

# CANINE BEHAVIOUR TYPE INDEX

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## **Abstract**

While working intensively with companion dogs it emerged that certain behavior types present particular management challenges in a domestic setting. Gosling, Kwan, John & Oliver validated the concept of dogs having a distinct measurable personality type (Gosling, Kwan, John, Oliver 2003 *A Dog's Got Personality: A Cross-Species Comparative Approach to Personality Judgments in Dogs and Humans* Journal of Personality & Social Psychology. 2003 Dec Vol 85(6) 1161-1169).

Our team (Pet Connect) developed The Canine Behavior Type Index (CBTI) (Patent Pending) typing companion dogs into 12 distinct profiles. There are 3 psychological dimensions: (1)Environmental Order (either Organized or Spontaneous); (2)Social Order (either Alpha, Beta, or Gamma); (3)Motivation (either Medium or High) giving 12 possible outcomes. The CBTI is not breed specific though breeds may cluster around particular profiles.

Questions were administered to 50 volunteer pet dog owners with 1-3 dogs each. Each owner played a board game in solitude. The board game has twenty-six two-sided cards with opposing statements about the dog. The owner selects the most appropriate statement about their dog. There were nine cards for each of the Environmental Order and Motivation dimensions, and eight for the Social Order dimension. The CBTI type was decided according to a majority of answers, then the corresponding CBTI printed profile given to the owner.

The owner filled in a questionnaire about the perceived accuracy of the CBTI printed profile to their companion dog. In preliminary statistical analysis, the owner perceived accuracy ranged from 70-100 percent. The person administering the test was a Veterinary Behaviorist who also typed each dog independently of the owner, based on behavioral questions and observations. The correlation between the owners and the researcher's selected CBTI type is  $P$  is less than .01.

The CBTI recognizes that certain canine psychological profiles best suit specific tasks and lifestyles. A behavior management plan was tailored to meet the specific needs of each CBTI profile. Each dog requires exercise, deference, environmental enrichment, rapport and respect exercises, though the relative importance and style of each exercise depends on the dog's CBTI profile.

## **Foreword and Introduction**

The motivation to produce the Canine Behaviour Type Index came from repeatedly seeing problem dogs with similar personalities. No method for identifying canine personality types existed, which is hardly surprising given that dogs' possession of a personality is not widely accepted amongst animal behaviour experts.

We decided to research a way to characterize a dog's personality, and to produce a management and training schema for each personality type. This would enable dog lovers everywhere to access

information to understand and solve their problem dog behaviours, or to simply better understand their canine companion and enjoy them more.

### **Introduction**

The Canine Behaviour Type Index™ divides dog behaviour into 12 types based on three dimensions of interactive factors.

### **The Environmental Dimension**

There are two elements to the Environmental Dimension: The Organised type and the Spontaneous type. The Organised type seeks an orderly controlled environment. It loves to herd things and is team focused. The Spontaneous type is more self-focused and interested in a particular facet of its environment at any time, rather than with the larger picture that the Organised type focuses on.

### **The Social Dimension**

This dimension refers to social position and willingness to comply with social rules. It is a linear hierarchy of three types: A, B, or Gamma in that order. The Alpha type is most dominant, confident and controlling socially. The Beta type is socially mobile and challenging of the social order. The Gamma type is a born follower and is highly rule bound socially.

### **The Motivation Dimension**

This is a general term denoting how active your dog is. Dogs display either high or medium levels of motivation. High levels will amplify other characteristics in the preceding two dimensions. Medium levels will tone down the other behavioural dimensions.

### **The Twelve Profiles**

The twelve Canine Behaviour Type Index™ profiles are:

Commando (OAH)	Director (OAM)	Defender (OBH)
Sentry (OBM)	Deputy (OGH)	Diplomat (OGM)
Rebel (SAH)	Aristocrat (SAM)	Adventurer (SBH)
Dreamer (SBM)	Investigator (SGH)	Companion (SGM)

### **The Environment Dimension**

All dogs are either “Organised” or “Spontaneous” in the way they interact with and manipulate their environment. Their preference influences their world view and all of their thinking and actions.

#### ***The Organised Preference***

Organised types impose order on their environment. For example working and herding breeds are driven to herd and cause other animals to clump together. Some dogs are so motivated to do this that they will even circle gold fish in a tank until they cluster into one corner!

The Organised dogs' instinct is to herd and protect. They enthusiastically obey their instincts to chase, heel, herd, and protect. They are typically highly intelligent, easily trained, and team focused. They have been bred for trainability, hence intelligence is incidental rather than an integral part of being an Organised type. Cross bred dogs displaying a Spontaneous character type can in addition have the intelligence more commonly found in an Organised type.

An Organised and highly intelligent (the two often go together) high activity type is at increased risk of suffering environmental impoverishment, and the disastrous psychological consequences, if insufficient mental stimulation is available.

Those consequences usually manifest as behavioural disturbances. Boredom somewhat understates the situation of the environmentally impoverished dog. Think of a human shut in prolonged solitary confinement, deprived of all stimuli. The effected dog will try to remedy its impoverished situation by finding or making the lacking stimulation.

The Organised dog in such a situation is likely to attack washing, bark, escape, chase and chew items. If prevented from self remedy, for example by confinement or being tied up, the dog's options are limited.

It may over-groom (known as acral lick dermatitis), become aggressive, or display any number of disturbed behaviours. The Organised dog can develop stereotypic obsessive compulsive behaviour patterns such as fence running in a set order, and monotonous barking. These are all very serious manifestations of a psychiatric disorder.

Because the Organised type strives for an orderly, controlled environment, they are uncomfortable and less tolerant of routine change, lack of rules or rule changes. The Organised type does not enjoy rule breaking by humans or canines, even in jest. They are straight-laced and can be almost teutonic in the extreme. They crave consistency.

The Organised type enjoys working together as part of a team. They readily look to other team members to work together co-operatively. For example of working cattle dog readily co-operates with other working dogs and their human to perform some herding task, and is aware of the whole herd and other involved individuals ie. The big picture.

### ***The Spontaneous Preference***

The Spontaneous type is singularly-focused and interested in a particular facet of its environment at any time, rather than with the larger picture that the Organised type focuses on. The Spontaneous dog will readily go into a psychological zone which serves to cut it off from other aspects of its environment. For example a spaniel smelling an exciting scent will quickly become engrossed and not readily break off on command; A terrier remembers its ratting beginnings chasing a small moving

object to ground seeking to kill it with a strong neck breaking death shake. It seemingly does not even hear your command. In reality, the Spontaneous dog may be psychologically deaf at these times.

Extreme environmental impoverishment in the Spontaneous type manifests in behavioural disturbances too. The effected Spontaneous dog will try to remedy its impoverished situation by finding or making the lacking stimulation.

All dogs in such situations are likely to attack washing, bark, chase and chew items, dig and escape. A particular trait of the Spontaneous dog will be to play in their water bowl. If prevented from self remedy, for example by confinement or being tied up, the dog's options are limited.

The Spontaneous dog can develop stereotypic obsessive compulsive behaviour patterns such as tail chasing and chewing, or adrenalised barking (this is when the dog receives an internal high from becoming excited from barking). These are all very serious manifestations of a psychiatric disorder.

The Spontaneous character is much less rule bound and does not seek to impose any special order on its environment. It is more tolerant of rule breaking and can invent ways to break rules and as such may appear cheeky. The Spontaneous dog has a less serious nature, can be creative and funny. On the other hand, it is more difficult to train usually. The Spontaneous dog needs to be given plenty of patience and may learn by rote.

The listening and focusing skills of the Spontaneous type are naturally less tuned to us than those of the Organised type. The Spontaneous dog listens to its instincts or inner voice telling it to obey fixed motor patterns involving narrow and independent focus. For example the scent hound on a trail, the retriever focused on a retrieve, the fighting dog focused on its opponent.

### **The Social Dimension**

This dimension refers to social position and willingness to comply with social rules. It is a linear hierarchy of three types: Alpha, Beta, or Gamma in that order.

Dogs are born with a genetic predisposition towards being either Alpha, Beta, or Gamma. However these types are relative to one another so if two Alpha types are housed together, they may fight and dislike one another, OR one may be a relatively lower Alpha type and accept the Beta type role in this context restoring harmony. It may also be possible to achieve this result through behaviour treatment. It is important to note that it is only possible to modify any given type, not change it completely. An Alpha type can never become a Gamma type. Neither can a Gamma type become an Alpha type.

Males and females have separate but similar social hierarchies, hence males and females clash less often since their respective domains are over their own gender. Males tend to be more socially rule bound than females, hence inter-female aggression is more likely to result in injury. Dog social rules

dictate that physical injury is rarely inflicted, just convincing displays, intimidation and chosen deference.

### ***The Alpha Preference***

The Alpha type is most dominant, confident and controlling socially. It has an aura of calm confidence surrounding it. The body posture is high and regal, chin carriage high giving the impression of looking down its nose at the world. It is highly rule bound socially and is a natural leader. The Alpha type is intolerant of others breaching social rules.

The Alpha type chooses its fights carefully to win. It is infrequently reactive, but forceful. It may decide it does not like or want a particular bone or toy, and allow a lower ranked dog to have it. The Alpha type readily uses active controlling strategies such as grasping your hand in its mouth to prevent you from doing something it does not like eg. While grooming, you're Alpha type grasps the hand using the brush, preventing you from further brushing.

### ***The Beta Preference***

The Beta type is socially mobile and challenging of the social order. It is a social stirrer, or climber, but never quite seems to make it, encountering a glass ceiling. The Beta type is less socially rule bound than the Alpha or Gamma type. The Beta type is inherently insecure, aspiring to be an Alpha type. This insecurity may serve as an additional motivator creating additional drive and activity needs. The Beta type likes to challenge the social order and is opportunistic in doing so. The Beta type uses both active and passive strategies. It can be unpredictable and impulsive.

The Beta type dog is most commonly referred to consulting behaviourists because their insecurity often shows up as unwanted behaviour.

### ***The Gamma Preference***

The Gamma type is a born follower and is highly rule bound socially. Everyone likes the Gamma type, because they are highly submissive and amenable. They excel at following doggy social laws and tend to lack confidence and be self effacing. The Gamma type can not take over, even if their human does not provide leadership. The Gamma type will just become anxious if the pack lacks a leader.

The Gamma type will display low body posturing and readily adopt submissive postures such as rolling onto the back, sitting and lying down. They employ passive strategies mainly.

### ***The Pack Structure***

Some humans who do not appreciate a dog's need for clear leadership try to impose human middle class values of equality on the canine/human pack. A Gamma type becomes rudderless and anxious. An Alpha type may take over. A Beta type may become difficult to manage. Your relationship with your

dog will improve substantially if you take the lead. All dogs appreciate and respect a firm kind and consistent leader. Children need leadership too. It is okay to spoil them all you wish, as long as there are clear rules and your dog demonstrates respect for your leadership.

We all interact slightly differently with each human we know. Likewise with dogs, it will optimize your relationship to interact slightly differently with each of the 12 CBTI profile types.

### **The Motivation Dimension**

This is a general term denoting how active your dog is. Dogs display either high or medium levels of motivation. High levels will amplify other characteristics in the preceding two dimensions. Medium levels will tone down the other behavioural dimensions.

### ***The High Activity Preference***

A High activity type will go all day long. They can have incredibly high energy levels, both physical and mental, that require spending. The social and environmental dimensions are hence amplified and gain greater expression. This is a full on dog requiring greater maintenance. The management implications of High activity versus Medium activity type are significant.

The High activity type should have a human who is athletic, be used for aerobic work of some kind or has plenty of space to run. This dog will go crazy in an urban environment without heaps of stimulation, exercise and input. Interactive toys and working for every speck of food from a slow release operant device can be of invaluable assistance. Throw the food bowl away... it is a High activity type's worst enemy. They eat their daily ration in 5 seconds flat then have nothing to do all day but make their own fun i.e. transform your lovely landscaped garden into a doggy playground; jump the fence and be the dog-about-town for a while.

### ***The Medium Activity Preference***

The Medium activity type best suits most people in an urban environment. The social and environmental dimensions are toned down, and this dog requires much less input than a High activity type. The Medium activity type still requires activity, but is content with short walks providing just a brief change of scenery. Even small amounts of daily exercise have a good anti-depressant effect on dogs (and people). Whether it is the change in scenery or the physical activity, or a combination, is not clear.

### **Precautions**

When a dog becomes depressed it can be expressed as an increase in irritability and anxious activity, unlike humans who typically become withdrawn and reduce activity levels. The neurochemical changes occurring in depressed humans and dogs are thought to be similar. If your dog changes from a Medium activity type to a High activity type, perhaps all is not well and help from a local Veterinary Behaviorist should be sought.

Dogs under 3 years old (or 5 in cases of late social maturity) may need to be profiled each 6 months because their personality is still forming.

In cases of abnormal brain function or a psychiatric condition, the test may need to be retaken at regular intervals and after treatment.

Dogs' personality may change with senescence (old age).

Breeds tend to cluster around specific profiles, because they have been selectively bred for specific purposes. People often prefer a particular breed for their character, hence continue to select the same breed with a similar personality profile.

If your dog displays any unwanted aggressive tendencies, consult a local Veterinary Behaviourist.

Canine Behaviour Type Index™ Materials

The Canine Behaviour Type Index can be undertaken through the Pet Connect web site:

<http://www.petconnectgame.com>

Extensive management strategies for each of the 12 profiles can be sourced from the web site also.

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