

ELEMENT DOG TRAINING

Fundamentals of Dog Communication

People and Dogs speak different languages. People are primarily auditory: we use words and sounds as our primary method of communication.

Dogs are primarily non-verbal communicators. Dogs use body language to communicate. Learning to understand and identify what your dog is communicating, or learning to “speak dog,” is key to successful training.

For the most part no single body part on a dog can communicate how they are feeling. You have to take into account the entire dog and the context that the behavior occurs in. When reading your dog there are a variety of physical features to pay attention to:

- Eyes
- Ears
- Brow
- Coat
- Lips
- Body Posture/Position
- Tail Position
- Tail Movements

- Body Language Basics
 - ASPCApro – 7 Tips on Canine Body Language
 - <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/7-tips-canine-body-language>
 - VetStreet – Your Dog's Body Language Decoded
 - <http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/your-dogs-body-language-decoded>
 - Video – Dog Body Language
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i33WRZaRwaA>
 - Video – What Your Dog is Desperately Trying to Tell You
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_stvG_SUzMo

ELEMENT DOG TRAINING

EYES

Soft Eyes – Indicates a relaxed happy dog



Squinting – Indicates a happy dog but can also be a submissive behavior



Hard Stare – Indicates a threat/aggression



Whale Eye – Indicates stress or fear



Staring – Maintaining extended eye contact. Typically considered a rude behavior. Can be an indicator of stress or excitement.

Hypervigilance – Rapid eye & head movement scanning the environment. Indicator of stress or general arousal.

Avoidance – Looking away or turning head/body away is an Appeasement or Avoidance gesture indicating the dog doesn't want a confrontation

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EARS

Forward/Erect – An indicator of arousal or interest



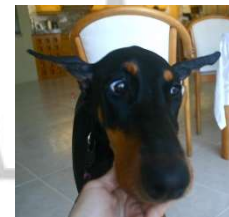
Relaxed – Natural position of a happy dog



Back – Appeasement gesture or slightly concerned about something



Airplane – Typically a state of confusion or unsure how to respond



Tucked – Sign of extreme stress or fear



ELEMENT DOG TRAINING

BROW

Relaxed – Indicates a relaxed or neutral dog



Furrowed – Indicator of Stress or Curiosity



Tense – Indicator of stress



COAT

Normal – Requires the rest of the dog to interpret. Short coats, long coats, double coated, and non-shedding dog all have slightly unique looks.

Piloerection – Hair standing on end indicates arousal (not necessarily aggression)



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LIPS

Neutral – Relaxed, is a stress-free dog



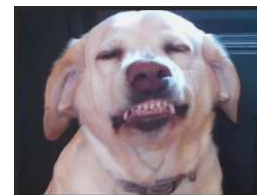
Snarl – An aggressive, space increasing gesture



Tense – Indicates a sign of stress



Grinning (a.k.a. submissive grin) – Is an appeasement gesture which can indicate happiness, anxiousness, or both



Forward (C-shaped) – Offensively aggressive



Yawning – In certain context is a stress indicator



Back (V-shaped) – Defensively aggressive



Lip Licking – In certain context is a stress indicator



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BODY POSTURE

Neutral – Relaxed and calm with fluid movements

Still – High arousal state. Typically, a threatening or stalking behavior



Raised – Head high, shoulders high, strong stance. High arousal and a space increasing signal



Lowered – Head low and/or shoulders low. With intense eyes can be stalking. With head turned away is an appeasement behavior



Dan Skultety

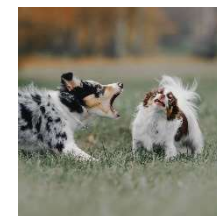
Play Bow – Invitation of Play



Submissive Roll – Appeasement behavior to indicate a lack of threat



Turn/Lean Away – A disengagement or appeasement behavior



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TAIL POSITION

Vertical – Indicative of confident or high arousal dogs



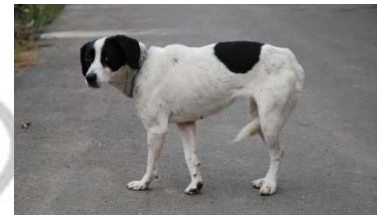
Neutral – Indicates a relaxed stress-free dog



Up – Typically indicates an excited dog



Tucked – Indicates a stress, fearful dog



Mid – Indicates a happy dog with a wag or an unsure dog if still



Flagging – Is a vertical vibrating tail and is indicative of very high arousal. Can precede aggression.

Speed – The speed of the tail wag is a good indicator of arousal for the dog. Slow speeds are typically calmer while high speeds are typically higher arousal. A stiff tail can be a sign of stress or anxiousness

A Wagging Tail does not guarantee a Happy Dog