

## AGGRESSIVE

An aggressive dog goes far beyond dominant. All feet are firmly planted on the ground in a territorial manner, and may lunge forward. Ears are pinned back, head is straight ahead, eyes are narrowed but piercing, tail is straight and full. Bares teeth and snaps jaw and growls or barks threateningly. Hairs along back stand on edge. If you are near a dog showing these signs it is very important to get away carefully. Do not run. Do not make eye contact with the dog. Do not show fear. Slowly back away to safety.



## A QUICK GUIDE TO DOG BODY LANGUAGE

### Eyes

- Direct eye contact means that a dog is feeling bold and confident
- Casual eye contact means it's contented
- An averted gaze means deference
- Dilated pupils indicate fear

### Ears

- Relaxed ears mean that a dog is calm
- Erect ears show that a dog is alert and attentive
- Ears that are up and forward mean a dog is challenging or being assertive or aggressive
- Ears that area laid back indicate that a dog is worried or scared

## Body Movements

- Pawing is an appeasing gesture
- Licking another dog's face is an invitation to play or a sign of deference
- Play bowing (front legs extended, rump up, tail wagging) is an invitation to play and a sign of happiness
- Draping the head over another dog's shoulders is a social challenge
- Freezing in place means a dog is frightened

## Mouth and Lips

- Panting means that a dog is feeling playful, excited or stressed, or it may simply be hot
- A dog with the mouth and lips closed is uncertain or appeasing.
- Licking the lips is a sign that a dog is worried or is trying to appease a person or another dog
- A relaxed mouth means a dog is calm
- Lips pulled back are a challenging or warning sign, especially when combined with a snarl

## Tail

- A relaxed tail means that a dog is calm and at peace
- A tail held straight out, wagging rhythmically and slowly, means that a dog is cautious or on guard
- Tail down indicates worry or uncertainty
- Tail held up and wagging fast indicates excitement
- An erect tail is a sign of alertness
- A tail held between the legs is a sign of fear



# UNDERSTANDING DOG BODY LANGUAGE



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# DOG BODY LANGUAGE

Dogs are very expressive animals. They use their faces and bodies to communicate when they're feeling happy, sad, nervous, fearful and angry.



Once you learn how to read a dog's body language you'll better understand his feelings and motivations and be able to predict what it's likely to do.

This will allow you to interact with dogs with greater enjoyment and safety.



## THE DIFFERENT EMOTIONS CONFIDENT / ALERT

The confident dog stands straight and tall. Head held high, ears perked up and eyes bright. Mouth may be slightly open but is relaxed. Tail may sway gently, curl loosely or hang in a relaxed position. At ease in surroundings friendly and non-threatening



## HAPPY / RELAXED

Show the same signs as a confident dog. In addition, will wag tail and sometimes hold mouth open more or even pant mildly. Appears even more friendly and content than the confident dog, with no signs of anxiety.



## PLAYFUL

A playful dog is happy and excited. Ears up, eyes bright and tail wags rapidly. May jump and run around with glee. A playful dog may exhibit the "play bow" - front legs stretched forward, head straight ahead and rear end up in the air.



## SUBMISSIVE

Holds head down, ears down flat and averts his eyes. Tail held low but is not tucked. Can roll on back and expose belly (passive submission). May also nuzzle or lick the other dog or person to display passive intent. May sniff the ground or divert attention to show he is not a troublemaker. A submissive dog is meek, gentle and non-threatening.



Active submission



Passive submission

## ANXIOUS

Acts somewhat submissive, but often holds her ears partially back and neck stretched out. Stands in a very tense posture and sometimes shudders. May slightly whimper or moan. Tail held low and may be tucked. May overreact to stimulus and can become fearful or even aggressive.



## FEARFUL

Combines submissive and anxious attitudes with more extreme signals. Stands tense, but low to the ground. Ears are flat back and its eyes are narrowed and averted. Tail is between its legs and typically trembles. Often whines or growls and might even bare teeth in defense. May also urinate or defecate. Can turn aggressive quickly if senses a threat.



## DOMINANT

A dominant dog will try to assert herself over other dogs and sometimes people. Stands tall and confident and may lean a bit forward. Eyes are wide and makes direct eye contact with the other dog or person. Ears are up and alert, and the hair on her back may stand on edge. May growl lowly. Demeanor appears less friendly and possibly threatening. If the behavior is directed at dog that submits, there is little concern. If the other dog also tries to be dominant, a fight may break out.



*As long as man has a dog,  
he has a friend.*

*-Unknown*