



Have you ever wanted to spend quality time with your Affenpinscher while at the same time enjoying the benefits of exercise? If yes, then agility may be for you.

Agility is a fast growing and exciting sport. Affenpinschers are so intelligent and full of energy, that agility allows them to use their “monkey” type talents in a challenging and fun arena.

One of the great things about this sport is that it does not require perfection to be successful. For example, there is not one single way to run a course or complete a series of obstacles. A dog and handler work together as a team to develop strategies on how to safely complete a specific course within a specified time.

Another advantage to this sport is it only requires some basic obedience commands. These commands include: sit, down, stay, and a solid response by the dog to “come” help to keep your Affen safe and from taking an incorrect obstacle.

Although one trademark of the Affenpinscher is stubbornness, I have found this to not be an issue in agility. Affens are a breed that are eager to learn and are willing to please. The key to any successful venture with this breed is “fun”. Training sessions must include food, toys, and/or any other positive motivators, a positive and enthusiastic attitude from the trainer, and short sessions of training.

These can be anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes per day at least 3 times per week. Overworking your Affen may cause them to become bored and to no longer see this as something fun to do. Voice tone and attitude is also very important when training. Using a loud/harsh voice can be discouraging. It is important to remember that each Affenpinscher is different. Different dogs learn and perform at different speeds. Always know your dog and what they are comfortable doing. One key to success with this breed is to always end your training sessions on a positive note and with the dog wanting to do more.



Another important tool to successfully training an Affen in agility is a good dog training school. An instructor with experience in training toy breeds will help tremendously. Don't be afraid to ask questions of a potential instructor or to observe a class. Remember the most important ingredients of agility are safety and fun!!!

If you are interested in competition, you will find many challenging organizations that offer several titling events. Affenpinschers can not only compete in AKC agility trials, they can also compete in NADAC (North American Dog Agility Council), USDAA (United States Dog Agility Association), and UKC events. Affens gain titles depending on which organization is sponsoring the trial. For example, AKC provides titles for Standard course classes, and Jumpers with Weaves classes (just jumps and weave poles). NADAC provides titles for Standard course classes, Jumpers classes (jumps and tunnels only), and Gamblers classes (which are a games class that incorporates distance work). USDAA offers even more titles and contains more of the games classes.

While agility can be fun and exciting, a handler must also consider the possibility of injury. The risk is always there, but it is low. It is important to remember to know where your Affenpinscher is mentally and physically at all times when training or competing. A handler must also always be there to help and encourage their Affen to perform an obstacle both correctly and safely. With these things in mind, one will find a both enjoyable and rewarding activity to share with our mustached little devils.