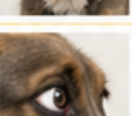


UNDERSTANDING CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

The Five Fs - Fight, flight, freeze, fidget and flirt

Dogs communicate how they are feeling through their body language long before they resort to barking, growling or biting. Learning to recognise these signals can help us better understand our dogs and respond appropriately when they are feeling uncomfortable, worried, frustrated or excited.

Many owners expect dogs to progress directly from calm to growling or biting. In reality, most dogs display numerous subtle signals beforehand. Recognising these **early warning signs** allows us to intervene before a dog feels the need to escalate their behaviour.

FLIRT	FIDGET	FREEZE	FLIGHT	FIGHT
 Play bow	 Lip licking	 Becoming still	 Moving away	 Hard staring
 Curved approach	 Yawning	 Closed mouth	 Hiding	 Growling
 Loose wagging tail	 Sniffing the ground	 Whale eye (showing the white of the eye)	 Leaving the room	 Snarling (showing teeth)
 Bouncy movements	 Scratching	 Tense posture	 Retreating behind owner	 Barking
 Relaxed body posture	 Shake-off	 Weight shifted backwards	 Avoiding interaction	 Lunging
				 Biting

TOP TIPS

- ✓ Observe the whole dog, not just one body part.
- ✓ Look for clusters of signals rather than focusing on a single behaviour.
- ✓ Consider the context in which the behaviour occurs.
- ✓ Give dogs space when they appear uncomfortable or overwhelmed.
- ✓ Seek professional support if you are unsure what your dog may be communicating.

REMEMBER

When in doubt,
give your dog
SPACE



NEED MORE HELP?

Behaviour concerns are often easier to address when support is sought early. Did you know most pet insurance companies cover the costs of clinical behaviourists?



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