

# SO YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT ENTERING YOUR DOG IN A SHOW?

Tips to help you get started



## LEARN THE BASICS

### First things first: The official term for dog shows is conformation

At a dog show dogs are being measured by how closely they conform to the standard of their particular breed. A dog is eligible to compete in a dog show if it is registered with the American Kennel Club, is at least 6 months old, hasn't been spayed or neutered, and measures up to its breed standard.

## ATTEND A SHOW IN PERSON

### Go to a show, or several

and familiarize yourself with what happens in the show ring, and to experience the energy and camaraderie between the spectators in the stands and the competitors (also called "exhibitors"). It'll also give you an idea of whether you want to show your dog yourself, or hire a professional ("handler").

## JOIN AN AKC CLUB NEAR YOU

### Get involved with your local AKC club

We encourage newcomers to get involved with their [local AKC Club](#). Not only do they offer invaluable resources and training classes, you'll meet new people with similar interests who are more than willing to share their knowledge and lend a hand.

## PREP YOUR DOG- AND YOURSELF

### Consider a conformation class

Classes will focus on how to handle your dog in the show ring. Your dog should know basic behavior like how to walk on a leash on your left side and how to stack. He should also be very comfortable around other dogs and well socialized. Finally, before your first show, your pet should be well-groomed—think trimmed nails, tangle-free fur, and no dirt.

## TRY A MATCH SHOW

### Wish you could have a practice run before the real show?

That's what Match Shows are for. Here, you and your dog socialize in an informal, educational show environment, meet other dog show enthusiasts, and swap stories. Another bonus? Seasoned handlers, judges, and fellow dog owners will provide guidance and feedback you'll want to have before actually getting into the ring.

