

RALLY

Rally is a form of obedience but not as formal and has more different exercises to perform. You can talk to your dog and your dog does not have to be precisely at your side as in formal obedience. Some people call it "obedience light". In rally, you follow the signs set up in a course by the judge. There are different levels starting with Novice and ending in Master.

There are multiple organizations that have rally as a sport, the more common ones around our area are: AKC, ASCA, C-WAGS, and World Cynosport. While each of these organizations have slightly different rules and slightly different looking signs. The signs will look different but the action performed by the sign is exactly the same in all of them. So, it will not matter if the classes you take are using AKC, C-WAGS or ASCA signs, you can easily transfer what you and your dog have learned to compete in all of them. Because once you learn how to perform the sign, it will not matter what the sign looks like.

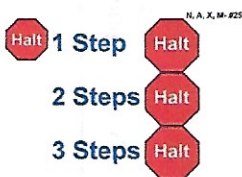
Why would you want to take lessons to do rally? That is a great question and the main reason is that you and your dog learn to work as a team. Your dog learns to take direction from you and you learn what your dog can and cannot do. This helps with building up that team spirit you will need if you want to do any other dog sport or just to have a great house pet. Also, if you have a dog that lacks confidence, is a bit fearful or stressed, rally seems to help them overcome those issues. It shows them that they can work with you and with each success you are giving lots of praise, because in rally you can actually give a lot of praise throughout the entire course. Another reason is that they are working close to you which helps them feel secure. The fact that they are on a leash gives them a connection to you.

They all start with Novice, where the exercises are less complicated and do not require as much skill. But as you move up, the signs require more from you and your dog. Like in Novice, there is a sign where you and the dog work together by you stopping and the dog just sits. You & the dog take 1 step-dog sits; you & the dog take 2 steps-dog sits; you & the dog take 3 steps-dog sits. It is actually just that simple. The signs will just look different but the action will be the same. See the signs below. All of Novice is done with the dog on a leash but the leash must not be tight.

As you get into the Advanced level the dog is off leash and must move with you and not wander off. The signs will require more independent work from the dog, like you leave them and move 2 or 3 steps then call them to you. But you are building up to this and do not have to go off leash until you are ready. There are ways to stay in Novice which are working on what is called an X Novice title in ASCA and going to Intermediate in AKC. Both of those are still on leash.

Doing rally with your dog will open up a lot of good things for both of you. It is easier to work as a team when you are working close together. It will build confidence. It will help you with whatever else you plan to do with your dog, whether it is a dog sport or just being a good house pet. It is fun to do rally because it makes your dog think and gives them something fun to do.

AKC sign



ASCA sign

