

Billie is the sole reason I began doing dog agility, that I can say for certain. I was at a dog show one day when we discovered the fast-paced sport, and she took me and told me all about it, explaining how there was a place for me as a junior handler and convincing my parents that it would be a good idea to enroll me with my dog. Since I was so excited about it, I started out in puppy class and everything sky-rocketed from there. Now, I've been a member of Jumping Chollas Agility Club (JCAC) for about three years. My dog and I have been competing for a while now, at fun runs and trials from a variety of different clubs. We've been through a lot, and have conquered many different issues along the way. For instance, about a few months after we started competing, we ran into an issue very much opposite of the problems many handlers have with their dogs. Mine *would not move*. She was probably the *slowest* dog at all the shows, since she flat-out refused to move at any faster pace than a sluggish walk. No one could figure out why, and it quickly became an aggravating experience to go through each run. It's a miracle I even got her to finish the courses. However, Billie continued to encourage me not to give up on her, and we tried to figure out what might be causing the problem. But even when I was ready to quit, she pulled me back and convinced me that there was a fixable reason behind it. Eventually, we started bringing her to a canine chiropractor and I learned the best ways to excite her before a run. Gradually she became more hyper and happier when running a course. Happier with agility in general; it seems now that she actually enjoys it, like she should. Nowadays, she almost always has a fast, mostly-clean run. I'm proud to say that I no longer have daunting issues I hardly think can ever be fixed; just the little ones I know can be dealt with. We had refusal problems with every single contact - in turn -, but luckily she's gotten over that. Because of agility, my dog's attitude has definitely improved. What was once a lazy, lethargic pup who didn't really get too excited over anything but walks is now a happy, hyper, fun-loving dog who's improving and getting faster every day. Because she gets more exercise now, her health has also improved; she's much more active, which is always a good thing in any dog. Also, it's nice because my whole family gets involved in the sport. My father does a lot of work building courses in trials and lessons, my mother runs booths, and I volunteer when I can to leash-run and help in the fund raisers. I love doing agility because it creates a special bond between my dog and I that not many people can have with their pet. It brings us very close and I'm proud of everything she's accomplished with me. I wouldn't trade her or this sport for the world.