

## **DIY Cavaletti Rails**



“Cavaletti” is basically a series of poles arranged in a row on the ground or slightly elevated

1. **Cones:** Amazon or five below have cheap packs of cones. If you find ones with holes already in them, it saves you time of making holes in them
2. **Poles:** pvc pipe or I bought brooms at the dollar store and took off the broom portion and just used the broom handles as bars. The brooms save you the time of having to cut the pvc because they are already a good length

### **Step 1: Measure & Mark the PVC**

First, you need to determine how long you want the poles to be. For a little dog, I could have gone shorter, at like 2 feet, but I wanted to make sure that I could use these new Cavaletti poles with any size dog, so I decided on 3 feet poles. To start, I’m making 4 sets of Cavaletti poles, so we need to cut four 3’ sections of PVC pipe.

The best construction advice I’ve ever gotten is “Measure Twice, Cut Once!” It takes a lot less time to double check your measurements than it does to re-cut, or even worse, run back to the store because you messed up and ran out of PVC to remake an extra pole.

### **Step 2: Cut the Poles**

Using your hand or hack saw, cut your pipes to the desired length. The first few passes aren’t the easiest, but once you get a little groove in the plastic, PVC is REALLY easy to cut.

### **Step 3: File on a Hard Surface**

So, using a hand saw, the pipes didn’t come out exactly perfect on the end, but I found the easiest method imaginable for filing them down and making them smooth... My driveway!?) you literally just take the uneven sawed end of the pole that you just cut and scrape it on your driveway or patio. The hard surface will file down any bumps and get rid of any splintered pieces and VOILA! Smooth pole, ready to use. Repeat 3x for the other 3 poles.

#### **Step 4: Assemble**

Now that you have all of your poles cut, all that's left is to set up your Cavaletti course!



#### **Spacing:**

For a basic cavaletti setup, you want to set your poles to match your dog's stride. When they walk through, they should be taking one step in between each pole. To determine this distance, measure the length of your dog's leg. This should be about the length of their stride. You may need to tweak this a little, depending on your dog, but it's a good starting point. This will not work for all breeds, for example, Dachshunds and other low-riders with super short legs, who may have to do 2 steps in between the poles. Also keep in mind that if your dog is recovering from an injury or surgery, their stride may be a little different than normal, so just watch them on their first few walks through and adjust the spacing as needed

#### **Height:**

If your dog is new to cavaletti, start with the poles no higher than your dog's carpus, otherwise known as their ankle. We did a few run-throughs on the ground and then put the poles in the lowest hole in the cones, about an inch or so off the ground. Once your dog gets the hang of it and can walk through confidently without knocking any poles over, you can adjust the height and/or spacing to engage their muscles and work on their balance.

#### **Pace:**

Cavaletti is not a race, nor are they hurtles. They are not meant to be run through or leapt over, but rather walked through, focusing on balance and stride at a comfortable pace.

There are a MILLION different ways to use cavaletti poles. Different heights, spacing, orientation, and different ways of moving through them. If this has peaked your interest in trying out cavaletti, I encourage you to do some reading on other uses for this simple, yet versatile training tool..

Cavaletti is not just for muscle rehabilitation, which is what we're using it for. It's also great to improve your dog's balance, rear end awareness, muscle tone, and coordination.