

How to Greet a Dog (and What to Avoid)

Appropriate greetings are common sense. Imagine if someone greeted you the way many people greet dogs!

Human to Human INCORRECT

Human to Dog INCORRECT

Avoid reaching into their safety zone.  HEY!!!

Avoid reaching in or towards the dog's car.  YIKES!

Avoid rushing up.  CREEP!

Avoid rushing up.  YIKES!

Avoid interactions without asking.  STRANGER DANGER!

Avoid interacting with unfamiliar dogs, especially if they're tied up.  STRANGER DANGER!

Avoid staring at people. This is scary. 

Avoid staring at the dog or approaching head-on. 

Avoid looming over. 

Avoid leaning over or towards dogs even when you change position to squat or get up. 

Avoid reaching into personal space. 

Avoid reaching your hand out for the dog to sniff. 

Avoid close interaction if the person is afraid of you. 

Avoid petting if the dog looks nervous or tense. Just admire him instead. 

Avoid touching inappropriately.  SQUEEZE... AAARGH! DON'T LIKE!

Avoid hugging, kissing, and patting roughly. This is too familiar and disliked by many dogs. 

Human to Dog CORRECT

Stand a safe distance away so that you are not a threat. 

Approach slowly (at a relaxed walk). 

Ask if you can interact first.  MAY I PET YOUR DOG?

Approach sideways and look using your peripheral vision. 

Stay outside the dog's bubble and present your side to the dog. 

Let the dog approach at his own rate. 

It's OK to pet the dog if he looks relaxed, comes up to you, and solicits your attention by rubbing against you. 

Pet gently. 

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