

General Dog to Dog Interaction

Dogs are social creatures, and most communicate with their body to show other dogs how they are feeling. It is important for owners to understand basic body language, so they know what body postures indicate play and what body postures may result in conflict.

When dogs are interacting with other dogs, they will display certain body language that indicates things are going well, such as a “play bow.” In this posture, a dog places their front limbs on the ground with their hind end in the air, which is an invitation to another dog to play. Another indicator that an interaction is going well is a loose and wiggly body, with the tail usually in a neutral position, swishing back and forth or in a circular motion.



You want to carefully watch out for the following types of body postures and vocalization, which indicate that an interaction may be about to turn into conflict:

- Stiff body
- Prolonged stare
- Snarling or growling

If you see any of these signs in your dog, interrupt them immediately by getting them interested in something else. It helps if you teach your dog a recall cue that has a strong history of reinforcement so that even if they are escalating with another dog, they will come away when you call. When you intervene, make sure you do so in a positive and calm manner.

Owners should always be supervising their dogs when they’re interacting with one another. This way you can ensure they are behaving appropriately and pre-empt or interrupt interactions that could lead to conflict.

