

# DOGTALK

# PUPPY COURSE

PUPPYCOURSE THEORY



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## The last lesson

*Congratulations! Your puppy has completed the puppy course. The dogs have grown so much in the last few weeks and you both learned a lot! As you have noticed, the training is not complete yet, as the puppy is now in the "young dog "phase – a phase that comes with new challenges. He will development more until he is about one and a half years old, but you will also have to keep training once in a while when he is an adult. It is similar to our behaviour; it should be maintained and rewarded otherwise we will change our behaviour. We love to see pictures of your puppy with his diploma and/or rosette! And of course we look forward to working together when you join the basic course to work on obedience and cooperation with your young dog.*

*Sincerely,  
Team DogTalk*

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## Dominance

.You probably have heard people using the word "dominance" before. There is always someone "with knowledge of dogs" who will tell you that your dog is dominant or that his dog is dominant and that they have to figure things out for themselves. It is often said that being dominant is caused by a dog wanting to get higher in rank. So you should not give in, and above all ensure that the dog is not the boss of you. Examples of how the dog might try to accomplish this is by sitting on the couch, pulling on the leash or not wanting to let go of something.

Fortunately, we know better nowadays, this is absolutely not true! This outdated theory – which unfortunately is still used by many people – is based on research done by Schenkel and David Mech in the nineteen seventies. They researched a pack of wolves in captivity that had no family ties, at a place where there was also a lack of food and they assumed this behaviour would also shown by domestic dogs. The wolves in this group were indeed trying to get a higher rank.

Recent research shows that dogs and wolves have different types of behaviour – dogs do not necessarily behave like wolves! And the DNA of domestic dogs is different from that of the wolves studied. They were a pack in captivity that had no family ties and I assume everyone understands that their behaviour will be very different from a pack of wolves in the wild which often do have family ties.

There is no struggle for hierarchy in a natural pack, the hierarchy is clear and together they stand strong! There is no conflict, and that is something that you see in dogs as well, a dog basically avoids conflict.

New studies also show that the hierarchy can shift, sometimes even per situation. It was discovered that the social bond and the property/possessions are important for wolves, and that is something we also tend to see in dogs. The better the social bond, the fewer conflicts. Learning experiences also play a major role, one dog attaches much more importance to something than another. That can possibly be a reason to go into conflict, the dog will also learns quickly with who he can or cannot do this. It is therefore important to realize that we do not have to dominate and control our domestic dogs.

A dog is absolutely not concerned with getting a higher position in the pack. New studies show us that it is very unlikely that all dogs do all day is care about rankings and conflicts so there are other things are more important to them. We do not have to worry about having to be "the boss" and having to fight with our dog about that anymore. Of course you can set rules and limits, but physical violence is absolutely not necessary.





## Playing with other dogs

It is necessary for the development of your puppy to play with other puppies and adult dogs. He will learn social interactions and also develop motor skills. It is important that playing is really playing and a fun experience, it is therefore a good idea to observe the behaviour and stop the interaction if necessary.

Signs you can look for are:

- Is the other dog a match for your pup, or is he much bigger, wilder or stronger?
- Is your puppy a match for the other dog, or is your puppy too wild and does he bulldoze the other dogs?
- Is the environment safe – In other words can the dogs play safely, without harming themselves or being able to run away?
- Is the game equal, do they take turns leading?
- Do the dogs occasionally stop playing and take a break?
- Does the intensity change?
- How is the body language of the dogs, is it fun for both?
- Are they really playing or is there some aggression sometimes (growling, snarling, biting)?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then the playing is fun. If you doubt whether there are clear no's, then please stop the playing to avoid negative learning experiences. Adult dogs or dogs with a different size or playing style can also learn to adapt to the other dog, we call this self-handicapping. They will play less rough or in a different way.



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## Is your puppy registered correctly?

The puppy has been living with you for several weeks, so time to check if the puppy is registered correctly, so that other people can reach you in case of emergency, for example if your puppy has ran away and was found by someone else.

Check your registration with the NDG, the Dutch database for pets. Besides that it is very useful, it is also mandatory to register your dog. [www.NDG.nl](http://www.NDG.nl)

It is a good idea to put a reminder in your planner every six months, so that you can always change the data, such as a telephone number or address.

## Grooming

You can get your puppy get used to grooming by getting him used to combs and brushes. You can brush him for a short time and touch him all over with his own dog brush just. Make sure you do not hurt him and carefully unravel any tangles. Always brush or comb carefully in the direction of the hair growth and be extra careful around the head of your puppy, that is very sensitive.

You can let your dog get used to being touched on his body when you brush his fur. Then it is no longer scary when a veterinarian or groomer examines him. You can carefully examine his eyes, ears, mouth, nails and skin. Please ask the vet for advice if your puppy has flaky skin or ears that smell.

Your puppy will change his puppy coat when he is about 4 months old. The frequency of shedding depends on the breed, on average this will happen 2 times a year – in spring and autumn. Some breeds, however, shed hairs continuously. Brush your puppy daily during moult to prevent irritation due to loose hairs.

The type of grooming your puppy needs depends on the hair length. A short, smooth coat – like a Boxer has – can also be wiped with a piece of wet chamois leather. You can brush a short coat about once a week. Puppies that have medium long hair should be brushed every other day, and puppies with long hair should be brushed every day. A shaggy coat needs more care because the rough hairs do not fall out and that is why the hairs of the undercoat also cannot fall out. This will cause itching: the puppy will start to scratch, bite and hurt himself. The coat of your puppy will be 'ready for hand stripping' from about three months old and plucking out the hairs will not hurt.

There are a lot of different products you can use: dog combs, rakes, brushes, rubber brushes and slicker brushes (brushes that have a lot of curved hooks). It depends on your puppy's coat which material you will need to provide the best care. You can ask professional advice at a grooming salon or pet store.

Your puppy really not have to take a bath every week. Rinsing with water is often sufficient if he played in the mud. You can use dog shampoo if your puppy is very dirty, do not use normal shampoo as they affect the sebum layer of the skin. This sebum layer is important to keep the skin supple and protects against dehydration and infections.

Make sure your puppy does not slip when you wash him in a bath or shower, you can use a non-slip rubber bath mat to prevent this.

Good nutrition is also important for healthy skin and a shiny coat. Nutrition with special ingredients, such as

Omega-3 fats, Omega-6 fats and vitamin B have a positive influence on the skin and the coat.



*"Always practise and take small steps, it can be a little scary for your puppy."*



## Sequel of the puppy course: Basic course 1

After completing the puppy course your dog can start the basic course. This is often a good idea because the dogs are 4 months old at the end of the puppy course and you will then clearly notice a change in their behaviour. They are no longer puppies, they become mischievous, they do not always listen to you and are going to push their boundaries. It is nice to continue to train in a group when these changes occur.

We focus on raising your dog in the basic course 1. We will work on obedience, walking on a leash, leash skills, "sit and stay", "down", "come", and more in multiple different situations. We train functional and practice oriented. Balance & coordination and cooperation will be discussed to further strengthen the bond with the owner and confidence in the owner. The basic course consists of 6 lessons and the start dates can be found on our website and Facebook page.

After that it is possible to move on to basic course 2, in which we focus on training. We will work on walking without the dog pulling on the leash, "sit and stay" at a distance and out of sight, walking beside the owner after you tell your dog to come, "down and stay", "go to place", "come" and more in multiple different situations. We focus on generalization so that your dog will learn to listen in different situations. We train functional and practice oriented and work together to make sure your dog will exhibit good behaviour whenever you want. There is there is always time for your own input because we work in small groups.

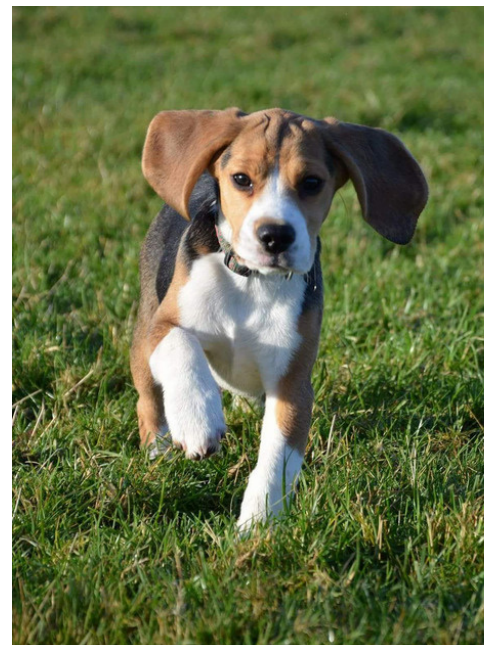
Sometimes you do not have time to do a course or it is not possible due to other reasons, that is why we offer private lessons at any desired location so we can always help you.

And of course it is also always possible to participate in one of our activities or other courses and workshops.

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## Diploma and rosette

Your puppy will get a diploma and rosette when you complete the puppy course. We would love it if you would take a picture of that and email this to: [info@dogtalk-cursussen](mailto:info@dogtalk-cursussen). After completing the basic courses the puppy again get a beautiful rosette – a pink, grey and white one – and you will get a certificate after each course or workshop. Please make sure you do not lose the certificate because dog training is mandatory in some countries, this is not the case in the Netherlands as of now but may be changed in the future.



***"Yay my first diploma!"***

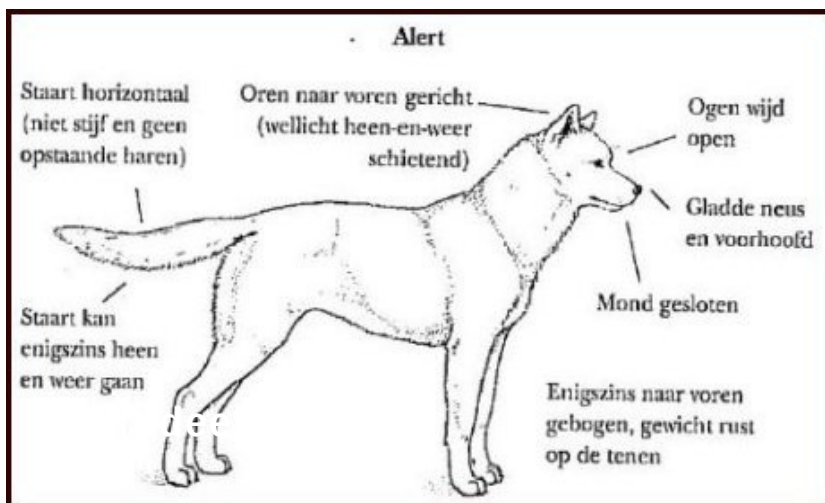
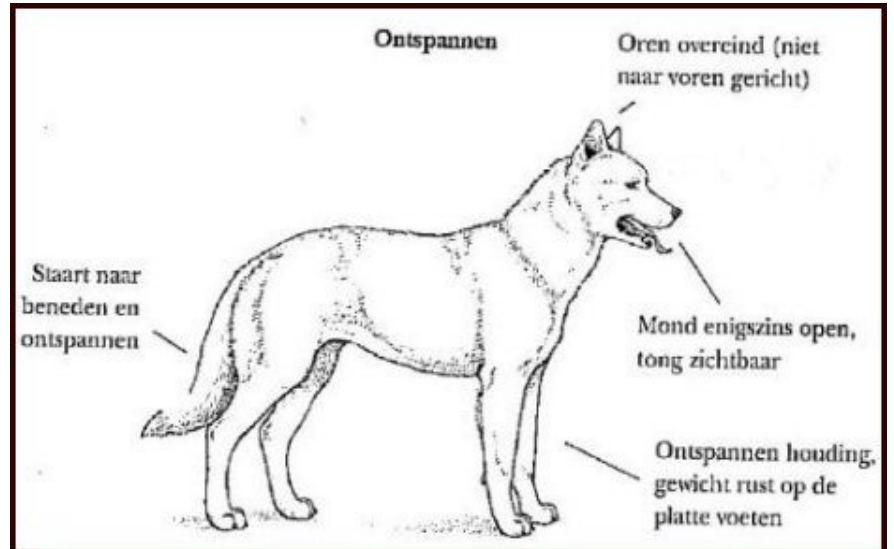
**You can share pictures at email: [info@dogtalk.nl](mailto:info@dogtalk.nl)**

## Body language - postures

We have already talked about the different forms of body language dogs can use in other handouts. Now we will discuss the postures. It is important to realize that we must always take the context into account when we interpret body language, but also the fact that dogs are masters of ambivalent behaviour. So they can often show several different "emotions" with just one posture. For example, a dog wagging his tail is not always a happy dog.

### Relaxed dog

- Ears up (not facing forward)
- Mouth slightly open, tongue visible
- Relaxed posture, weight rests on flat feet
- Tail down and relaxed

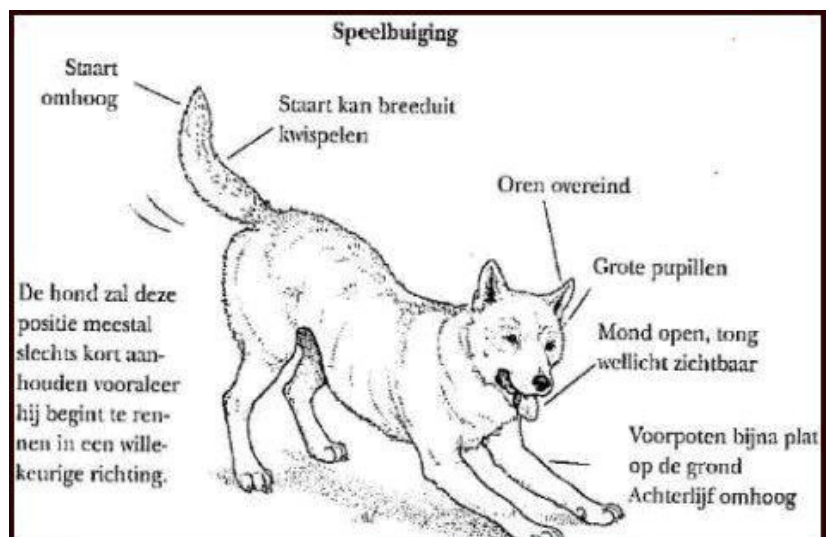


### Alert dog:

- Ears facing forward (can move back and forth)
- Eyes wide open
- Smooth nose and forehead
- Mouth closed
- Bent forward, weight leans on the toes
- Tail horizontal (not stiff and hair not raised)
- Tail can go back and forth slightly

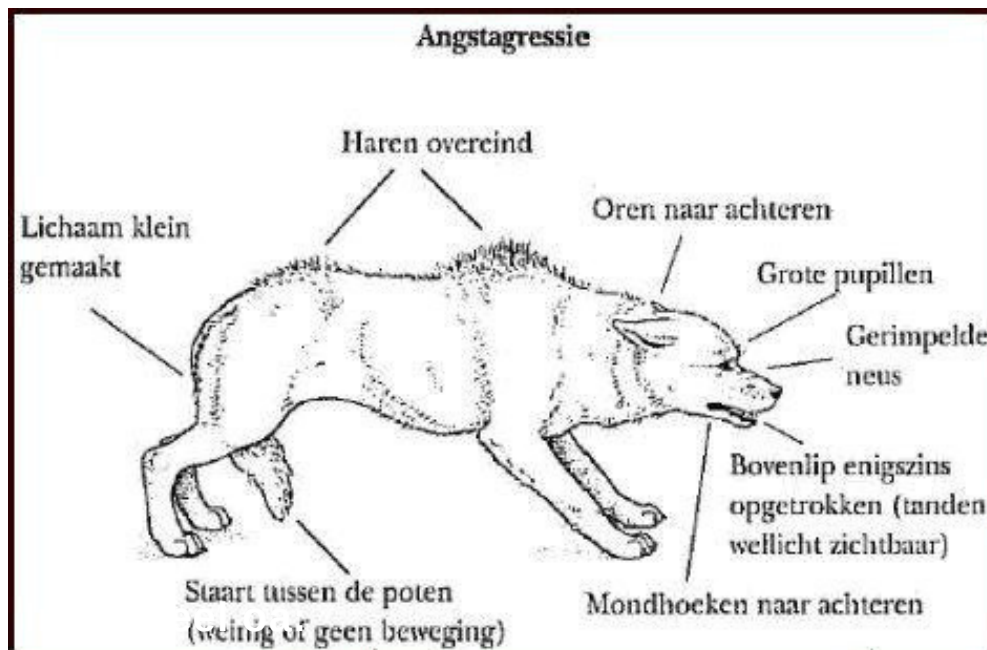
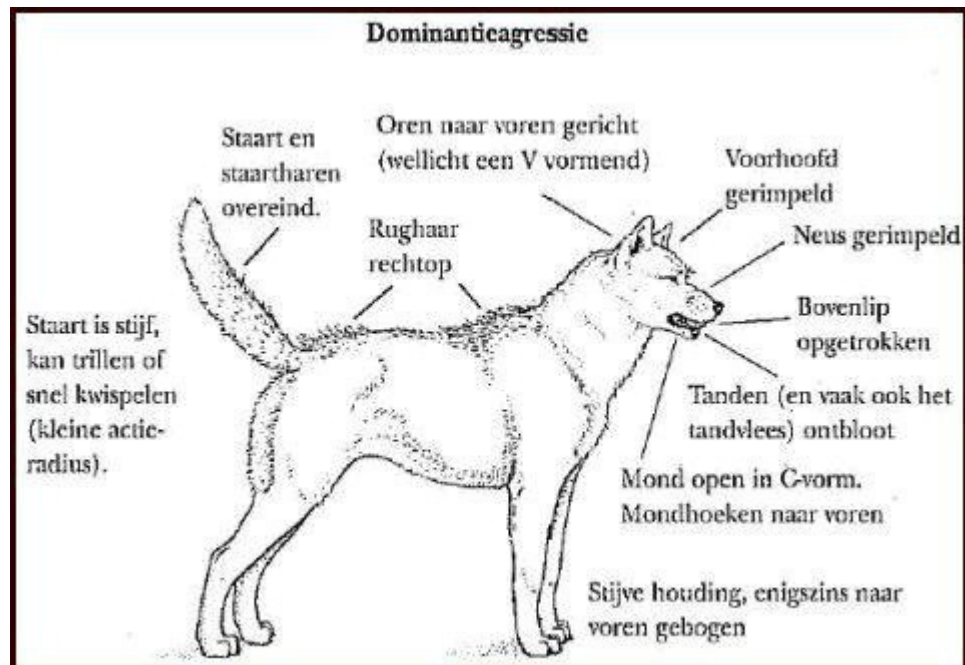
### Dog in a playing posture:

- Ears up
- Large pupils
- Mouth open, tongue can be visible
- Front legs almost flat on the ground
- Backside up in the air
- Tail raised and can make wide sweeping motions



## Dominant aggressive dog:

- Ears facing forward
- Wrinkled forehead
- Nose wrinkled
- Upper lip raised
- Teeth and often also gums bared
- Mouth open, corners of the mouth facing forward
- Stiff posture, slightly bent forward
- Hair on back raised
- Tail and tail hair raised
- Tail is stiff but can vibrate or wag quickly and briefly

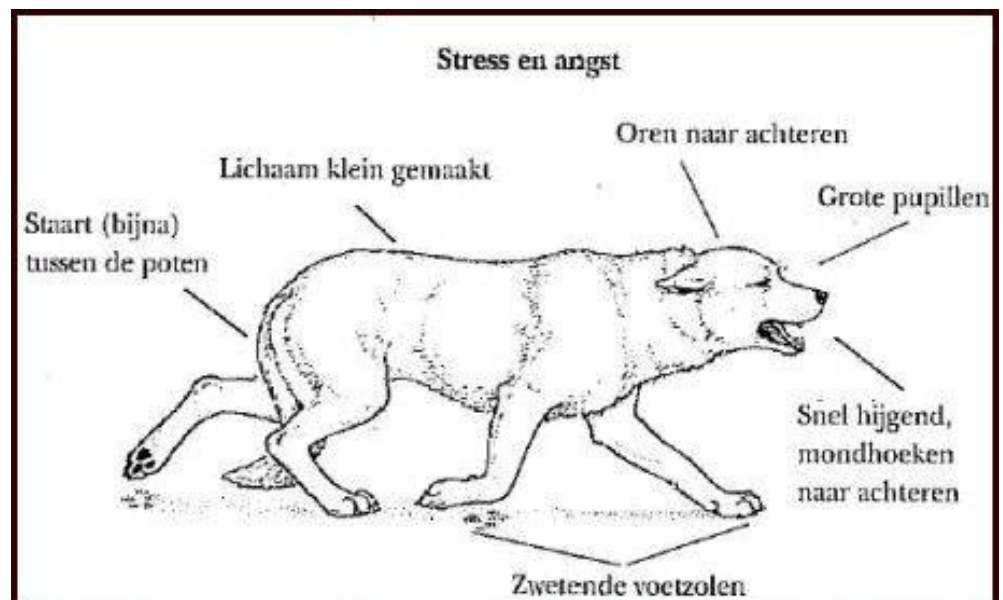


## Dog with anxiety aggression:

- Ears facing backwards
- Large pupils
- Wrinkled nose
- Upper lip raised, front teeth visible
- Corners of the mouth facing back
- Hairs raised
- Makes himself look smaller
- Tail between the legs

## Dog with stress and anxiety:

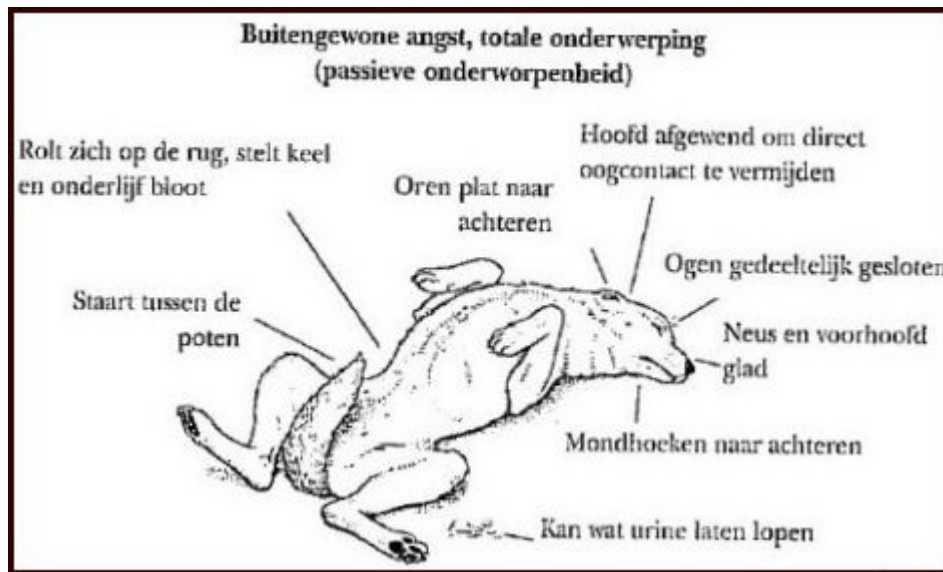
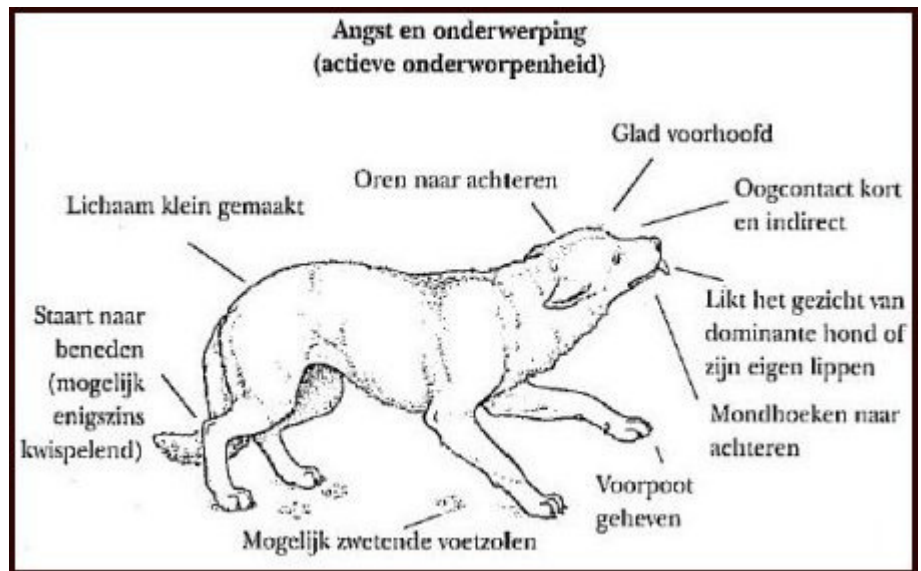
- Ears facing backwards
- Large pupils
- Panting fast
- Corners of the mouth facing back
- Sweaty feet
- Makes his body small
- Tail (almost) between the legs





### Active submission due to anxiety:

- Ears facing backwards
- Smooth forehead
- Eye contact is short and indirect
- Licks the face of the other dog or his own lips
- Corners of the mouth facing back
- Front leg lifted
- Sweaty feet
- Makes the body small
- Tail down, often wagging



### Passive submission due to anxiety:

- Ears flat and facing backwards
- Head turned away to avoid direct eye contact
- Eyes partially closed
- Smooth nose and forehead
- Corners of the mouth facing back
- Can urinate
- Roll on his back
- Exposes throat and belly
- Tail on the belly.

Perhaps you have noticed that different emotions cause the many behaviours. There are also certain breed characteristics, e.g. differences in fur, ears, tail and many more.

It is very important to realize that these behaviours are just moments in time, a dog can show dominant aggression in certain situations but is not necessarily dominant. It is just like fear, sometimes it is present and sometimes it is not.

Please observe your dog and other dogs when they are outside a lot, then you will notice that it will become easier to recognize these characteristics. You can also go to one of our lectures on body language, it is listed under "events" our Facebook page.

*"Learning to read body language requires a lot of practice, please start observing and interpret what you see later."*



## Homework assignments

.You can again get started with some extra exercises. You have a good foundation after completing the puppy course but your young dog still has a lot to learn. Therefore, we will train “come” and “walking on the leash” extra.

### “Come”

**What you will need:**

- Leash (preferably a long one)
- Treats

Please put your dog on the leash and walk backwards – away from him – when he comes to you, you use your special “come” reward and reward him when he is near you. You can wait with giving the reward after doing that a number of times until the dog will sit down after coming to you. It is also a good idea to occasionally take off the leash and put it back on when the dog is with you, so that he get used to being put on the leash after coming to you.

You can practice this on a longer leash if the dog understands this exercise (you can buy suitable 3 meter lines and 10 meter lines from us). You can practice “come” on the beginning of the leash so that your dog cannot make a mistake. Slowly you can walk further away from your dog and please reward him after you call him and he comes to you. You can also throw the treats away from the dog so that he can run after it and you can walk away and call him again. Please make the distance a little bigger every time and use more distractions.

### “Walk on the leash” (with hand touch)

**What you will need:**

- Leash
- Treats

Please put the dog on the leash. We will first we start with the hand touch: put your open hand in front of him and reward if he touches your hand with his snout. You can slowly increase the distance between your dog and your hand.

It is time for the next step if he feels comfortable touching your hand when you put it in front of him. Try and make eye contact with your dog, tell them you will go for a walk together, and let him follow your hand for a short distance. Please reward him for the walking along with you and then slowly walk further and further without rewarding him. Dogs like it if, for example, you walk in all directions – left and right – if you change your pace or let them walk or jump over something.

*"Thank you very much for your participation in the puppy course! We hope to see you soon at one of our other activities or courses."*

*Team DogTalk*

