



CIRCUS SKILLS LEVELS



HELLO!

We're super excited that you're completing your circus skills levels with us. We have so many different challenges for you and we can't wait to see you showing off your skills!

This guide will tell you everything you need to know from what tricks to train to how to submit your videos for assessment.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I

Levels

2

Environments

3

Criteria

4

Visual vs Verbal Cues

5

Submission videos

6

Juggler

10

Acrobat

14

Lion Tamer

16

Training Tips





Levels

There are three core levels

Juggler

Acrobat

Lion Tamer

Each of these levels can be completed using

verbal cues

or

visual cues

These levels can then be completed in different environments

at home

outside low distraction

outside medium distraction

outside high distraction

How to complete your levels

To gain a certificate for each level you must complete **10 tricks** from the list provided and submit these for assessment.

You can complete each level in each environment and with each cue type, so that's up to eight certificates you can get for each level.

For example you could complete **juggler** with **visual cues** in a **low distraction** environment, and then **juggler** with **verbal cues** at home. Mix and match to create your own fun!



Environments

At Home

This can be anywhere in your house as long as your dog is on non slip flooring (you can place mats down to work on if necessary) or use your garden.

Outside LD (low distraction)

A quiet outdoor location. Think quiet park or empty field with no distractions close by. Must be away from home, so not your garden.

Outside MD (medium distraction)

A more distracting outdoor location (woodland or a beach perhaps). Or your distractions could be people and dogs at a distance.

Outside HD (high distraction)

This is expert level. Your high distraction environment should be either a built environment with plenty of foot traffic (high street, shopping center) or a park/woodland with plenty of people and/or dogs.

For the MD and HD environments, your dog needs to be aware of the distractions around them but still able to perform the skills.



Criteria

Cues

The handler must give **one** cue either **verbal** or **visual** per skill.

The cue must be given **once** with no additional verbal or visual prompts.

You can use any verbal or visual cue for each trick as long as your dog understands what you are asking.

Response

The dog must perform the behaviour within **two seconds** of the handler giving the cue.

Rewards

For all levels, rewards must be in a pocket or treat pouch. You must not hold rewards in your hands. Once the dog has completed the behaviour you should mark (with a verbal marker or clicker) and **then** reach into your pocket/pouch to get a reward.

Duration

Unless otherwise stated, all stationary positions must be held for two seconds.

Starting Position

Unless otherwise stated, dogs can begin the trick from any position. You may use a separate cue to get the dog into a starting position if necessary.

Visual vs Verbal cues

Visual Cues

This is when the handler uses a visual signal to ask the dog to perform a behaviour. Usually a hand signal or gesture.

If you choose to submit videos using visual cues you must only use the visual cue and must not give any verbal cues or prompts.

Verbal Cues

This is when the handler uses a verbal signal to ask the dog to perform a behaviour. Usually a word or a noise. For some behaviours your cue may be two words however, this must sound like one cue. For example “**sit** (pause) **stay**” would count as two cues and would not be allowed, whereas “**sitstay**” said as one word would count as one cue.

If you choose to submit videos using verbal cues you must have your hands by your side or behind your back and may not gesture with your body in any way.

Some tricks can only be performed with verbal cues (selecting named objects) or are not possible to cue without a visual cue (paw). Look for the colour coded paw prints which symbolise which cues can be used for each trick.



Submission of videos



Filming criteria

Both the handler and the dog must be fully visible in the video.

Verbal cues must be audible and visual cues must be clearly shown on the camera.

Tricks must be performed on a non-slip surface.

Each trick must be shown in a separate video.

Videos must be no longer than 30 seconds. There may be exceptions to this with advanced skills where they may take more than 30 seconds to complete. These skills will be marked with (*).

Submission criteria

Submissions for each certificate must be submitted together at the same time.

Videos must be submitted using we-transfer to **focusdogtrainingleeds@gmail.com**

<https://wetransfer.com/explore/file-sharing>

When submitting your videos please include the following information in the message box;

Dogs Name: *Fido*

Handlers Name: *Jo*

Level: *Juggler*

Environment: *Home*

Cue type: *Verbal*

Contact Number: *07123 123123*

You will receive your feedback pass/fail and virtual certificate within seven working days.

Payment

Circus skills levels are included in our training membership.

If you are not a training member please pay £15 upon submission of your videad using the following link https://monzo.com/pay/r/focus-dog-training_gAlIKWbY7fW04i

If videos do not meet criteria to pass they can be re-submitted twice free of charge.

focusdogtrainingleeds@gmail.com

jo.blogs@gmail.com

Title
Circus Skills Levels

Message
Fido
Jo
Juggler
Home
Verbal

Transfer

Juggler



To achieve this level, submit videos of 10 of the following tricks:

Sit

Dog begins in a standing position and when cued, places their bottom on the floor.

Down

Dog begins in a standing position and when cued, places their whole body on the floor, all elbows, chest and back legs to be flat on the floor. They may enter from a 'sit' or 'bend' direction.

Stand

Dog begins in a sit or down and raises into a stand position.

Spin and Twist*

Dog begins in a stand and when cued, turns in a circle clockwise (spin). They must end in the same spot they started so they have completed a full 360 spin. Once they complete the spin, mark and reward them, then cue the twist (counter clockwise turn). The handler should give one cue for each direction.

Middle

Dog begins in front of the handler. When cued they position themselves in a stand between the handlers legs, facing the same way as the handler. The dog may enter from the front or by walking behind the handlers legs.

Side and Heel

Dog begins in front of the handler, when cued the dog comes to stand next to the handler on the right hand side (side) facing the same direction as the handler. The dog is rewarded in position and released. The dog is then cued to stand on the handlers left side (heel) facing the same direction as the handler. The dog is rewarded in position and released.

Step

When cued the dog places their front paws on a stationary object keeping their back paws on the floor. Object must be at least two inches off the ground.

Four Paws

When cued the dog places all four paws on a stationary object. The object must be at least two inches off the ground.

Touch (Nose target to hand)

When cued the dog touches the handlers hand with their nose.

Target an object (with nose)

When cued the dog will touch an object with their nose. The object can be held by the handler or placed on the floor.

SitStay (20 seconds)

Follow instructions for sit and the dog must hold position for 20 seconds without a further cue. The handler should take one step away from the dog.

Down Stay (20 seconds)

Follow instructions for down and the dog must hold position for 20 seconds without a second cue. The handler should take one step away from the dog.

Back Up

Dog begins in a stand facing handler. When cued the dog walks backwards for **four** steps in a straight line

Bow

Dog begins in a stand facing handler. When cued the dog lowers the front half of their body so their front elbows are on the floor and their bottom remains in the air.

Jump Over an object

When cued the dog jumps over an object. There is no height requirement but the dog should jump instead of step over. All four paws must be off the floor at the same time.

Jump Through a hoop

When cued the dog jumps through a hoop. The hoop can be held at any height and can be any material or size as long as the dog can comfortably jump through it. All four paws must be off the floor at the same time.

Roll an object

When cued the dog will use its nose to roll an object. This can be a ball, yoga mat, cardboard tube or any spherical object.

Left Paw and Right Paw

Starting in a sit in front of the handler, when cued the dog will target their left paw to the handlers right hand. Once the behaviour is complete the handler should mark and reward the dog before giving them a cue to target their right paw to the handlers left hand.

Leg Weaves

The dog starts in either heel or side position with the handler in standing position. As the handler steps forwards the dog will weave between handler's legs from front to back, ending in the opposite heel or side position. The handler should take at least four steps for the dogs to weave through. If the dog begins on the left the first weave should be going under the right leg and vice versa.

Send to Bed

The handler will stand facing the dogs bed two meters away (mat, towel, or blanket can also be used). When cued the dog will leave the handler, go to their bed and lay down.

Walk Around handler (both directions)

Starting in heel position on the handlers left hand side, the dog will walk around the handlers body in a clockwise circle, ending in the same position they started in. The dog will be rewarded before being reset to perform the same trick from the handlers right hand side where the dog walks counter clockwise back to the handlers side.

Buckaroo (paws)

Dog begins in a down. Handler places a treat on each of their paws. Dog remains still enough that the treats stay on their paws until released.

Leave it

A toy or treat will be placed in front of the dog, at least half a meter away from the dog. The dog must wait for 5 seconds before being released by the handler.

Find hidden treat

Select three similar objects (cones, cups, bowls etc) and with the dog out of sight place a reward under one of the objects. Bring the dog in the room and cue them to find the treat.

Stand In a Box

When cued the dog will place all four paws inside a box or similar object. The box or object must have four sides that are at least two inches tall so that the dog has to step over and into it.

Speak

When cued the dog will bark. One bark is enough but multiple barks will be accepted.

Chin

When cued the dog will place their chin in the palm of the handlers upturned hand.

Push ups

For this trick the dog may be given a separate cue for each position change. Beginning in a stand the dog must perform the following sequence. **Sit, Down, Stand, Sit, Down, Stand, Sit, Down Stand.**

JUGGLER

Print this out to keep track of your progress



**Trick
Performed**

**Cue Given
(verbal or visual)**

Environment

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Acrobat

To achieve this level, submit videos of 10 of the following tricks:

Step on an unstable object



When cued the dog places their front paws on the object keeping their back paws on the floor. The object must be at least two inches off the ground and have some movement to it, such as a fit bone, a bean bag, or a ball.

Rear Foot Target



When cued the dog will place their rear feet on an object keeping their front paws on the floor. The dog may back up onto the target or walk forwards over it, ending in a two on two off position. The target must be stable and at least two inches tall.

Emergency Stop



The dog must be trotting or walking; they may be coming towards or away from the handler. When the handler gives the cue the dog will stop moving. They may stay in a stand or put themselves in a down or sit. They must remain stationary for two seconds. For this trick the dog must stop within one second of receiving the cue.

Select named object



Three objects will be placed in front of the dog. When cued the dog will retrieve the object by name. The objects must be similar in size.

Retrieve to hand



Dog must begin in a stationary position. The object can either be thrown or placed out in advance while the dog remains stationary. When cued the dog will retrieve the object to the handlers hand. The object can be anything the dog is able to comfortably carry.

Figure of eight leg weaves



Dog begins in heel position on the handlers left hand side. The handler will stand with their legs slightly apart. When cued the dog will weave through the handlers leg in a figure of eight shape ending in the same position they started.

Go around an object (Send away)



Starting in a heel position the dog will go out and around an object placed one metre away. If the dog begins on the handlers left they should go clockwise around the object. If they begin on the right hand side they should move counterclockwise around the object. Any object can be used

Hold an object

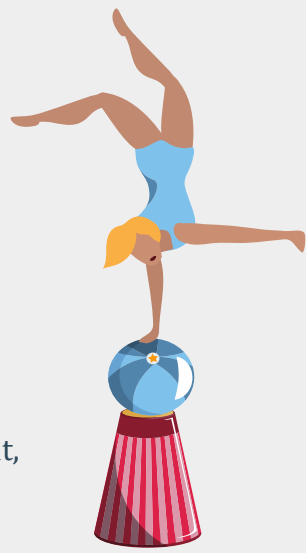


The dog will start in a stationary position. They may pick the object up from the floor or the handler will hold out the object for the dog to take from their hand. The dog will hold the object in their mouth for 3 seconds. Any object can be used as long as the dog can hold it comfortably. The handler must not touch the dog and the dog must remain still without chewing or shaking the object.

Roll Over



Dog can begin stood, sat, or laid down. When cued they should roll all the way over ending in a down. The dog can roll in either direction.



Middle on the Move (Forwards)

The dog begins in a middle position. As the handler walks forward the dog moves with them. Handler and dog must take at least four steps forward.

Toes (Stationary)

When cued the dog comes to stand between the handlers legs and places a front paw on each of the handlers feet so that they are standing on the handlers 'toes'. This must be given as one cue and not 'middle' followed by 'toes'.

Give a kiss

When cued the dog targets the handlers mouth or cheek with their nose (no duration required).

Tell me a secret

The handler crouches down to the dogs level with their hand held up to their ear, palm facing backwards. When cued the dog targets the handlers ear, or the back of their palm, with their nose.

Sitstay (out of sight)

Follow the instructions for sitstay, then the handler must go out of sight (i.e leave the room) for two seconds before returning. The dog must remain in position throughout.

Pull a rope (object)

When cued the dog will pull on a rope or similar object (such as towel). The rope can be in the handlers hand or attached securely to an object.

Stand on hind legs

When cued the dog will stand on their hind legs and hold position for two seconds.

Pivot

Dog begins with their front feet on an elevated platform. When cued they move their back feet so that they pivot around the object. Their front feet must remain on the object and they must end the trick in the same position they started in. They may move clockwise or anti-clockwise.

Wave

Beginning in a sit in front of the handler, when cued the dog lifts one of their paws in the air as if they have 'waved'. Their paw must reach shoulder height.

Jump through hooped arms

The dog will start in front of the handler. The handler makes a 'hoop' shape with their arms, when cued the dog jumps through the hooped arms. This can be performed at any height that is appropriate for the dog.

Recall to middle

The dog begins facing the handler with at least one metre distance between them. The handler stands facing the dog, when cued the dog will move into middle position.

Sustained nose touch (five seconds)

Follow instructions for touch and the dog must keep their nose on the handlers hand for five seconds.

Step 2m

When cued the dog places their front paws on a stationary object keeping their back paws on the floor. Object must be at least two inches off the ground and placed two meters away from the dogs starting point. The handler must remain in position and must not move towards the object.

Switch

The dog begins in a stationary heel position (stood on the handlers left hand side). When cued they should move behind the handler to come and stand on the handlers right hand side. They should be marked and rewarded in this position and then cued to switch back to the handlers right hand side.

Play Dead

Starting in a stand position, when cued the dog will lay on their side with their legs outstretched.

Paws in

When cued the dog places their front paws inside the object keeping their back paws on the floor. The object must have four sides all the way around that are at least two inches tall such as a washing up bowl or a box.

Middle on the Move (Backwards)

The dog begins in a middle position. As the handler walks backwards the dog moves with them. Handler and dog must take at least four steps backwards with the dog remaining in the middle position.

Leave it (full name)

The dog begins in any position. The handler gives on cue (visual or verbal) and then spells out the dogs name in treats in front of them. The dog must remain in position until released by the handler. They must not move towards the treats.

Front

The dog begins in heel position on either side of the handler. When cued, the dog moves from heel position to standing squarely in front of their handler facing them. The handler may take one step back to give the dog space to turn

Four Paws in

The dog begins in heel position on either side of the handler. When cued, the dog moves from heel position to standing squarely in front of their handler facing them. The handler may take one step back to give the dog space to turn

Target an object with nose. 2m

When cued the dog will touch an object with their nose. The object must be placed two meters away from the dogs starting point. The handler must remain in one position and must not move towards the object.

Down 360

The handler gives on cue for the dog to move into a down position. They will then walk in a circle around their dog in both directions while the dog remains in position. The dog may turn their head to look but they must remain in the 'down' position.

Pivot in Middle

The dog begins in a middle position. The handler turns 360 degrees, first in one direction, then the other. The dog remains in middle position, turning with the handler.

Acrobat

Print this out to keep track of your progress



**Trick
Performed**

**Cue Given
(verbal or visual)**

Environment

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Lion Tamer



To achieve this level, submit videos of 10 of the following tricks:

Say Your Prayers

When cued the dog places their front paws on a chair or the handlers arm. If using an arm the handler will need to be sat at the dogs level. The dog then places their head between their front paws facing downwards

Send to bed (with bed out of sight)

The dog's bed/mat or towel must be placed out of sight (behind a door frame or large piece of furniture. The handler must stand facing the dog (not the bed) and be at least 1 meter away. The dog must go to the bed and lay down. (This will need to be filmed by a helper who can show the handler giving the cue and then move the camera to show the dog on their bed).

Orbit

The dog begins in heel position on the handlers left hand side. When cued the dog will circle backwards around the handler ending back in heel position on the left hand side, having completed a 360 turn.

Rewind

The dog begins in heel position on the handlers right hand side. When cued the dog will circle backwards around the handler ending back in heel position on the right hand side, having completed a 360 turn.

Put toys away (three toys)*

Three toys will be placed on the floor in front of the dog. When cued the dog must pick up a toy and place it into a container placed one meter from the toy. You may repeat the cue once for each toy.

Pivot in Middle

Dog begins in middle. The handler moves in a small circle, keeping the right foot stationary and moving the left leg so that they pivot in a circle. The dog must follow the handlers movement, remaining in middle position and turning a circle.

Reverse into Middle

Dog begins facing the handler, when cued they turn so they are facing away from the handler and then walk backwards into middle position. They can end in a sit, down, or stand.

Side Steps in Middle

The dog begins in middle position, the handler takes four sideways steps first in one direction, then in the other direction. The dog moves sideways with the handler, remaining in middle position.

Pick Pocket *

Beginning with the dog in a sit the handler will walk past the dog with an object slightly protruding from their back pocket (this could be a toy, a handkerchief, a sock or something similar). Once past the dog the handler will stand still. When cued, the dog will approach the handler from behind and take the object from the handlers pocket.

Crawl

The dog will crawl with both elbows on ground for at least four steps. They must not lift their rear end off the floor. The handler should be in a standing position.

Remove Handler's sock/slipper

When cued the dog will use their mouth to remove the handlers sock, slipper, or shoe.

Pivot into heel

Dog begins facing the handler, when cued they should turn their rear end keeping their front feet stationary ending in heel position. This can be performed on either side. You may use a front foot target for this trick.

Recall past distraction

Dog begins in a sit, down or stand. The handler places a distraction (toy or food) one meter in front of the dog. The handler walks a further two meters away (the total distance between dog and handler is now three meters). When cued the dog will immediately recall past the distraction and come to the handler.

Shuffle (backwards crawl)

Dog crawls backwards with both elbows on the ground for at least four steps. They must not lift their rear end off the floor. The handler should be in a standing position.

Aeroplane

The handler kneels or sits on the floor and holds their arms straight out to their sides in an “aeroplane” position. When cued, the dog jumps each of the handlers arms so that they move in a circle around the handler. The dog should jump each arm at least once. The handler's arms must remain in position.

Close a door (push)

When cued the dog will push a door closed using either their nose or their paws. This can be performed with a standard door, cupboard door, crate door, or similar. They must push the door hard enough that it closes fully.

Open a door (pull)

When cued the dog will use a rope (or similar) attached to the door to pull the door open. This can be performed with a standard door, cupboard door, crate door, or similar.

Switch on the move

The dog begins in heel position on the handlers right hand side. The handler walks forwards and while still moving cues the dog to switch to the left hand side. Once the dog has switched sides the handler should walk forward at least two more steps. The handler must keep moving at all times.

Nose in an object

When cued the dog will put their nose in an object held by the handler and keep their muzzle inside for five seconds. They should only remove their nose from the object when cued to do so by the handler. Objects used could include a muzzle, a cone, a jug, or any object the dog can safely fit their muzzle inside.

Nose in an object

When cued the dog will put their nose in an object held by the handler and keep their muzzle inside for five seconds. They should only remove their nose from the object when cued to do so by the handler. Objects used could include a muzzle, a cone, a jug, or any object the dog can safely fit their muzzle inside.

Step 5m

When cued the dog places their front paws on a stationary object keeping their back paws on the floor. Object must be at least two inches off the ground and placed five meters away from the dogs starting point. The handler must remain in position and must not move towards the object.

Target an object with nose. 2m

When cued the dog will touch an object with their nose. The object must be placed five meters away from the dogs starting point. The handler must remain in one position and must not move towards the object.

Burrito

The dog begins laid down on the blanket. When cued the dog puts a corner of the blanket in their mouth and rolls over so that they end the trick laying down wrapped in the blanket.

Pattercake *

The handler will sit either in a chair or on the floor at the dogs level with the dog sat in front of them. When the handler holds up their left hand (palm flat facing the dog) the dog will target that hand with their right paw and vice versa. When the handler holds up both hands the dog will place a paw on each of their hands. Complete this in the following sequence (left and right refer to the handler) the handler should clap between each paw target.

Left hand (clap)

Right hand (clap)

Both (clap)

Right hand (clap)

Left hand (clap)

Cross Paws

The dog can be stood or laid down to perform this trick. When asked the dog will take one front paw and cross it over the other front paw. This must be performed in both directions for example, left paw over right, and then right paw over left. The dog will need to be given one cue for each direction.

Selfie *

The handler will crouch down to the dogs height and when cued the dog will go behind the handler and place their paws on the handler's shoulder. Dog and handler should be facing the same direction as if posing for a selfie. The dog can use a platform or step to reach the handler's shoulder if needed. The dog should remain in position long enough for the handler to lift a phone (or similar object) to head height as if taking a picture.

Put three hoops on a cone *

When cued the dog will pick up a hoop and place it on a cone (or similar upright object). This must be repeated three times. You may give one cue for each hoop.

Side Step

This trick is lateral movement where the dog moves sideways with the handler. This can be performed in heel position or with the dog stood facing the handler. The dog and handler should take four steps in each direction. Once four steps have been taken the dog can be marked and rewarded before moving in the opposite direction.

Toes (Forward and Backwards)

When cued the dog moves into 'toes' position. The handler then walks four steps forwards followed by four steps backwards. The dog moves with the handler, keeping their front paws on the handlers feed.

Toes (Pivot)

The dog moves into 'toes' position, The handler moves in a small circle, keeping the right foot stationary and moving the left leg so that they pivot in a circle. The dog must follow the handlers movement, remaining in middle position and turning a circle.

LION TAMER

Print this out to keep track of
your progress



Trick Performed	Cue Given (verbal or visual)	Environment
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



Training Tips

When we're working on teaching skills there is a simple rule to follow to set your dog up for success.

Push, Drop, Stick

Work in sets of five, if your dog performs the behaviour 4 or 5 times, **push** to the next step.

If your dog performs the behaviour 3 times out of 5, **stick** at the same step in the plan.

If your dog performs the behaviour 2 times or less, **drop** your criteria.

Example:

Aim: Send the dog to touch an object 2m away

Handler stands two steps away from the object and cue's 'step'

step!

1 of 1 ✓ 2 of 2 ✓ 3 of 3 ✓ 4 of 4 ✓ 5 of 5 ✓

Push: Stand Three Steps away

step!

1 of 1 ✓ 2 of 2 ✓ 2 of 3 ✗ 2 of 4 ✗ 3 of 5 ✓

Stick: Repeat from two steps away

step!

0 of 1 ✗ 1 of 2 ✓ 1 of 3 ✗ 2 of 4 ✓ 2 of 5 ✗

Drop: Stand one step away