

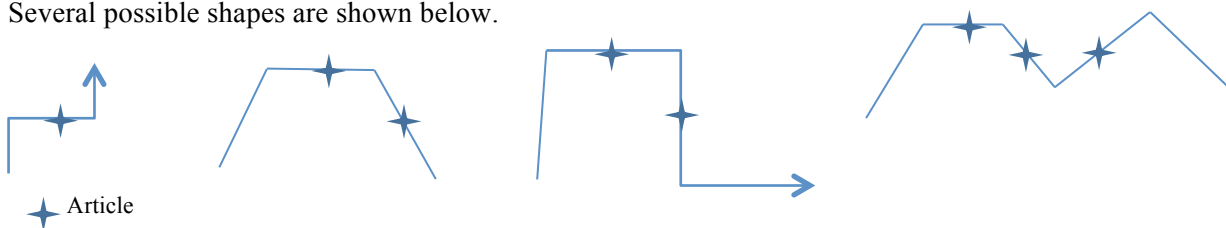
## *If Someone Asks You to Flag Them a Track..*

### **DON'T PANIC**

There are a few simple steps:

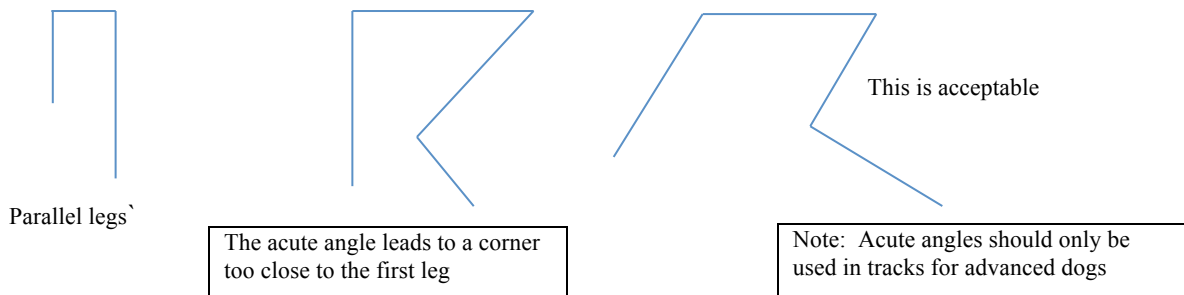
1. Carry a small notebook and pen. You should also know how many steps you take to walk 100 metres. Most women take between 130 and 150 steps (depending on height and fitness), men take fewer. Use the measured track on Trainor Rd to find out.
2. Ask what kind of track is wanted and draw a rough diagram showing rough shape, approximate leg length, corners and articles. A practice track should be no longer than 400m. Leg length of approx. 80 m is plenty. Remember that you may need to be flexible – 50 m is fine if not parallel to a previous leg.

Several possible shapes are shown below.

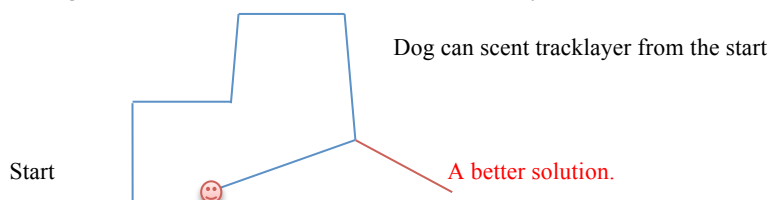


**Note:** these tracks can be reversed.

3. Parallel legs or a leg and a corner (see diagrams below) should not be too close together. In trials, the minimum distance between parallel legs is 100 metres. In training, slightly less is acceptable.



4. The finish should not be close to the start (think about why !). In trials, a good rule of thumb is 400 metres to separate start and finish, especially if the tracklayer is to stay in the hide. Again, in training, less is acceptable but the dog should not be able to scent the tracklayer from the start.



5. **At the start:** Look for a fairly clear area for your start – nothing that the dog is likely to get tangled in.

Take a few moments to find a reasonably clear corridor with a marker that is 100 metres or more away. The marker, which might be a leaning pine, a gum tree with a weird shape, a grass-tree, a zamia, is what you need to walk towards to keep more or less a straight line.

Make a note of the time you start.

Put in the start flag and drop an article beside it.



6. Walk along the first leg, towards the marker, *counting your steps*, until you are close to the number you worked out previously.

Put a flag every 30 – 60 steps depending on the terrain.

If you deviate from the track (for example, to skirt a thick bush or a big log) flag your path, keeping the flags close together then go back to walking towards your marker.

7. **At a corner.** When you are close to the number of steps you need for the first leg, start looking for a corridor at right angles to your path. You may find one before you get to the number of steps you planned or you may need to go a bit further.

When you find a suitable corridor, put in two corner flags and flag the next leg.

8. **Articles:** An article can be placed on any leg. In a trial, it cannot not be less than 30 metres from a corner. In training, it can be closer but should not be less than 20 metres.

Put in either two article flags or a different flag (different coloured tape) to indicate the article, then drop it on the ground close to the flag.

The article should not be hidden nor should it be above ground ( for example, on a stump or hanging on a bush).

9. **At the end:** Look for a suitable “hide” such as a tree, low bush, log ....

If you are going to stay in the hide, make sure you are actually hidden from the handler. This includes making sure the handler can’t see any flags you might have left over from the track.

If you are going to follow up, put in the three flags that indicate the end, leave an article and the treat and walk out.

#### **Notes:**

1. It is a good idea to put in a flag near the road and close to your start so that when you come to work the track you can easily find the start.

2. This flag is often called a “walk-in” flag but don’t fall into the trap of thinking that the line from the walk-in flag to the start flag gives the direction of the track. It doesn’t – its function is purely to enable you to find the start flag. (This applies to trials as well)

3. If you are to go back into the hide and it is not easily visible from the road, put in some “walk-in” flags as you come out. Remove these as you go back in.

4. **To work out a right angle:** Stand facing the way you have been going, with your arms at your side. Raise your arm(s) sideways. Your arm is now pointing at right angles to the leg you were flagging. If the new direction is not quite a right angle, *obtuse turns* are quite OK. Use an acute turn (turning past the right angle) only for advanced dogs who may ask for them.

5. Don’t make the track too long – 400 metres maximum with turns and articles will keep both dog and handler interested and working hard. Long straight legs are boring for both dog and handler (especially dog).

6. Use various terrains. Short grass, low scrub, pigface, sand tracks, limestone road can all be used to add variety and interest in training.

As it says on the cover of *The Hitch-hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, DON’T PANIC.