

# 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 interactions without asking.**



**Avoid staring at people. This is scary.**



**Avoid looming 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 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, & patting roughly. This is too familiar & 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. Do NOT pat top of head.**

**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).

