

# How to let dogs meet and play



## Question?

How should dogs meet and play?

**Answer –** By mutual friends, use of distance, and body language!

Most dogs should be already socialized by their family and small pack group, and either by themselves or in a small group they come across first a scent of another dog, and then possibly see the dog at a great distance and can move towards or away as desired. Escape is generally an option if it is an interaction that is undesirable. In many situations dogs or wolves will leave their existing pack and go join another one. The key here is shared activity that is mutually beneficial. Generally this means hunting or migrating together.

The key to this is that do you want to move in the same direction parallel and not at one another. That creates too much conflict tension and bad body language.



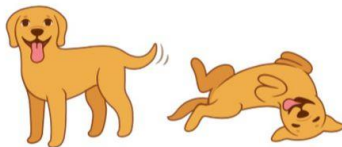
Some examples of importance dog body language would be listed below

## Understanding dog body language

### Happy

Relaxed posture, mouth open, wagging tail.

Dog is friendly and invites interactions.

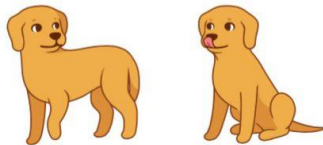


### Worried

Dog avoids eye contact, body tense, tail low.

Licks its lips or yawns.

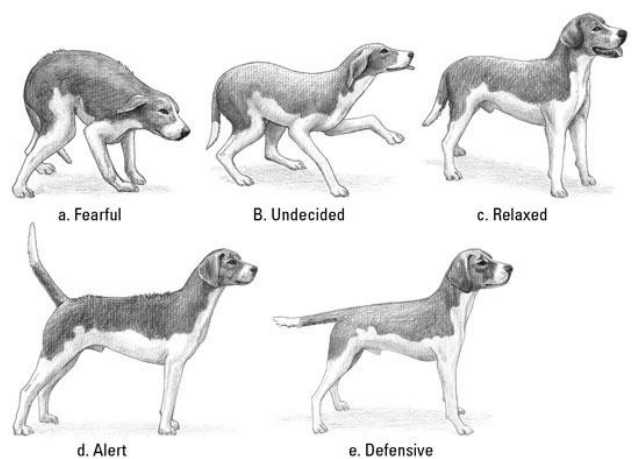
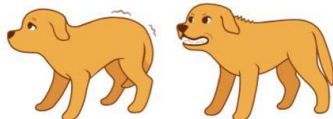
Lifting front paw in hopes of disengaging.



### Very stressed

Very tense, cowering and trembling or growls and snarls, baring its teeth.

It is threatened and will bite if it must!



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Dog communication is very different than human communication. The first approach the dogs will take it as distant as we spoke of before, then they will use body language, communicate whether or not they are comfortable with an interaction, if necessary they will escalate to verbal they are uncomfortable on your face, and then the last thing that they will do is make contact with another dog if absolutely necessary. A healthy dog go follow this rate of escalation in a slow speed and is healthy and appropriate. Unhealthy dogs world jumped from a zero to a 10 over trivial interactions.

The key to healthy socialization is willing participants. At all times both dogs would be interested in the interaction and comfortable with the level and pace which is proceeding. They should be able to remove themselves without restraints if they feel the desire to. The answer to whether play is appropriate or not is if dogs are taking turns being on top or whether they are switching roles of instigator versus participant.

## Dog Play

Normal Dog Play consists of:  
Play fighting, play fleeing, play chasing & play mounting

Signs of good play:

  
  
**Play-face**

  
**Play bow**

  
**Bouncy, exaggerated movement:  
Rocking horse gait**

**Activity shifts:**  
Chasing with play fighting breaks

  
**Role reversals:**  
Chaser/chasee  
On top/on bottom  
Biting/being bitten

**Self handicapping:** Eg. biting with minimal force - a large dog allows a small dog to knock him over



**Play-face**



**Play bow**



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