Dog goes behind and puts his head in the hole.
- Heels backwards (beside handler)
- Ladder – dog walks down “railroad tracks” –bunk bed ladder made of wood. Dog’s feet are on side boards.
- Light- turn on light with toggle on wall
- Over and under handler – dog jumps over handler, runs/scoots under
- Phone – reliable alert to ringing phone, doorbell
- Phone – phone rings at distance, dog gets it and brings to handler
- Piggy bank. Plastic coins into piggy bank.
- Reads – dog reads signs with subtle cue from handler
- Retrieves ball from 10 ft., runs back and places in a cone
- Retrieves toy out of a clear container of water
- Reverses around handler 3 times
- Ring toss (put at least 3 rings on a stacking pole)
- Roll out mat (for yoga, etc.)
- Side pass (side steps) – dog moves laterally with handler- both move sideways.
- Sit pretty, cross paws (Sit pretty is Intermediate; add cross paws = Performer)
- Soccer – push ball into a goal
- Song- dog responds to one song over others (handler shows how dog comes to one preferred song then sits pretty)
- Spin through (dog starts in heel position right side, on cue moves in front of handler, spins counter clockwise 360 degrees, then backs thru handlers legs and moves back into right side heel position).
- Stranger Danger (this is a discrimination exercise—dog is cued by hand the

treat is in—offer treat, say, “This is from your friend, Mary.” Dog takes treat. Offer treat and say, “This is from a stranger.” Dog refuses treat.

- Touch the ___ (color blue, number, etc). This is another version of stranger danger. Dog touches the correct plate, photo, number on a card, yes/no on card, etc.
- Walk on handler’s feet (step on handler’s feet from behind and walk)
- “Where’s my dog?” Dog hears cue and come from behind handler to between handler’s legs
- Wipe feet on mat (modified “dig”)

Behavior Chains

Handlers may also combine tricks (behavior chains) to create 1 complex trick. For example, in the Advanced level, the dog can take a toy to a toy box and drop it in the box.

For Performer, with one cue from the handler such as “clean up,” the dog could go and get the toy, take it to the toy box, put the toy on the floor, open the lid of the box, put the toy in, and close the lid. This behavior chain would be done with only one cue from the handler and it would count as one trick.

Examples:

- Basketball: Catches ball, runs to basket, drops ball in basket
- Circles- running in at least 3 circles around handler backwards (in reverse)
- Pick pocket: Takes item from handler’s pocket, goes and drops into basket, box, or dog bed

Additional ideas for Performer tricks will be added to the list as time goes on, however, handlers and instructors should feel free to create and use their own tricks. If there are questions about whether a trick would be approved as a Performer trick, check with AKC at trickdog@akc.org

ELITE PERFORMER LEVEL

At the Elite Performer level, handlers will use the tricks previously learned to create a routine that would be suitable for an audience. However, since covid, until further notice, an audience is not required.

As a reminder, for Elite Performer,

- The dog/handler must perform 10 Tricks that include at least 5 tricks from Performer.
 - At least 5 tricks must have props.
 - No agility or obedience equipment may be used.
 - May include handler-designed props including jumps, etc.
 - No lures in Elite Performer.
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FOR TRICK DOG TITLE APPLICATIONS AND CHECKLISTS, SEE:

<https://www.akc.org/sports/trick-dog/resources/trick-dog-applications/>

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