

It is typically human to touch something you like. Keep in mind that, no matter how fond of dogs you are, not every dog likes being touched. Of course there are a lot of dogs who like people so much that they even want to be touched by strangers. **But do not assume this if you do not know the dog!**

If a dog comes to you give him space to greet you and do not rush it. Just be calm and do not act overenthusiastic. A lot of dogs can get overexcited by 'hysterical behaviour' and this may lead to overreactions.

If you do not want to have contact with a dog, walk in a curve and do not make eye contact when you pass him. Keep in mind that fast movements can trigger the hunting instinct of a dog. This can increase the chance that the dog *'must instinctively chase this moving object'*. So never start running when you pass a dog.

As you can read it is quite simple to show a dog that you are a non-threatening, peaceful person. By nature a dog is a conflict avoiding animal. He will try to prevent a fight and the chance of getting wounded. Be more aware of what your body language means in dog language. A little more knowledge about this can reduce the number of biting incidents and the nasty consequences that these incidents can have. For both!

**Be polite to every dog you meet.**


# THANK YOU!

*Since long dogs learned to understand our words. Only recently we learn to understand their signals.*



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Read about dog language?  
On Talking Terms with Dogs:  
Calming Signals -  
Turid Rugaas

**DO NOT PET ON TOP  
OF HIS HEAD** 



- Moving your hand above the head can be very scary for a dog. The dog cannot see what you are going to do and he might think you want to grab his neck. In dog language this means that you want to harm or even kill him by shaking and breaking his neck. To protect his own life he could react defensively. **As a stranger, stay away from the neck!**
- Putting your hand on top of his head can also mean you want to dominate him. He might not accept this from complete strangers or children.
- Never put your arm over the dog's body to pet the other side of the dog.
- Do not hug or embrace a dog if you are a stranger to this dog.

**BUT PET ON HIS  
CHEST OR SIDE** 



- Always wait until the dog comes to you!
- Petting a dog on his chest or on his side feels much safer for a dog and he can also see where your hand is.
- When you are petting a dog take little breaks, to see if the dog keeps physical contact with you. Some dogs do not like being petted, but just undergo it. Meanwhile, their stress level can rise. If you do not notice their small stress signals you can be surprised if the dog finally gives you a big warning to make you stop.
- **If a dog walks away, let him and do not lure him back to you!**

# HOW TO MEET & GREET AN UNKNOWN DOG



# SEE IT THROUGH THE EYES OF A DOG



DO NOT WALK STRAIGHT



BUT CURVE



DO NOT BEND



BUT TURN SIDWAYS



The first thing dogs pay attention to is **body language!** When you meet an unknown dog, please:

- **Never walk straight to the dog.** This can be very threatening to a dog because it is a too direct confrontation.
- Do not look straight into the eyes of the dog, this can be threatening and even provocative.

- **If you walk towards a dog and you walk in a slight curve,** you show the dog that you are a **non-threatening person.**
- Best is to look a bit sideways too. If you think the dog is insecure, you can also soften your gaze by looking a bit downwards to make the dog feel more comfortable about this meeting. Curve wider if necessary.

- **Be aware that bending over can be very threatening** and a lot of dogs will walk through or will move backwards.
- Never urge yourself on dogs.
- Close encounter is for a dog always a bit threatening.
- Do not move your head too close to his and do not look into his eyes.
- Never hold tight and do not talk loud.

- **Turn sideways and keep a bit distance, look a bit away.** This posture is non-threatening.
- If a dog wants to have contact with you, he will approach you by himself.
- Meet him in a gentle way. Act calm without sudden fast movements. Only touch him if he makes body contact to you by himself. Slow movements have a calming effect.