

Dog Body Language

Dogs express themselves with their bodies and learning to read their cues (speak their language) is essential to keeping everyone safe and happy.



Relaxed Body Language

- Ears in their natural position
- Eyes soft, no forehead wrinkles
- Mouth either closed without tension or open in a relaxed pant
- Tail is wagging in a wide, sweeping motion or relaxed in a scorpion position

Stressed or Nervous Body Language

- Stressed dogs will often exhibit self-calming behaviors as they try to regulate themselves and reduce tension.

These include:

- Looking or turning away from the scary thing, yawning or lip licking, slow, stiff movements, lip smacking, raising one paw or shaking their bodies (like shaking off water). They may also scratch or self-groom excessively.

Aggressive Body Language

- Eyes may be fixed on the object or scary thing with a hard, unwavering glare. May have wrinkles across the forehead
- May have raised upper lip
- Rigid, tense body with minimal movement. Hair might be raised across the dogs' back.

Appeasement Body Language

- Avoiding eye contact and squinting eyes
- Appeasement grin (exposing front teeth like a smile to show difference)
- Movement is slow and weight shifted backwards to appear less threatening
- Tail held low and tight wags

Fearful Body Language

- Ears may be pointed back or perked up
- Tail may be extended or stiffly pointed back
- Alert dogs look focused and ready

Alert Body Language

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- Tail may be extended or stiffly pointed back
- Alert dogs look focused and ready

It is important to take into account the situation, dog's history and their entire body when determining body language. Learning to understand dogs is like learning another language. Nobody is good at it in the beginning. But, with mutual respect, space and safeguards to keep everyone comfortable and safe, it can be a wonderful learning experience.



RENEGADE
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