



# Distance Handling— gamble 3

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Here are some typical distance challenges set up as gambles or FAST-type challenges. Keep in mind that Distance skills can help solve any kind of course but this helps illustrate how I think you can communicate at a distance - without the dog assuming or guessing where to go.

Here are the general tips:

**Move naturally.** Leave yourself enough room to add pressure and release pressure, even if it is only taking a step or even rocking forward or back on your feet.

**Keep working the 1/2 way points** on the path even if you are 30 feet away or behind your dog. While you are working the path, you aren't doing something else that would give a conflicting cue.

**Make your arms and your body work together.** Arms do not replace what your body is doing, they add to it. Throwing your arm out to your side while you turn away or lean away is a classic "push-me/pull-you" cue that only works for Dr. Doolittle.

**Use your verbals** to add to what your body is doing but not replace what it is doing. I also highly recommend using your verbals proactively to control the behavior of an obstacle, not fix the path between obstacles.

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Here is a specific example where I am practicing with Echo. This is a variation on gamble #2 so contrasting with that handling might be interesting.

In this video I send Echo to the first jump on my right just stepping toward the 1/2 point (control point) on the path to the jump- but I send her much farther ahead. Why? First because I want to be in a position to be able to push to the far side of the U-shaped tunnel. Second, I don't want to give a huge acceleration cue going into the first tunnel and then try to redirect her off of the off course entrance. That would be a major miscue.

As she takes it, I hold pressure on the gap (keep slowly moving toward it) between jumps #1 and #2 to keep her out on the 180 (instead of pulling through the gap in a wrap. Notice that by the time she commits to the first jump I am already working the gap to the second jump.

As she approaches the second jump, I use serpentine body language to pull her over the jump and then send her back out to the tunnel. I hold her on my left hand for just a moment to pull her in and you can see she makes a little hairpin turn on the approach to the first tunnel. The last thing she sees me do as she goes into the tunnel is change hands and push in toward the gap to the correct U-shaped tunnel entrance.

### **Why serpentine handling?**

The reason I use serpentine handling is that I want her to anticipate the turn away at the end of the tunnel and I know that I won't be able to give very effective rear cross body language as she goes into the tunnel. So I will clue her into the turn and use my verbal "tunnel-right" to add clarity.

As she comes out of the U-shaped tunnel, I put pressure on the 1/2 way point on the perfect line to the light teal tunnel and she sends out for it.

A quick "go on" plus my acceleration as she goes into the teal tunnel drives her out over the last jump.

That's it. See other articles for other examples, but they all follow the same rules.