



Episode 19: There's so much to train!

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

training, agility, dog, overwhelmed, episode, information, foundation, mistakes, training session, podcast, excellence, feeling, handling, experts, talked, grand experiment, community, learning, small, skills

This is the agility challenge with Daisy peel. You're listening to Episode 19. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host, Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started. This is the podcast for you. You can have the best training and the best skills and the best dog and access to the best trainers, coaches and instructors in the world. But if you don't have your mental game under control, you'll never be able to successfully use all those skills you have to the best of your abilities. Now let's dive in to today's episode. In today's episode, I'm going to tackle a common challenge that many of us myself included face at one time or another. And that is feeling overwhelmed by the sheer amount of training that we feel like we have to do, and the overwhelming amount of information that we have to draw from to do it. But before we dive in, I want you to take a deep breath. And remind yourself that you're not alone. We've all been there at some point. Like I said, I have to feeling that creeping sense of panic when it comes to all of the things that we feel like we have to train before we're ready. And it doesn't matter what we're readying for, we just get overwhelmed. That can happen whether you're getting ready for the novice ring, or ready for your first national championship, or ready for tryouts or ready for a big international event. We get that feeling that there's so much to train, there's no time to train it, we can't train anything until we're armed with information. And then often we train nothing at all, or nothing that really helps us make progress. So I want to start by



addressing the elephant in the room, which is the overwhelming amount of training to be done. Now there is a lot of training that we probably should be doing with our dogs. And sometimes it feels like it's a lot more training than it used to be especially like me, you've been in the sport for a long time. And it's easy to get caught up in the idea that you have to master everything at once. But you didn't master walking all at once you didn't master writing all at once. You didn't master driving a car all at once. And you're not going to master dog training or agility all at once. Even the best agility handlers started with the basics. So you have to remember that, even though once you're out on course, there's a timer and it is kind of a race, your dog training is a journey. And have you ever heard that phrase? How do you eat an elephant? I mean, nobody should be eating elephant, obviously. But the point is, How do you tackle any big huge project? The answer is one small bite at a time. So in this episode, I'm going to give you five tips that will help you prioritize what to train, and also kind of help you move back from the edge of that cliff. That is analysis paralysis, and just do it. So if you're a Star Wars fan, you'll appreciate it. When I say Yoda said it when he said there's no try, there's only do and then of course, Nike capitalized on this idea. When they put just do it on everything Nike from shoes to shirts. So when I thought of that, I thought you know, I'm going to do a little bit of digging and see what the origins of that famous marketing slogan are. Just do it. And so I learned all about the origins of that famous marketing campaign. It's pretty interesting. Look it up if you're interested. But what I thought was really interesting was that there was a quote from the marketer, Dan Whedon, who came up with that slogan, and he said, also, excellence is not a formula. Excellence is the grand experiment. It ain't mathematics, it's jazz. And I think that's really important for us to remember because jazz can be kind of messy. And mathematics can be pretty precise. And I think a lot of the times we get caught up in Oh, I can't even start until I can do steps one through 150. exactly perfect and exactly in order. But really, sometimes you just have to roll up your sleeves and be prepared to get dirty and to make some mistakes. And to come inside for some training sessions where you think, oh my gosh, that was a humongous mess. I



don't even know what happened there. But that's how experimentation is. So think of excellence as a grand experiment. You're going to make some messes. You're going to completely mess something hangs up, you're going to completely do things wrong. But at the end of it, you have to just do it, you can't spend all of your time thinking and planning. Without the do there is nothing. So anyway, here are my tips for you when you're feeling overwhelmed and short on time. And I do have to say that, as with some of my other podcast episodes, this particular episode was spurred on by an agility challenge member who reached out and said that she felt pretty overwhelmed with her young dog. And that can be especially true with young dogs, because you really do feel like oh my gosh, there's just, there's just so much to train, I don't even know where to start. So, if you're, if you're a listener, and you have something you'd like me to address in the podcast, please don't hesitate to reach out, leave a comment at the bottom of any episode page, or reach out, you can email me at Daisy at Daisy peel.com. You can go to podcast at Gmail dot the agility challenge.com. And there's a button there where you can leave a voicemail. Because I really do listen to what you guys are interested in, and fold it into ideas for podcast episodes. So anyways, here are my tips. Tip number one is my most important tip, and that is foundation. First, you have to focus on foundation training. Building a strong foundation is the key to success in dog agility. I mean, it's the key to success in a lot of things. By honing your dog's understanding of fundamental skills, you're going to set you and your dog up for future success. So take a step back, take a deep breath, and dedicate the time that you do have to those foundation exercises that are going to benefit you and your dog the most. foundation skills always underpin fancier or sexier skills. So when in doubt, work on foundation, foundation skills almost always get forgotten, they almost always need revisiting. And they almost always have the most ripple out effects on the rest of your training. It's like when you throw a rock in a pond, and it makes ripples. foundation skills are like a boulder, when you throw that big boulder into the pond, you're going to get the most ripples, they're going to travel the farthest. And they're going to affect more of your other training than some of the



fancier stuff. When I first started agility a long time ago, I was also eager to jump right into the fancy stuff, the sexy stuff, the advanced stuff. But over the years, I've realized that advanced training and advanced handling is really just a more and more precise application of the fundamentals. And it's my ability to prioritize and keep coming back to Foundation training that always makes the biggest difference. It's not always glamorous. But those hours that I spend on building a solid foundation, I know it's going to pay off in the long run. And honestly, once you realize that it is pretty enjoyable. And it might not be glamorous, but you you know, it's like you have a big secret that other people don't have because you enjoy all of that foundation training that other people are willing to skip over. So aim for foundation, get it super sharp, and then start moving up the chain when it comes to more complicated training endeavors or the fancy stuff. And remember, advanced handling and training really is just more and more precise application of the fundamentals.

08:31

So now for Tip two, I want to talk about and I've talked about this before, the overwhelming amount of information that you might have available to you online, or maybe you've got a stack of training journals sitting on your desk. But nowadays, with countless training videos, training articles, training forums at our fingertips, it's pretty easy to get lost in a sea of knowledge. But here's the thing. And you may already know this, but I'm here to remind you, not all information is created equal. And not all of it is relevant to your current training or handling needs. So tip number two is for you to be selective with your learning. Take a step back and evaluate what areas you need to focus on the most. Is it your contacts? Is it your weave poles? Is it your handling techniques? Maybe it's your flat work with your dog? Is it your dog's jumping, maybe it's your start lines, maybe it's your footwork, maybe you don't even need your dog for some of the most important learning that you need to do. Once you've identified your training priorities, seek out resources and experts that specialize in those areas. And I can't stress



enough looking for experts. Like I said, not all information is created equal. And there are people who might have a lot of knowledge who really aren't experts possessing knowledge and possessing expertise can be two very different things. So make sure that you're looking for We're experts. If you're part of an online program, like my agility challenge, search for content in the content library that will support what you're looking for. Or if you know you're somebody who can spend a lot of time searching and not settling on a topic, ask, ask me, ask your instructor, ask your mentor acts, ask the curator of the online content in the program that you're a part of. Sometimes just doing what you're told can be really productive. It can help you use your time training instead of searching. So if you're a chronic information, gather, chances are good, you're also probably avoiding doing the real work of training, making mistakes messing up, but also, of course, making progress. So like Dan wieder said in that, quote, excellence is a grand experiment, and you have to be willing to experiment. And that means also making mistakes and starting over again. By narrowing your focus, you'll save time and energy, and you'll be more likely to find the information that truly benefits you and then do the important thing, which is just do it. Go out and train your dog take action, take action that you can evaluate, and learn from and then base future training sessions off of. If you're spending countless hours watching agility videos online, trying to absorb everything at once, it's just going to open you up to feeling more overwhelmed and confused. Once you start prioritizing your learning and looking for guidance from trusted sources who are experts, that's when you'll start seeing real progress. So remember, quality Trump's quantity when it comes to online agility education for especially pick one small thing and get going on it. Don't worry about doing everything right, or doing it all right now. All right. So now that I've talked about the importance of foundation training and selective learning, I want to dive into some strategies to help you stay grounded and not get overwhelmed along your dog agility, training and handling journey. So tip number three, is to break down your training into manageable steps. So this is where we're going to talk about how to eat an elephant. Instead of looking at the big picture and feeling overwhelmed. Once



you've determined what your big picture is, break your training goals into smaller, achievable tasks, you also are going to have to make sure that you celebrate each milestone along the way no matter how small. So if you're working on some really miniscule training, topic or training detail, you have to take time to celebrate it even if it's just my dog held to start lines during a practice session. And yesterday, she only held one, you have to remember every step forward is progress and steps can be small. I really like to talk all the time about purposeful practice. In fact, it was the topic of my last podcast episode, Episode 18, where I talked all about the sweet spot for purposeful practice and how it can be and probably should be at least a little uncomfortable, at least for you the human part of the equation. So it's better to pick one small thing to work on that thing you've been avoiding that thing you already know you need to work on, you already probably have all the information you need to train that thing, you've just been putting it off, maybe because you aren't sure what to do when things go wrong. Dog Training is not going to be smooth sailing, it's not going to be a linear process. So you're going to break it down, lean into the things you're avoiding. Stop gathering information, like a squirrel gathering nuts for winter, and take action, and then celebrate the small successes. Tip number four is that I want you to focus on the present moment when you are involved in a training session. When you step onto the training field or into your training space, you've got to let go of any worries or doubts. You've got to be fully present with your dog fully present in the moment. And really focus on that amazing call and response nature that you can experience in a training session. And by that I mean the interaction between you and your dog, you do a thing and they do a thing. And then you evaluate your next step and do a thing and then they do a thing. So it's very much like a tennis game. It's just back and forth and back and forth. It doesn't matter so much if your dog's right every time. It doesn't matter so much if you response to a mistake is right every time. It doesn't matter if you don't click your clicker the right moment, every time. You do want to strive for excellence with all of that, of course, and you want to be open to the moment and learn from those mistakes. You're going to make them you're going to make



mistakes, there is no doubt about that. And when those mistakes happen, you're going to want to focus intently on them without getting overly emotional about it and without judging yourself or you know being too hard on yourself. But you are going to want to look at those mistakes in an analytical way. Try and figure out how to change your behavior so that you can get your dog to change its behavior. And then continue onward with that grand experiment that is your training. Finally, surround yourself with a supportive community. Connect with like minded people who understand your journey, and can offer guidance and encouragement, whether it's through local training groups or online forums or going to agility shows or run throughs or classes. Having a support system is going to keep you motivated and grounded agility at the end of the day, it is a sport. And it is something we do with our dogs. But it's also something we do with other people. So don't diminish the need for as a human being social interaction with other human beings. Of course, you have to be careful that you're not supporting one another's tendencies toward inaction, or not gathering like that squirrel scurrying around collecting food for winter. You want to encourage those in your community to take risks, to get okay getting dirty with experimentation and failure, and learning and the imperfections of the process. And you want those in your community to encourage you to do the same. If your community has a growth mindset, and learning and failing, and the idea that anybody can get better through effort and purposeful practice, then you're going to benefit from that. But if your community has more of a fixed mindset, then you're going to want to be careful with that, because it's just so easy to adopt the mindset and habits of those around us. And if that mindset and those habits aren't productive for your training, you're going to really need to evaluate whether your support system is really a support system, or maybe just a group of friends that you might really like them, you might love them, but you don't want to mimic them all that much. I want to remind you once more, like I did at the top of this episode, that feeling overwhelmed is natural. But with the right mindset and the right strategies in place, you can overcome that feeling of being overwhelmed and continue moving toward excellence by engaging in purposeful practice



experimentation, making some messes, making some mistakes, and really, it does come back to just do it. You have to get out there and just do it take action, you might not have all the information you need at that moment. And other information may come along and contradict the information you do have. And that's okay too. There have been things that I've trained my dogs over the years to do that got changed during their careers because things change new of a new information became available, new handling challenges started popping up on courses. You know, our dogs can often changed more readily than we can for sure we tend to hold on to things just for the sake of holding on to them sometimes. So it's okay to change. It's okay to make mistakes. It's okay to be messy. It's okay to just like totally fall on your face. What I want you to take away from today's episode is to remember to focus on foundation training. Be selective with your learning, break down your goals. Stay present in the moment, and lean on your support system. And that's it for this episode. I want to thank you guys for joining me today. Remember, you have the power to calm your mind. Take it one step at a time.

18:20

And you can really achieve more than you thought was possible with your dog. So until next time, just do it. Get out there take action. Stay positive, meaning solution oriented and embrace the agility challenge. If you enjoyed today's podcast and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things we talked about today. Head to the webpage for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 19. And scroll to the bottom you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. Now I'm a pretty tech savvy person. But even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 19. subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the



episode and let me know your thoughts about what I talked about today. What do you think about it? What did you think about the five tips that I shared? What did you think about the idea of breaking things down into small pieces? Maybe what did you think about the Nike slogan of just do it? Did you go out onto the internet and look up the history of that like I did. I'd love to hear from you and maybe discuss your thoughts on a future episode.