

# 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



Avoid reaching into their safety zone.



Avoid rushing up.



Avoid interacting without asking.



Avoid staring at people. This is scary.



Avoid leaning over.



Avoid reaching into personal space.



Avoid close interaction if the person is afraid of you.



Avoid touching inappropriately.

## Human to Dog INCORRECT



Avoid reaching in or towards the dog's car.



Avoid rushing up.



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



Avoid staring at the dog or approaching head-on.



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



Avoid reaching your hand out for the dog to sniff.



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



Avoid hugging, kissing, and petting 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.



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.

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS  
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit [www.drsophiayin.com](http://www.drsophiayin.com).

