

Dutch Sentence Structure series - Part 4 of 4

Dutch Sentence Structure

Part 4: Om te + Infinitive & Giving Instructions

What you will learn in this course:

- ✓ How to express purpose and goals with om ... te
- ✓ Which verbs take (om) te and which take only te
- ✓ How to use om te after adjectives and degree words
- ✓ Three ways to give instructions, from indirect to direct command
- ✓ How to soften commands like a native speaker (eens, even, maar, ...)
- ✓ Practice exercises with answer key

LEVEL	FORMAT	PAGES
A1-A2	PDF Workbook	18 pages

Introduction

Welcome to the final part of the Dutch Sentence Structure series! In Parts 1 to 3, you learned how Dutch builds sentences, asks questions, and combines clauses. In this last part, we cover two very practical structures:

1. **Om te + infinitive** → to express purpose, goals, and much more
2. **The imperative** → how to give instructions, from polite, softened requests to direct commands

How to use this workbook

Read each explanation carefully and study the examples before attempting the exercises. The answer key is at the end of this workbook.

PREVIEW – Dutch and You

Part 1 - Om te + Infinitive

1.1. What is Om te?

We use om te + infinitive to describe the purpose or goal of an action.
The “why?” of the sentence.

STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
om ... te	<i>Ik ga naar de sportschool om fit te worden.</i>

Why do you go to the gym? → To get fit. That's the purpose, so we use om ... te.

1.2 Real Helping Verbs vs. Te-Verbs

First, an important distinction. Real helping verbs need nothing at all:

NO TE	EXAMPLE
willen / moeten	<i>Ik wil slapen. / Ik moet gaan.</i>

ONLY TE	EXAMPLE
durven / hoeven	<i>Ik durf te springen. / Je hoeft niet te gaan.</i>

Why do some verbs not use om?

Verbs like *hoeven*, and *durven* only slightly modify the meaning of the main verb. There is no room for a purpose (om). Together, they form a single verb chain.

Part 2 - Giving Instructions

2.1. Three Ways to Give an Instruction

There are several ways to give instructions in Dutch, one clearer than the other. All of them are correct – it depends on the situation and how clear you need to be.

HOW DIRECT?	EXAMPLE
Indirect (asking)	<i>Kun/Wil je de was ophangen?</i>
Direct (saying)	<i>Je moet de was ophangen. (always with the verb moeten)</i>
Command	<i>Hang de was op! (verb stem, no subject)</i>

The command form:

Always use the verb stem and **no subject**. With separable verbs, the prefix goes to the end: ophangen → Hang ... op!

2.2. Softening Words: Eens, Even, Maar, Toch

A bare command can sound harsh. Dutch speakers soften instructions with small words that change the tone completely:

eens	makes an action less serious or less demanding
even	gives the impression that the action is brief and requires little effort
maar	invites the other person or gives permission. Sounds very hospitable
toch	a friendly reminder or a gentle nudge

Thank You!

You made it to the end of the Dutch Sentence Structure series. **Gefeliciteerd!** 🎉

Over these four workbooks, you've built a complete foundation: **normal word order and inversion, questions, subclauses and indirect speech, and now purpose structures and instructions**. These are the building blocks that make Dutch sentences work, and you now have them all.

Thank you for learning with Dutch and You.

Creating these workbooks has been a labour of love, and I hope they've made Dutch feel a little less mysterious and a lot more doable.

Did these workbooks help you?

I would love to hear about it! Leaving a short review on the product page takes only a minute and helps other Dutch learners find these materials.

It means the world to a small, one-person business like mine. 🌷

Veel succes met het leren van het Nederlands!

Renée

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