



INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS DURING COVID-19 DISRUPTION

(Issue 10, 1 September 2021)

Below is the latest information about Club arrangements during the ongoing COVID-19 disruption. Read it to stay informed and keep an eye on our Facebook page for further updates. Remember, you can access the Facebook page from our website and do not need to be a registered user to see our latest posts. You can also link directly at <https://www.facebook.com/ACTCompaniondogclub/>.

Are any classes still being held at the Club?

No. All training classes across all disciplines have been suspended during the current lockdown (in place until midnight 17 September at this stage). This affects all classes in Behaviour Training, Agility, Dances with Dogs/Trick Dog, Flyball, Obedience Trialling and Rally.

Dogs-As-Therapy activities are also suspended.

Can I come to the grounds to informally train or exercise my dog during the lockdown?

No. There is no access to the Club grounds due to the ACT Government's directions for people to stay-at-home, remain within their regions (eg, Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong) and to minimise travel wherever possible to protect the community. Under current restrictions community sport and organised sporting activities and shared community sports facilities remain closed and training is not permitted. The Club's Committee continues to monitor the ACT Government's public health directions and to assess the risk to its members and the broader community as restrictions ease.

Is the Club Office open?

No. The Club is not regarded as an essential business under the current restrictions. Email is being monitored remotely and urgent correspondence is being addressed.

When will classes resume?

This will depend on when the lockdown is lifted and what restrictions remain in place when this occurs. Such restrictions may apply to sporting and community clubs specifically or, more generally, to limits on social gatherings in the community. The Club intends to resume its training activities when the ACT Government's public health directions permit. However, this may need to be on a limited basis as some of the Club's instructors (and other members) live in New South Wales and may be subject to different public health directions than local ACT residents.

At this stage we are looking at the following possibilities (subject to instructor resources):

- Behaviour Training – extending Term 3 classes into the ACT school holiday period for Foundation and Consolidation levels
- Obedience Trialling and Rally – suspending classes until Term 4 (commencing 6 October) due to the cancellation of forthcoming trials
- Flyball – extending Term 3 classes into the ACT school holiday period
- DWD/Trick Dog – extending Term 3 classes into the ACT school holiday period (subject to cross-border restrictions and the availability of the Queanbeyan Showgrounds venue)
- Agility – resuming Session 4 classes and transitioning into Session 5 (commencing 4 October)

For the time being, assume you will return to the same class you were in when lockdown occurred. We will post updates when the future becomes clearer.

Are the Club's dog sport trials and related events scheduled for September going ahead?

The following decisions have been taken regarding the following events:

- Double Obedience Trial – 4 September – Cancelled
- Tracking Trial – 5 September – Cancelled
- Agility Ribbon Trial – 14 September – On hold
- Trick Dog Test – 19 September – Cancelled
- Scent Workshop – 25 September – On hold

Refunds will be provided to participants for those events that have been cancelled.

Will Term 4 Behaviour Training bookings still open in early September?

No. Bookings for new members are currently closed due to the current lockdown. A decision on opening bookings for new members will be made when the future of the current lockdown and any subsequent restrictions become clearer. An announcement will be made on Facebook and on the Club's website at that time.

I am struggling with my dog's behaviour and need help!

We have put together a list of resources that you might find useful – whether you are having issues or simply want to learn more about dog behaviour and training to strengthen your bond with your dog:

- For puppy owners (and everyone interested in dog body language and teaching basic manners): invest in a copy of Steve Mann's *Easy Peasy Puppy Squeezy* (2019) – available in print, as an e-book and as an audio book from various sources (just Google the title for purchase options)
- For older dogs, see Steve Mann's *Easy Peasy Doggy Squeezy* (2020) – available in print, as an e-book and as an audio book from various sources (just Google the title for purchase options)
- For socialisation ideas in the age of COVID-19: see <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/decoding-your-pet/202004/puppy-or-rescue-dog-socialization-during-covid-19>
- For owners of adolescent dogs (6 months +): see <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/puppies/adolescent-dogs-6-facts-to-know/>
- For tips on teaching your dog to walk nicely on lead: see pages 19-22 of the Club's *Good Companion* magazine at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_november_2018_term_4_.pdf

- For training videos on coping with puppy behaviour, teaching basic manners, learning tricks, handling and grooming and much more dip into the 'KikoPup' Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/kikopup/videos>
- For ideas on physical and mental enrichment for your dog: invest in a copy of Allie Bender and Emily Strong's *Canine Enrichment for the Real World: Making It a Part of Your Dog's Daily Life* (2019) and Christina Sondermann's *Brain Teasers For Dogs* (2019) – both available in print and as e-books (just Google the titles for purchase options)
- For the latest information about dog cognition, dog emotions and how they influence behaviour: see Professor Paul McGreevy and Dr. Melissa Starling's *Making Dogs Happy: How To Be Your Dog's Best Friend* (2018). This is an Australian publication and should be readily available from your favourite bookshop or library. It is also available as an e-book (just Google the titles for purchase options)

We also have lots of useful training advice in back issues of our Club magazine which are available online at <https://actcdc.org.au/the-good-companion/> . Some examples include:

- The 7 habits of highly effective dog owners: see page 21 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_june_2019_term_2_lowres1.pdf
- Interpreting dog play: see page 31 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/tgc_julysept_2016.pdf
- Teaching your dog to settle: see page 23 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_november_2018_term_4.pdf
- How to train polite greetings at home (for dogs): see page 23 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/tgc_nov_2016.pdf
- Learning to greet dogs properly (for people): see page 13 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_july_2017_term_2_lowres3651.pdf
- Playing with your dog: see page 27 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_july_2017_term_2_lowres3651.pdf and page 27 at https://actcdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/final_tgc_sept_2020_term_3_lowres.pdf.

And don't forget the Training Tips articles on our website at <https://actcdc.org.au/training-tips/>:

- Exercise and the young dog by Dr Sandra Hassett
- Together apart – Raising two puppies at once by Jess McNamara-Rice
- Ignoring other dogs – It's the polite thing to do by Juliet Ward
- But he does it perfectly at home – Helping your dog to be practically perfect everywhere by Anne Robertson

Two excellent encyclopaedic online reference sources are the *Whole Dog Journal* at <https://www.whole-dog-journal.com/> and Karen Pryor's Clicker Training at <https://www.clickertraining.com/library?source=kpctnavbar> . You'll find lots of sound advice on both these sites. Use the search engines on both sites to find articles about topics you are interested in.

And for those of you who are at the more advanced levels of your training and would like to dabble in some online courses or webinars, look at the offerings of the Fenzi Dog Sports Academy (<https://www.fenzidogsportsacademy.com/>) and the Karen Pryor Clicker Training YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/markkpct/videos>) – where you can watch (and learn from) training videos featuring alpacas, donkeys, goats, giraffes and dogs!

And there are some good programs to binge watch online as well:

- ABC TV's program 'Making dogs happy' at www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4532828.htm (part 1) and www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4537241.htm (part 2)
- BBC's program 'The wonderful world of puppies' – search online for episodes
- Channel 4's program 'Dogs: Their secret lives' presented by Dr Mark Evans – search online for episodes

The Club's guiding ethos is to 'do no harm'. This means that we do not recommend any training approaches or training tools that involve the use of fear, pain, intimidation, physical force or compulsion. All of the reference materials that we recommend advocate humane science-based approaches to raising and training dogs using rewards-based force-free methods.

Will the Club's Committee and Sub-Committees continue to meet during the current interruption to the Club's activities?

Yes. The Club's Main Committee meets on the last Tuesday of each month and business will need to be conducted to keep the Club running during the current disruption to activities. We will use video-conferencing facilities if we cannot meet face-to-face as well as using email to maintain regular communication. The Club's Sub-Committees (Behaviour Training, Agility, Obedience Trialling & Rally, Dances with Dogs & Tricks, and Tracking) are also continuing to manage their activities via meetings, emails, Facebook and other channels.

The Club's Annual General Meeting was scheduled for Monday 23 August. Did it go ahead?

Yes. The Club's Constitution required the Annual General Meeting to be conducted by the end of August. The AGM was held online via video-conferencing software. An announcement has been posted on Facebook about the outcome of the Annual General Meeting and the website has been updated to reflect decisions taken at the meeting.

How can I keep up-to-date with any changes to all these arrangements?

Please keep an eye on our public Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ACTCompanionDogClub/>) and on the Club's website (<https://www.actcdc.org.au/>) for further updates including any changes to the above arrangements.

If you have any urgent queries, please email the Club Office on contact@actcdc.org.au and we will do our best to respond.

We look forward to seeing you and your dogs back at the Club when circumstances allow.

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding.

On behalf of the Main Committee and Sub-Committees of the
ACT Companion Dog Club