

# DOGTALK

# PUPPY COURSE

PUPPY COURSE THEORY



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## Puppyclass 4

*Little puppy, you grow so fast!*

*Your pup develop and grow so fast, it will be like having a different dog after a few weeks. Please take advantage of the fact that the pups are interested to learn new things! You will also see some changes in behaviour: sometimes things are scary and sometimes they are not. Do not be worried, that is part of the development of your puppy to become a young dog.*

*We are happy to assist you, because what is more beautiful than the growing bond between a puppy and owner? Slowly you will get to know each other better. If there are still things that are unclear or questions about behaviour, please send us an email: [info@dogtalkcursussen.nl](mailto:info@dogtalkcursussen.nl) In addition to the group lessons it is also possible to get private lessons at your house.*

*Sincerely,  
Team DogTalk*

## Kinds of rewards

What a reward is – as described earlier – for every dog, for every situation and for every environment. Below are various forms of rewards. You can alternate them.

### Food

Food is a very primitive and therefore intuitive way to reward. There are a lot of products you can use to reward your dog with; dry dog food, meat, dried fish, frankfurters, Frolic, cheese, cooked chicken breast, frikandel, but also carrot, apple or cucumber. The most important thing is that the puppy likes it. There are also dog sausages for sale, for example, by the brands Prins, Farmfood or Rodi. You can cut these into pieces and freeze them.

The rewards do not have to be the size of a full meal. pieces the size of a pea are big enough! A reward should be gone in one bite and it should be so small that it does not require extensive chewing. It is a good idea to fill a bag with different kinds of rewards so that it is always a surprise what will come out of the bag!

### Using your voice

Another form of reward that you do not have to teach dogs is using your voice. They do not know the meaning of the word 'good' (yet), but if you sound cheerful, enthusiastic and proud the dog knows he must have done well! Body language, voice volume and tone are important tools that you always have with you to reward your dog. Of course you can also choose a different word than 'good'.

We call this the "reward word" while training. Choose a word that is easy to pronounce, and not used often in every day conversations.

### Tug game

Some dogs love to play tug of war – then you really play together with your dog. Please choose a toy that is large enough to be able to hold together: a ball on a string, a floss or a braided fleece are some examples. You can end the game with the 'release' command, by exchanging the toy for a treat, by letting go of the toy or by holding the toy motionless against your body. You can use an extra long toy for small dogs and insecure dogs.

### Attention (stroking/cuddling)

Some dogs are very sensitive to attention, they will seek physical contact and want to be cuddled. A stroke on their head or a hug can then work well as a reward. Please note: not all dogs automatically think of cuddling as a reward! Some dogs prefer to be left alone as a reward. For example, it can be very nice for a dog who has been to the schoolyard to be allowed to go back into the car to get away from the crowds so that they do not receive any more stimuli, so that they can relax. Try to find out what kind of reward your puppy likes.

### Ball games/retrieving

Dogs that are fond of balls or like to chase things around can often be rewarded by playing a ball game. By choosing the direction in which you throw the ball, you can send them in a certain direction. You also keep them busy a little longer at some distance away, which makes sure that you are less busy with your dog. Dogs can choose to keep the ball instead of returning it. You can make dogs ball crazy! You then have a good way to prevent unwanted behaviour and do not always have to have treats with you. But it can also get too wild; it is important that the dog still responds to you while they have the toy.

Be careful with puppies; for them it is a better to roll the ball than to throw it. Then they will have less uncontrolled movements.

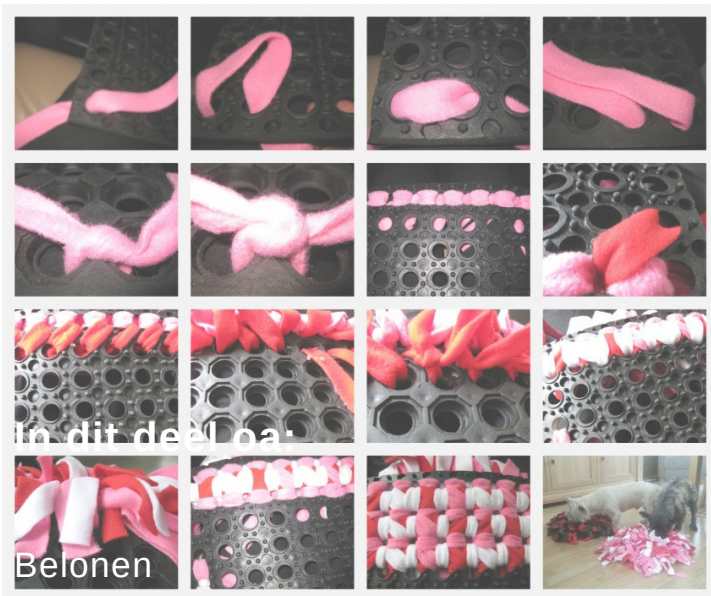


### Search games, sniffing or brain games

It is often very satisfying for dogs to use their nose, this creates a challenge. You can reward dogs by hiding their toy or a treat or let them sniff around. Some dogs find sniffing things fantastic with the owner around, so that they can explore and research things together with you! If you go and walk on the side of the road and touch the grass with your hands, chances are that your dog will help you 'search'! One specific form of search games are brain games – thinking games for dogs where they not only have to search for food or toys, but also have to puzzle to get them "free". Just take a wad of paper or a toilet roll and put a treat in it: success guaranteed! Take small steps and help where your dog needs it to avoid frustration!

### Run together

You can run short distances together as a reward, it is an alternative to retrieving a ball. In contrast to the search games, this is a reward is a physical one. Running with other dogs is fun, and running with the owner is just fantastic!



.By running we mean short distances, as running/jogging together with a puppy is not advisable because it takes a toll on their bodies. You can run longer distances with them when they are around 15 months old and fully grown.

### Conditioned reward or bridge commands

You can teach your dog a bridge command, as mentioned above. People frequently use a clicker word also known as a reward word. That is how you can show the dog what you consider to be desired behaviour at the right time and the actual reward can then be given later. You should first teach the dog to make the association between the bridge command and the reward. Once this association has been established, please train it regularly – but that speaks for itself, that really applies to all desired associations and behaviours.

### Use behaviour as a reward

You can also use behaviour itself as a reward – some dogs are happy to show certain behaviour. If they do not like other behaviour, you can teach them that they must first do the "stupid" things before they are allowed to do the "fun" things. For example, first let him walk on a leash and then let him run free or sniff.

"You can use a blanket to play a brain game and search game together"

## Lectures

We organize lectures, workshops etc very often. Please write down for our newsletter and receive all the extra info at mail.

You can sign in for our newsletter at our homepage (below at the right) [www.dogtak.nl](http://www.dogtak.nl)

# When can you start with strenuous activities?

## Bones, tendons and muscles

The little puppy that came into your home will increase weight enormously in his first year of life.

It costs a dog a lot of energy to grow and you ensure that your dog gets all the nutrition needed to create a healthy musculoskeletal system with good nutrition. But nutrition is only one of the aspects that determines whether your dog develops strong bones, tendons and muscles.

A healthy musculoskeletal system

Exercise is also very important for the development of a healthy musculoskeletal system. The tissue needs two contradictory things in order to grow: both exercise and rest.

- Exercise – by walking, playing and running – gives the bone tissue the stimuli it needs to grow the cartilaginous bones and to transform them into adult bones.
- Rest on the other hand, is necessary to ensure that the stimulus the exercise created can actually be processed into growth.

The same applies to tendons: the attachment to the bone becomes stronger due to exercise, but rest is also needed in order to be able to fully develop. A good balance between exercise and rest is therefore essential, but finding the right balance is also extremely difficult!

Young wild animals run around, play for short moments and then go back to sleep, that is the right balance between exercise and rest for them. It is important that your puppy does not have to walk too long at a time for the development of a healthy musculoskeletal system. It is very tempting to let your young dog run too far too quickly, especially if you have more dogs where you take long daily walks with.

The skeleton is fully grown when the growth plates are closed.

- Around the age of 3-8 months the growth plates will start to close, the first one that closes is the heel.
- and at the age of 12-24 months the growth plates of the pelvis will close.

They can only exercise for longer periods of time after all growth plates have closed and the skeleton is fully grown.

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## Make sure they rest in time!

Pups have a lot of energy and if you want to wait for your puppy to go to sleep you will not only have to wait a long time, but your puppy then will have gone over all his physical limits. It is best to protect your puppy against himself by letting him rest in time. This is very easy at home because you can send him to his place. His place is not designed to punish your dog, but to help remind him of the fact that he is tired. If you train him to go into the crate and relax you will notice that your young dog is reminded of the fact that he is tired at the moment you put him in there: 'oh yes, I'm actually tired!', after which he will go to sleep.

You can also easily create a time-out when you are out on a walk by using a dog stroller. This can be especially useful if you also have an adult dog. If the puppy understands the use of the blanket, you can use it, for example if you will drink a cup of coffee somewhere. Please note that by doing that you ask a lot of things of your dog. If you would like to use the blanket, you will have to practice. They can also get some rest when they lay down on the blanket.

It is also important to stop training in time! You can practice a few minutes per session because a puppy cannot yet concentrate for long periods of time. It is much more efficient to train 10 times 3 minutes per day than half an hour at once. Always try to stop at the moment when it is going well, so do not go on for so long for too long – the puppy will get tired and will eventually start making mistakes. That would be a shame because they learn from their successes!

or something. Besides that it is not fun for your dog, and it can also lead to undesirable behaviour, for example, fight behaviour or anxiety aggression. No matter how well you have worked on their socialization, most puppies suddenly start to suffer from their first anxiety phase from about 12 weeks onwards. The first anxiety phase lasts the longest and can last up to 6 months, during this period the puppy will be more frightened and can react anxiously.

This is followed by another three anxiety phases that occur around the age of 9 months, 14 months, and 18 months. These phases are shorter and usually last a maximum of two weeks. We will explain how you can deal with this fear and how to deal with 'normal' fear because the fear of dogs in the anxiety phase is usually caused by changes in their body.

Fear that develops during the anxiety phase will usually go away again if you deal with it correctly. Please do not force your puppy into a situation that he is afraid of. If, for example, he is suddenly afraid of the garbage truck, make sure that you do not walk near it, and if necessary even walk a different route than you usually do. You do not have to completely avoid everything your dog is afraid of, it is even better if your dog still comes into contact with it but try to keep distance so that your dog remains relatively calm and will notice that nothing is wrong. Also make sure that you do not place too much emphasis on the things your dog is afraid of – so do not try to lure him or something like that. Give the pup the control, and you will see that they often recover quickly and still want to go and to discover things and places. They then had the time to figure out that it is not as exciting as they thought. You can try to distract your puppy before he sees what makes him scared if you know that he is in the anxiety phase and has a reaction to things. For example by putting some treats on the ground – a dog that is busy sniffing and chewing will be less concerned with what happens around him.

In these kinds of situations, you as the owner ensure that your pup is safe, so please support him! A dog does not become more fearful if we show support, on the contrary, a dog that is supported will feel safer and more comfortable.



## Distraction

### What can cause your puppy to get distracted?

You may have noticed that your puppy will find it very difficult to pay attention in some situations. This is often due to the distractions that exist in the puppy's surroundings. It is therefore very useful to know what can distract your puppy and to think about how to deal with this while training. If you want to teach him something new it is best if there are as little distractions as possible. You can slowly start with more distractions around you if your puppy understands certain behaviour or commands. This way the puppy will learn to behave in all situations. A distraction is something different for every dog, so it is a good idea to make a list with the different types of distractions for your dog. Please make your own "distraction top 10"!

Things that could distract:

- Other dogs
- Birds
- Cats
- Horses
- Cyclists
- Cars
- Nice smells
- Different or strange surfaces
- Branches
- Balls
- Food
- Sounds
- Movements
- Wind and storms
- Adults
- Children
- Etc.

## Body language

A brief introduction into body language, because the body language of a dog is so extensive you can literally write books about it. Dogs do not have a language to make themselves heard as we humans do; they express themselves through body language – by using different postures and sounds. It is therefore important to understand the body language of your dog, so that you can see what your dog's intentions are and how he feels. This is how you can learn to understand your dog better and you can even try and prevent some problems.

When the dog, for example, encounters another dog, you can see how it will go if you look at the body language of both dogs. We will first explain the calming signals – this name is quite misleading, because they give you the idea that the dog can consciously use it to avoid conflict. But they use these signals unknowingly if they experience stress. Stress is also part of the life of a dog, and especially of a puppy. After all, everything is new and that can be quite scary. The signals indicate that the dog thinks the situation is exciting/strange. The dog unknowingly uses these signals and it is suggested that these signals can calm the dog himself – so they do not calm another dogs, animals or people.

You can try and observe your dog: do you see these signals and if you do, in what situation? Does the pup recover or does the puppy continue to find things exciting?

- Alert attitude
- Make himself smaller
- Raise a leg
- Turn his head and / or body away
- Yawn
- Lick – stick out the tip of his tongue
- Sniff
- Wag his tail
- Arch his back while in a playing position
- Lie on his back

You can see that some signals are also visible in situations that are not exciting, which sometimes makes interpreting body language in dogs so difficult. It takes practice



## Subscribe to our newsletter

Did you know that we also have a monthly newsletter? We will keep you informed about different activities, we regularly give tips and we give advice about how to deal with different situations. And there is always time for your personal input! You can subscribe to the newsletter on our website. (bottom right)

<http://dogtalk.nl>

# Homework assignments

In addition to the many exercises we did in recent lessons, you can also get started with the following exercises: "the collar" and "stay on the blanket". When you train a puppy, a lot of rest, patience and especially repetition are important. So please repeat the exercises and do not take too big steps, the puppy learns best by achieving many small successes.

## "The collar "

Many dogs do not like it when we want to put their collar or harness on. There are also many dogs that walk away if you want to put the leash on them. It is of course not our intention that the puppy will get scared or find it unpleasant. It is something that happens several times a day and it is also something you sometimes have to do to make sure that your puppy does not walk away or is safe from traffic or other dogs. Please train this a lot!

### What you will need:

- Treats
- A leash and / or harness

Please sit down with the puppy and grab the collar and/or harness, encourage him with your voice at the same moment (reward word) and give him a treat. Please repeat this about 10 times in a row. This is how the puppy will associate the grabbing of the collar and/or harness with something happy and tasty.



## "Practice only briefly"

### "Stay on the blanket"

After a while you will see that the puppy sees the blanket as something very important and safe, and that he will quickly lay down on it if you put it somewhere. That is the time to make the exercise a little more difficult; we will teach the pup to stay on the blanket while you move about and eventually even walk away.

### What you will need:

- Blanket
- Stool
- Leash
- Treats

Please put the puppy on the leash, put the blanket in front of your stool and sit down together. First reward again a few times when he sits down on the blanket, or even better, lying on the blanket. Then let go of the leash and gently move your feet, if the puppy still lays down please reward him. If you can move your feet, then try and move your arms a little, again when the puppy lays still please reward him. Slowly you can move more, further and more wild. If the puppy does get up, then you took a step in the training process that proved to be too big, so it is best to take a step back.

The next step is to try to get up and sit back down, if the puppy is still lying down when you are sit again please reward. Then take a step away from the blanket, and then step back. And again, when the puppy is still there please reward. You can slowly make it more difficult.

Make sure you do not move too carefully, that will only makes the puppy more curious. Do not hold the treats in your hand unless you reward, so do not walk away with the little treat still in your hand because there is a good chance that the puppy will follow the treats. The steps you took are too big if the puppy does not lie down. Please use the reward word often and enthusiastically so that the puppy knows that he is doing well.