

DOGTALK

PUPPY COURSE

PUPPY COURSE THEORY



In this part:

Rest and attention

Stages of
development

Rewards

Lesson 2

The time flew by, the second lesson is already finished! The puppies have been with you for at least two weeks and have gotten used to your home situation. You will probably see the behaviour of the pup slowly change a bit. Please enjoy this period of time because they grow so fast! Do not forget to take a lot of pictures . We also would like to see them, you can upload them on our Facebook page or send them via private message or e-mail. Maybe you can see them later on one of our social media channels. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. The best way to reach us is via e-mail:

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Rest and attention

"Two magic words"

Maybe you've noticed there are times the puppy is too busy exploring to react and does not pay attention to you. That can sometimes be quite frustrating, but it is also understandable because puppies are exposed to a lot of stimuli that all need to be processed, that will make them tired and that is why a lot of sleep is very important for them.

The puppy also needs rest, and attention from the owner to train and learn to cooperate. Otherwise the puppy will not receive sufficient information and you do not have the chance to let him know what you expect from him because they cannot concentrate are busy with other things. That is why the base of every lesson is peace and attention, so that we can put the puppy in the right situation to be able to learn.

That is what the puppies need to be able to learn and control their impulses better. It also makes it easier for you to take him with you on a visit – to a restaurant or another familiar environment. The puppy will have attention for the owner and can find his peace in different situations – which is a thing good for everybody.

In the lesson a start has been made with the "Blanket" exercise. We will fully describe this exercise again:

What you will need:

- a blanket
- a stool
- "The blanket" exercise
- the leash
- treats for puppies

Put the dog on the leash and make sure you have a stool or chair near you. In the beginning it is a good idea to sit on a low stool or chair so that you are closer to your dog, so you can reward faster and it is easier for the dog to make contact. The first couple of times please do the exercise while the dog is on a leash so that he cannot walk away.

The ultimate goal is that the puppy will lie on the blanket by itself and stay there relaxed and comfortable.

Take the puppy on the leash to the blanket and sit on the stool with the blanket laid out on the ground between your feet. Put a treat on the blanket as soon as the pup shows interest in it. Then keep giving some small treats as long as the puppy still stands near it and shows interest. Do not give the treats with your hands but put them on the blanket.

After doing that a number of times you can roll the treat away from the blanket – that the puppy can clearly see – and when the puppy walks to the treat you say "free". You will see that after the puppy has eaten the treat he will come back to the blanket. Please also repeat this several times. The next step is that the puppy will sit on the blanket, you can make him do this by waiting a little to give the treat after the puppy stands on the blanket. Wait until the puppy sits down and give him a treat between his front paws. After doing that a few times you say "free" again. Sitting on the blanket is now the new starting point, so no longer reward him for standing on the blanket.

Now we will try and make the puppy lay down on the blanket. This works exactly the same way as training him to sit down. After sitting down on the carpet you wait to reward him until the puppy lies down – this can require some patience. When the puppy is lies down, you give him a treat again between his front paws. After doing that a few times you say "free" again. Laying on the blanket is now the new starting point. So only reward him for lying down.

If the pup immediately lies down when he sees the blanket, you can put the blanket in other places and occasionally take it to different environments. It is a good idea to practice this in many different places because a puppy learns things contextual.



"Let the
DogTalk, its
worth it!"

They grow so fast!

Development phases

Every dog goes through a number of development phases from the moment he is born to adulthood. Every phase has its own specific characteristics. We can divide a dog's life into the following phases:

1. Prenatal phase
2. Neonatal phase
3. Transitional phase
4. Primary socialization phase
5. Secondary socialization phase
6. Pecking order phase
7. Adolescent phase
8. Adulthood

The prenatal phase

This is the period when the puppy is still in the womb. No research has yet been done on dogs to see the influence of, for example, the mother's stress, environmental sounds and other impressions that can be felt in the uterus. Such research has been done on mice and rats and we know that these animals show more restless behaviour if the mother lived under stressful conditions during pregnancy. A lot of research has been done on humans and it has been proven that the prenatal phase influences the later development of a child. That is why it is important to know in which environment the mother dog and the pups later will live for the first weeks.

The neonatal phase

This phase is from birth to about 14 days, and is also called the vegetative phase. The puppy is deaf and blind but he can smell and find the nipple of the mother very well. The very first imprint on, for example smell – because the eyes and ears are not yet opened and their motor skills are not yet fully developed – will start and lasts until they are about 7 weeks old.

The transitional phase

The third week. In the third week all the senses of the pup will function, first the eyes open and shortly thereafter the ear canals. A world literally opens up for the young dogs! Motor skills will also develop and the puppies will stand on their feet for the first time, of course a little wobbly.

In the first weeks the puppies needed the mother to lick them to poop and pee, but now they can do it themselves. The puppies will make a start with cleanliness and will go poop and pee outside the bed.

Puppies that have not had the chance to do that – during and after this period – will often have trouble getting toilet trained later. These dogs will later even poop and pee in their own bed.

The littermates will start to respond to each other by means of growling and shortly after the fourth week the puppies will begin to wag their tail. There is a difference in how fast different breeds develop, i.e. almost all Beagle's have their eyes open at 2 weeks old while with Jack Russell Terriers this is not even 10%.

Primary socialization phase

Four to 12 weeks. This is probably the most important phase in a dog's life because, they still imprint on other dogs, but the important socialization on "the world" is also taking place.

Everything that the pup experiences in this phase is experienced as something normal and will never be forgotten. Until the seventh or eighth week the dog will still live with the breeder. This plays an important role during this phase, a good breeder will let the dog get acquainted with just about anything the puppy can encounter in his later life, i.e. children, cats, loud noises, cars, daily sounds such as the vacuum cleaner, the television, and so on.

This is easy because the flight instinct will be fully developed around the seventh week, so after the seventh week, socializing will become much more difficult. If the breeder imprints bad things and/or socializes wrong, it is sometimes even impossible.

Usually the future owners of the pups are can visit them, which is fun for the future owners but also very important for the puppies. Then they socialize with both children and adults. Many breeders also allow other dogs to come near the litter – as long as there are no medical problems, and if the mother dog accepts it, it is a good idea. This is how the pups learn that there are dogs with floppy ears, with ears that stand up, large dogs, small dogs, dogs with curly hair, long hair, black, white, brown and many more differences.

If all goes well, the pups are also occasionally taken out to the street, this way they automatically learn what cars, cyclists, mopeds, the garbage truck, things that blow in the wind are and a lot more. At this age the puppies enter the world with an open mind, curious and full of confidence – If they do not have a hereditary predisposition and the very first imprinting and socialization period went well.

Hopefully the breeder will also let the puppy get used to a collar and walking on a leash, that is easiest when they are between 6 and 9 weeks old. It is extremely important to expose puppies to all these stimuli because that is the only way to ensure that he can handle those stimuli for the rest of his life.

Puppies learn at this age not only what the environment means but they also learn dog language. They learn through play that they cannot bite too hard because then the littermates no longer play with them, they already exhibit copulatory movements, and show power and submission.

They practice for later because practice makes perfect. The mother dog is the boss and determines the limits and when it gets too rough she intervenes. Around the seventh or eighth week an important event takes place with the dogs; his future housemates will come to pick him up and the pup will live where he will hopefully spend the rest of his life. The other phases will be described in later handouts.



Rewards

What exactly is a reward?

Simply said, a reward is something that increases the behaviour of a dog in a certain situation.

A treat when he sits down for example, but also the postman who leaves when he starts barking. If a dog starts to show a certain behaviour more and more, he is apparently rewarded for it somehow! And does he not show certain behaviour despite that there is a piece of sausage in front of him? Then the piece of sausage is apparently not a reward.

Dogs like to work with you and for you. But just as you would like to receive your salary at the end of the month, dogs also want to receive a reward. What a good reward is depends on the owner, the dog, the environment and the circumstances. Some dogs do everything for food, other dogs prefer a toy. Dogs are sometimes less food-oriented after eating or have no more energy to play after a long walk. And will they go to another dog to play, or will they choose for the treat?

When and how often can I reward?

The most important thing when it comes to rewards is the timing. If you want to reward certain behaviour, the dog has to make the association between that behaviour and the reward. The reward must come immediately after the desired behaviour, within two seconds. If the reward comes later, the dog will not learn what behaviour was exactly desired.

This can be a difficult thing to do. You can learn a, what we will call, a bridge command, such as a reward word. This will become a predictor for the actual reward. That word must be said within 2 seconds after the desired behaviour., then the reward can be given up to 5 seconds afterwards. You can often more accurately show the dog what the desired behaviour is.

If you want to teach a dog a certain command, it is wise to initially reward every good execution of that behaviour (continuous reward scheme). As soon as a dog understands and knows the command, you can switch to variable rewards: sometimes you reward, sometimes you do not, sometimes a lot, sometimes a little (interval reward). So it remains unpredictable for the dog what he will get and it is therefore always worthwhile. You can of course reward by using your voice! You do not have to feel sorry for your dog if you leave out the treats, in fact: you ask more of your dog, so he also will want to work harder for you. This makes the collaboration better and if there is a treat reward, it is worth more to the dog, so this is a win-win situation!

Variable rewards can also be applied to the strength of the reward – a few pieces of sausage is worth more than a small piece, and a big reward can also be worth so much that the dog is only busy getting hold of the reward. With a sit-and-stay exercise, for example, it is not convenient if your dog gets up to get a piece of sausage. You will therefore have to work with a less strong reward in order to make sure he will not show undesirable behaviour.

You can use a very strong reward in difficult situations. For example if your dog is playing in the forest with other dogs and you call him. If he comes to you, please reward him with a handful of pieces of sausage: the jackpot!



Types of rewards

What types of rewards can I use?

What a reward exactly is different for every dog, for every situation and for every environment. You can make a reward top 10 for your puppy!

Below is a list with various forms of rewards. You can alternate them.

- Food/treats
- Using your voice
- Play tug-o-war
- Give attention (stroking / cuddling)
- Ball games/retrieving
- Search games, sniffing or brain games
- Go run together
- Conditioned reward or bridge commands
- Associations and behaviours?
- Use behaviour as a reward

Homework assignment

"Earn your reward" exercise

In addition to the exercise with the blanket you can also train your puppy to ignore food. This exercise makes the puppy learn to wait for the food so that the puppy pays attention to you as owner and is not only focused the food. We will teach the puppy to show the desired behaviour first and that they receive the reward after. This makes sure that the puppy will behave calmly and in a controlled manner, but also to make sure that the pup will start to think about which behaviour he will get something for and which behaviour does not.

If the puppy understand this exercise he will not steal food for example, or eat things from the street. This requires a lot of training because food is very high on the dog's priority list.

What you will need:

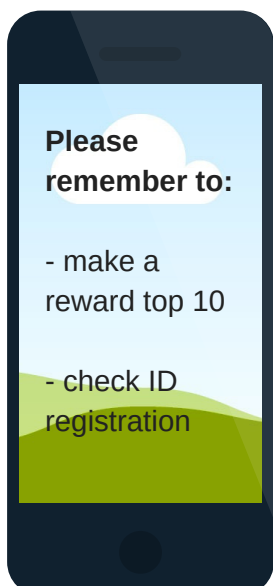
- treats
- a stool or chair to sit on
- if you want, a blanket (but it is not necessary)

Please sit in a way so that you are close to the pup so that you can easily get his attention and reward him quickly. You can sit on a stool for example. You can invite the pup on the blanket if you want, but this exercise can also be done without a blanket.

Offer the pup a few treats at the level of the puppy's head in a closed hand. You will see that the puppy will try and do all kinds of things to get the treats, i.e. by gnawing, nibbling, licking, sitting down, etc. Reward him with your reward word and give him a treat from your hand out if the puppy steps away from the closed hand for a few seconds – it is not necessary for him to ignore the hand – but just to take a step away. Repeat this until you have no more treats in your hand, everything treat you had there is for the puppy! You should use your last treat to tell the puppy "free", roll the treat away from him – for the puppy clearly to see – and when the puppy walks to the treat say "free".

You should not use a specific command for him to ignore the food or really earn the reward. It is normal desirable behaviour, which you should train a lot so that it will become a habit. The puppy should just wait for his reward and show the desired behaviour first.

In a later stage you can also do this with food in a bowl or food on the floor. But start with the ignoring of treats in your hand.



The microchip and registration obligation for dogs

The microchip and registration obligation for dogs has been in effect since 1 April 2013 and comes down to the following:

- Puppies born after 1 April 2013 must be chipped within 7 weeks of birth and registered with a special database within 8 weeks of birth.
- All dogs – regardless of their age – that have been imported after 1 April 2013 must be registered within 2 weeks. They must already have been chipped to be allowed to enter the Netherlands.

All changes to the recorded data must be transferred to the database, so that the information remains up-to-date for the rest of the dog's life. If you do not comply with these rules you will risk a fine.

It is also just very useful, if a dog is found by someone the chip can find out who the owner is and the dog can be safely returned home. All information about this subject can be found at these two websites: www.chipjedier.nl www.ndg.nl