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Cavaletti Instructions & DIY Guide

Cavaletti is a great exercise to add to your pet's fitness routine, but what is it?

Simply put, cavaletti is low-set poles. By encouraging your pet to slowly walk over each pole* you are working their hip flexors, which will help maintain/improve their stride length. Cavaletti is also a great way to develop their hindend awareness and timing.

*Your pet should slowly walk, not jump, over each pole. This will be especially hard for pets who have participated in agility.

Don't have cavaletti poles or cones? No problem.

A Few Cavaletti Guidelines:

- 1) HEIGHT:** The poles can be set at varying heights from or directly on the floor but should never be any higher than your pet's hock (see photo on next page). Doing so often causes compensation elsewhere, like the back, which can lead to chronic/acute pain and/or injury.

If this is a new exercise for your pet, begin with the poles on the ground.

- 2) DISTANCE APART:** Begin by spacing each pole approximately one and a half body apart. Adjust as needed after observing if your pet can fully extend through each limb as they walk over every pole.

Pet 2 feet long = Poles 3 feet apart

- 3) # OF POLES:** This might be limited by the number of poles and/or books you have around your home. If possible, set up 4-6 poles, but you can do this with as little as one pole, making sure to have your pet approach the pole and then continue walking after stepping over it in a straight line.





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You'll Need:

- Broom, Mop, Swiffer, and/or Any Other Rod To Act As A Pole (Nothing Toxic To Your Pet!)
- At Least 4 Heavy Books For Each Pole
- Carpet, Yoga Mat, or Other Non-Skid Surface
- You pet's favorite treats or kibble prepared into pea-sized pieces



1.) Go to a carpeted room or lay down a yoga mat or other non-skid surface and set up poles and books as pictured.

2.) With a close, baited fist, lure your pet over the poles, holding your first at their nose height (long, level spine and neck from the base of the tail to the tip of the nose). Tell them your conditioned reinforcer ("Good") and give them a treat after each or every few poles.



3.) Return back and forth for a total of 10-20 poles. Repeat for 2-3 sets, making sure to watch for fatigue, and asking your pet to hold a stand (four feet on floor).

Troubleshooting:

Your pet's nails or feet are hitting the poles: The poles may be placed too high or your pet might be (getting) fatigued.

The poles are getting knocked over: The poles are definitely too high and/or your pet is fatigued.

Your pet is refusing: Your pet is fatigued. Take a slight break before continuing. If refusal continues, end your training session.

Intensity Level Options:

Increase — Place the poles over an unstable surface like pillows, cushions, or wobble boards. This will combine balance and proprioception as well as hip flexion.

Decrease — Lower the poles or reduce the number of reps and/or sets.

Share a photo or video of your pet using your DIY Cavaletti on <https://www.facebook.com/feetandpaws>