

# DOGTALK PUPPY COURSE

## PUPPY COURSE THEORY



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## PUPPY COURSE LESSON 5

*Almost the last lesson*

*You and your puppy have learned a lot over the past few weeks. It took some time to get used to each other and now that you seem to understand each other your puppy has already reached a new phase in his life. His world is bigger and it is time to push the boundaries!*

*We have one more lesson planned for the finishing touch and then the pups will be ready for the basic course. Have you registered for that?*

*Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. The best way to reach us is via e-mail:*

*info@dogtalk-cursussen.nl*

*Sincerely,  
Team DogTalk*



# Socialization, there is more!

We talked about the primary socialization phase before, but there are more stages that your puppy will go through until he will be an adult dog.

The secondary socialization phase starts when they are 12 weeks to about 6 months old. It is often thought that the socialization stops when they are 12 weeks old but it continues – actually all throughout their lives. However, research has shown that pups who have had no contact with certain stimuli from birth to about 14 weeks may develop problems with this in the future. The period between the third and fourth or fifth month is called the pecking order phase. And that is for good reason.

Brothers and sisters from the same litter or dogs in a pack will determine their pecking order in this phase. That also applies to puppies in a “human pack”. It is best to set rules consistently and to not break your own rules. The pecking order phase has nothing to do with being dominant, it is normal behaviour and an expression of the possibility to learn. The puppy will try to figure out his boundaries.

During this period the puppy will test other dogs to see how far he can go. It is not a good idea to let a bubbly puppy play with other puppies that he can dominate. He will then get too much 'winner experience' and learn that he can control everything and everyone. That can later result in problematic behaviour such as not subjecting to another dog, aggression, jumping on people or other dogs, knocking down everything and everyone. You can sometimes let a dog that has a wait-and-see attitude play with another dog he can win from. Please do not let such puppies play with bubbly dogs. There is a big chance that they will become frightened which could later result in anxiety aggression, among other things. All puppies need help in this phase, and as an owner you can control the contact with other dogs and, very important, intervene when necessary!

Somewhere between 6 and 18 months the dog will start puberty, the young dog will become sexually mature. He can sometimes be extra naughty, pretend he does not hear you and challenge the owner .. It is important to stay consistent! Take a step back with the exercises and try to go back to the difficulty level you were on later. Please try not to be impatient. Every dog shows this behaviour, they cannot change that. You will help your dog to get through this difficult period by being kind and consistent.

Hormonal changes occur during puberty. Males will exhibit male behaviour under the influence of the hormone testosterone. They will lift their paw and mark their territory, and sometimes also scratch after they pooped. Some males will – to the horror of their owners –fight with other dogs for the first time, usually with other males. It depends on physical strength, the amount of win and loss experiences and on the attitude of the owner how this behaviour will develop further.

Bitches will get their first heat cycle and can also show behavioural changes. They will listen less good just before the heat cycle. Many will be catty, especially to other bitches. There are some that, like males, will mark, sometimes even with their paw up in the air.

It is a difficult period for owners when their dog is in puberty. They will listen less good, it can seem like they have forgotten all the things they learned. In addition, the dog can also defend his territory, which can lead to barking and aggression. Dogs will be adults from when they are about 14 months old but that depends on the breed. Small dogs are will reach adulthood faster than big breeds. For example, a Great Dane will be fully grown when he is about 2 ½ years old. The muscles develop, they gain weight and their appearance changes. There is a difference between mental maturity and physical maturity!

## Sometimes you will need help taking care of your dog.

Sometimes you will need help taking care of your dog. It is good to think about this at an early stage, also because you can get the pup used to new things easily.

Some common services are:

- Veterinarian
- Groomer
- Dog walking service
- Holiday care

**Veterinarian:** it is important that you have a good feeling when it comes to your veterinarian. Do you have the feeling you can ask everything, do they have enough time for your puppy – and perhaps even more important – what is the travel time and/or distance? Do you know where to go if your own veterinarian is not available?

Please take the time to choose the right vet, so that you will be in good hands when needed. Many people are not aware of the emergency service; there is an emergency clinic in every region, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In our region, for example, this is the medical centre for animals in Amsterdam (MCD). Please do not wait to ask for help, and contact an emergency service in case of emergency! This can save lives, so save the number of the emergency service in your area in your phone.

**Groomer:** not all dogs will go to a groomer, but with some fur types this is a good idea and sometimes even necessary. Again, please start searching and visiting the groomer young so that the puppy can get used to it. When choosing a groomer you can take a number of things into account: how much time do they have for your dog, what are the costs? Do you like the way they groom your dog? Sometimes different models or techniques are possible. Tip: if you see a dog of the same breed which is groomed in a way you like, you can ask where this was done.

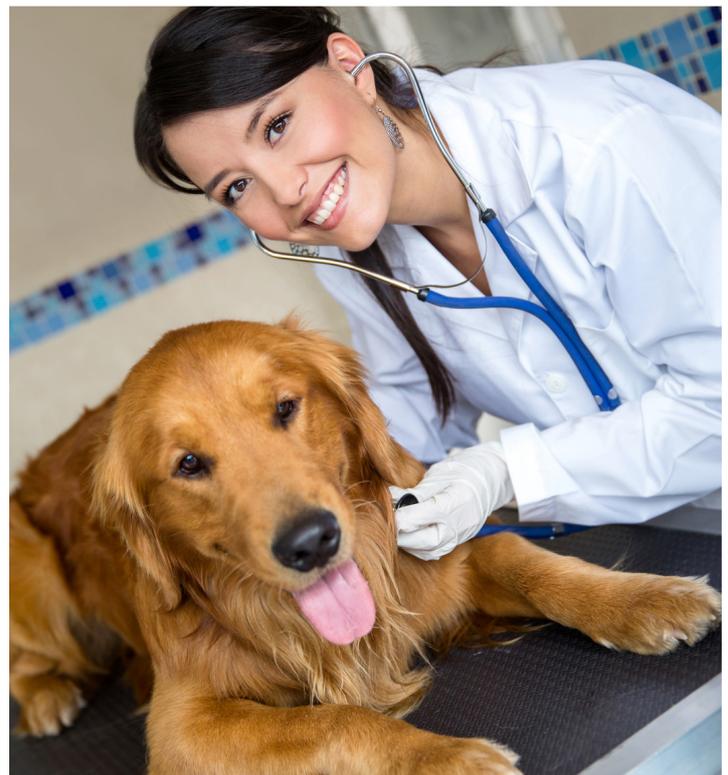
**Dog walking service:** sometimes you do not have enough time to walk your dog because you work for example. Or do you just like to have some time off? Then you can let your dog go with a dog walking service. Again, there are a number of things you can research: is the staff qualified, how are the dogs transported, how many dogs are there, where are they going etc. Dogs from about 6/8 months old can join the DogTalk dog walking service, in consultation with us.

Please let us know if you would like to know more about our dog walking service.

**Holiday care:** please do not wait to think about holiday care, and preferably look for two or more possibilities. Many people choose to leave the dog with family or friends. That is a good possibility, because you know who your dog is with. But unfortunately we have often heard that people change their mind at the last moment, or that something unexpected happens. You chose to have the dog and your family and friends can find taking care of your dog not very pleasant.

That is why it is a good idea to also look for professional boarding kennels and to go there and see how they work. Many will want your dog to stay for a test night, so that they can see how your dog will act in the boarding kennel. Most are often quickly fully booked for the popular holiday periods, preparation and planning is therefore of great importance.

If you need any help with this, we will gladly give you tips and recommendations. ([info@dogtalkcursussen.nl](mailto:info@dogtalkcursussen.nl))



## Harness versus collar

Your puppy will have to wear a collar or harness with a leash if you take him outside, because all dogs should be on a leash in the Netherlands. This means that dogs cannot run free in public areas unless there is a sign that says it is allowed.

Both collars and harnesses have advantages and disadvantages.

### Collar:

+ the collar is around the neck of the dog, and will not impede any movements.

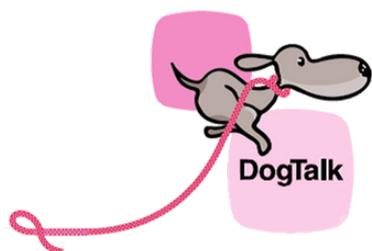
- A disadvantage of the collar is that all force is placed on the vulnerable neck of the dog. We therefore recommend a collar as long as a puppy still pulls while on a leash.

### Harness:

+ a harness covers the dog's chest. There are less vulnerable structures here than in the neck and forces are distributed over a larger area.

- Harnesses are more expensive to purchase and if they do not fit properly they can impede the movements, it is therefore important to try them on before you purchase one.

We recommend a harness for puppies, because puppies still pull on the leash and you should try and avoid that force on their necks. Wearing a light collar with, for example, an ID plate is no problem at all, it is just not wise to put the line on it, it is better to put that on the harness. We have puppy harnesses in our assortment, so if you want to try one during a lesson, please let us know. If your puppy has grown out of his or her collar or harness, you can always leave it with us, then we will ensure that someone else can use it.



***"Train on the basis of attention, trust and cooperation."***

## Basic course 1

From 16 weeks or after completing the puppy course your puppy, or young dog, can start the basic course 1. This is a 6-week course. The focus is on raising your dog. We will work on, among other things, obedience, walking on a leash, leash skills, sit and stay, down, come here in several different situations. We train functional and practice oriented. Balance & coordination and cooperation are discussed to further strengthen the bond with and confidence in the owner. There is always time for your own input because we work in small groups. You will receive useful tips by email about the lesson material discussed after each lesson. Please ask for the next start date!

[info@dogtalk-cursussen.nl](mailto:info@dogtalk-cursussen.nl)

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.



# Body language, stress signals

Dogs are masters of body language, and it is up to you to read this so that you can guide the puppy. We earlier talked about calming signals, this makes the dog to calm himself down in an uncomfortable situation. They do not do this consciously! Seeing these signals should therefore be a sign for you that the dog thinks the situation is scary.

There are also stress signals, which the dog shows when he experiences stress. A certain amount of stress is part of the dog's life, because we ask them to adapt to our world. Stress can build up, at some point the "bucket" is full and the dog cannot react other than violently.

This is also why these signals get more serious:

## - First signals (green)

- o Sniffing the ground
- o Scratching

## - Calming signals (green)

- o Yawning
- o Licking lips
- o Looking away
- o Closing eyes
- o Turning away, turning back towards other dog
- o Move slow
- o Sauntering

## - Stress reactions (yellow)

- o Panting
- o Dilated pupils
- o Shaking off the adrenalin
- o Sweating paws
- o Shaking
- o Turning eyes away, white of the eyes can be seen
- o Barking

## - Focus (yellow)

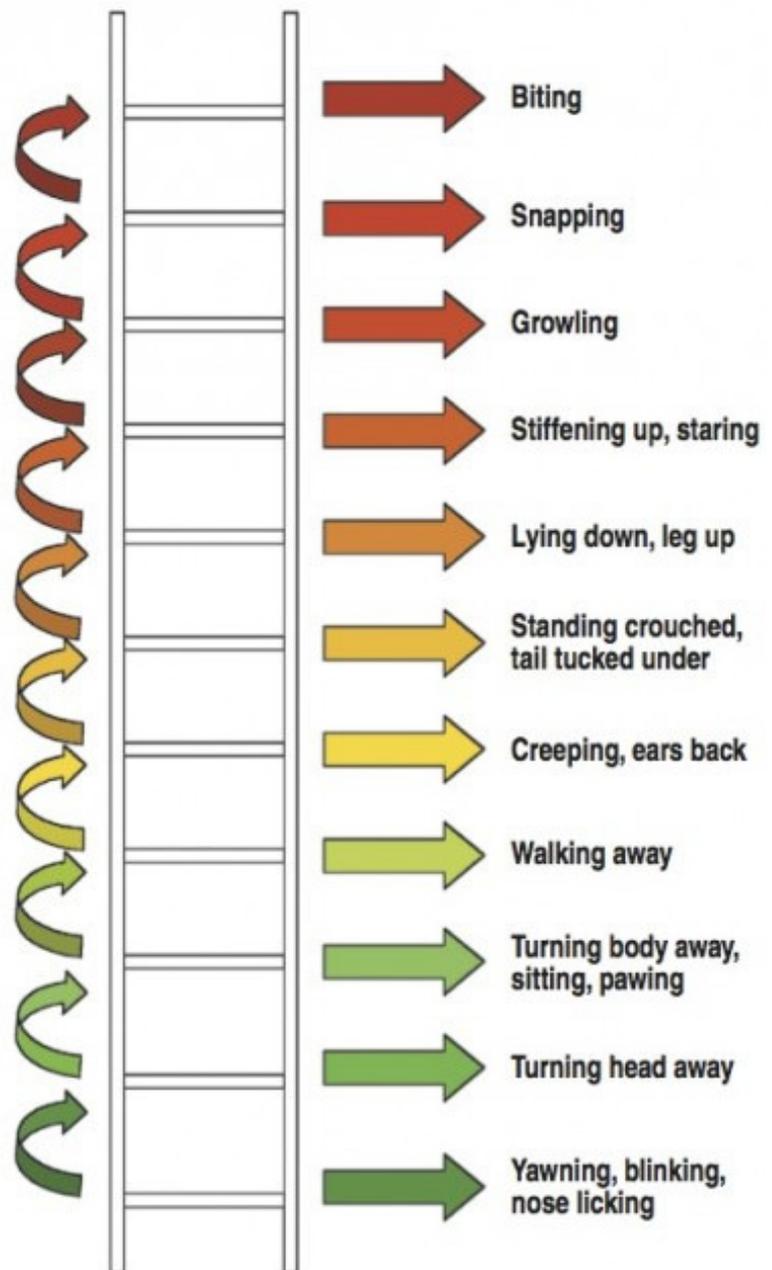
- o Calming signals are no longer shown
- o Closing the mouth, lips are tense
- o Body stiff

## - Ready to attack (orange)

- o Showing teeth
- o Growling
- Snapping (orange)
- o Snapping

## - Biting (red)

- o Biting
- o Biting repeatedly



Above you can see that the different behaviours have different colours, this is something we often use in practice but what also refers to the ladder of aggression. Aggression is a normal part of a dog's life; if the stress level gets too high the dog is only able to use aggression to communicate. It is up to you to prevent and manage this. We also give regular lectures on this subject, you can find the schedule on our Facebook page.

## To play with your puppy

Playing with your puppy is fun, but it also has other benefits. Playing together ensures a good relationship. It keeps the dog active and it can help against boredom. It also stimulates the pup both physically and mentally. But the puppy also learns the rules of social engagement.

If you both know how to play, playing can also be used as a reward or a distraction to prevent problem behaviour. The most important thing is that the game stimulates the natural behaviour of the dog. Not all games are suitable for all dogs, so please take the time to find out which games are fun and which are not. There are two conditions when it comes to playing: the dog should like it and it should stimulate natural behaviour. Every game has rules, which ensure safety. Please ask yourself which toys are safe for my dog? Are there, for example, sharp edges, can it break or does it contain small parts, can it cause harm to the dog? But also is the environment where we play safe? When will you play? If the dog has just eaten or for example just before training is not a very good idea. And what are you going to do, what will my dog like?

### Some examples:

- Ball games – retrieve
- Pull games
- Frolicking
- Dog sport
- Thinking games
- Sniffing games
- Food puzzles

*“Winning makes playing fun!”*

Make sure the game is fun for your pup. Make sure it is not too difficult and not too demanding and that your pup can also win! Please stop the game on time if you play a game that excites the dog such as a pull game. That is before the dog shows the orange or red behaviours, so before the dog starts to growl, shake and bite in something else instead of the toy.



## We offer more at DogTalk!

You've probably noticed that we do more than only puppy training at DogTalk. We offer the following services: courses, dog walking service and behavioural therapy. We offer several different courses such as the puppy course, basic courses, private lessons but also specialized courses that teaches dogs to come to you, or impulse control. In addition we try to give you inspiration for different activities you can do with your dog, for example: Stand Up Paddle, Frisbee, play fetch, tracking things etc.

Do you want to be updated about these activities? Then please like our Facebook page – because at the events we promote these activities – and sign up for our newsletter.

You can subscribe to our **newsletter** at: [www.dogtalk-cursussen.nl](http://www.dogtalk-cursussen.nl)

at the bottom of the page

Facebook: Dogtalkcursussen

## Homework assignments

Please continue practicing this week with all the exercises from the past lessons. Practice a few times a day, just a few minutes at a time. Sometimes you will have to take a small step and often puppies need a little extra help as they get older. So ask yourself what you are doing wrong if your puppy makes a mistake, what is in the environment that the can distract him and how you can make it easier?

This week please do the following exercises:

- Walk on the leash
- Send your dog to the blanket.

### *“Walk on the leash”*

**What you will need:**

- Leash (min. 1.8 meters long)
- Treats

Please put the puppy on the leash, ask for his attention and when the puppy comes to you/looks at you give him a treat between your feet. When the puppy eats it you can step around the puppy and put a treat between your feet behind him. So you rotate around your dog and after a number of treats the pup will automatically turn to you.

When the puppy turns, you can give a few treats in front of him "treat in front" and behind him " treat behind", then walk away from the puppy with your back turned towards him. Wait for him to come to you and then please reward him on the floor near your feet. If the puppy eats it, you can step away again, when the puppy comes to you reward again etc.

Slowly you can postpone the reward a bit, so after a few steps and then you can give the treat from your hand instead of on the ground. You can make it more difficult and step away when the puppy has



## *“Practice often and stop on time, when the puppy is still does the exercise successful”*

### *“Send your dog to the blanket”*

**What you will need:**

- Blanket
- Leash (min. 1.8 meters long)
- Treats

In this exercise it is important that the puppy understands the blanket exercise we did before very well and can also stay on it for a while. Please put the blanket down and put your dog on the leash. Walk together about one step away from the blanket and wait until the dog goes to the blanket himself. If he does that please reward him with the reward word, and when the puppy is on the blanket walk towards it and reward him on the blanket. You can let your dog “free” from the blanket and walk away together, then look at the blanket again and reward again when the pup walks towards it.

If the puppy understands this exercise, so if he goes to the blanket if you look or point at it, you can also link a verbal command to it. You can make the distance a little longer in small steps. It is very simple! If the puppy does not go to the blanket, your steps are too big.