

How to Approach a Dog

Every dog has a different way of responding to people. Just like humans, some dogs are extroverts, while others can be shy and nervous. Sometimes it's easy for us to see a cute dog and immediately want to touch them.

However, some dogs may be scared of new people, so making sure we're interacting with them in a way that's calm and positive is really important.

Approaching a dog requires caution and respect for the dog's boundaries.

Assess the dog's body language:

Before approaching a strange dog, observe its body language. Look for signs of aggression or fear, such as growling, bared teeth, raised hackles, or a stiff body posture. If you notice these signs, it's best to avoid approaching the dog altogether.

Ask for permission:

If you encounter a dog with its owner, always ask the owner for permission before approaching the dog. Some dogs may not be comfortable with strangers, and the owner knows their dog's behaviour best.

Approach slowly and calmly:

When approaching a dog, do so in a slow and calm manner. Sudden movements or loud noises can startle the dog and potentially lead to an unfavourable reaction. Maintain a relaxed posture and avoid making direct eye contact, as this can be perceived as a threat in the dog's world.

Let the dog approach you:

Instead of walking directly towards the dog, extend your hand calmly and let the dog sniff you first. Dogs rely heavily on their sense of smell and allowing them to initiate contact can help establish trust and comfort.

Avoid reaching over the dog's head:

When interacting with a dog, avoid reaching over their head or attempting to pat them on the top of their head. Instead, offer gentle strokes on their chest or sides. Some dogs may find it uncomfortable or threatening to have their head touched by a stranger.

Watch for signs of stress or discomfort:

Pay attention to the dog's behaviour during the interaction. Signs of stress or discomfort may include a stiff body, a tucked tail, averting their gaze, or attempting to move away. If you notice these signs, it's crucial to give the dog space and not push the interaction further.

Respect personal space:

Respect the dog's personal space and boundaries. Don't invade their space or try to force interaction if the dog shows signs of discomfort or retreat. Every dog is different, and some may need more time and space to feel comfortable.

Remember, not all dogs are social or receptive to strangers. It's essential to prioritize the safety and well-being of both you and the dog when approaching unfamiliar dogs.

Activities Near Dogs

When running or exercising near to dogs, it's important to keep both your safety and the well-being of the dogs in mind.

Be aware of your surroundings:

Pay attention to your surroundings and be aware of any dogs in the vicinity as you run. Look for signs of a dog owner, such as a lead or someone nearby.

Slow down:

Reduce your speed when approaching a dog. Sudden movements or fast running can startle the dog, potentially leading to an unpredictable reaction.

Give them space:

Dogs can be protective of their owners or territory, so it's best to give them a wide berth. Move to the opposite side of the path if possible or give them enough room to feel comfortable as you pass by.

Avoid direct eye contact:

Dogs may perceive direct eye contact as a challenge or threat. Instead, avert your gaze and focus on your path ahead.

Stay calm and composed:

Maintain a steady pace and avoid sudden gestures or loud noises. Dogs can pick up on fear or anxiety, so it's important to project a calm demeanour.

Communicate with the owner:

If the dog is off lead but under control, try to make eye contact with the owner and acknowledge their

presence with a friendly nod or smile. This lets them know you are aware of their dog and can help establish a sense of trust.

Ask for permission:

If the owner is nearby and you feel comfortable doing so, you can politely ask if it's okay to pass by. This shows respect for both the owner and the dog's space.

Be cautious with unknown dogs:

If you encounter a dog without an owner nearby or if the dog seems agitated or aggressive, it's best to give them a wide berth or change your running route if possible. Your safety should always be your top priority.

Being a Responsible Dog Owner

Exercise your dog every day:

Every dog owner has a duty of care to make sure that their dog gets at least one walk every day.

Clean up after your dog:

Always carry waste bags and promptly clean up after your dog. It helps keep the environment clean and prevents the spread of diseases.

Keeping Control:

A dog may be deemed dangerously out of control if:

- a dog shows aggressive behaviour towards people or other animals, such as lunging, biting, growling, or snarling. This behaviour poses a threat to the safety of others.

- a dog initiates unprovoked attacks on people or other animals, causing harm or injury. The severity of the attack and the resulting injuries can influence this determination.
- a dog consistently displays uncontrollable behaviour, such as chasing, harassing, or persistently jumping on people despite attempts to control it.
- if the owner is unable to control the dog's behaviour through appropriate commands or physical restraint, and the dog poses a risk to others.
- if the dog has a history of aggressive or dangerous behaviour, previous attacks, or has been classified as a dangerous dog by local authorities.

Practice good dog etiquette:

Keep your dog under control, and if your dog is not comfortable around other dogs or people, maintain a safe distance.

Stay aware of your surroundings:

Pay attention to your surroundings while walking. Be aware of other people, cyclists, runners, and fellow dog owners. Stay vigilant for potential hazards such as broken glass, litter, or any items that your dog might ingest.

Remember, responsible dog ownership is crucial when walking your dog in public places. Equally important is that those without dogs follow these guidelines. Together we can help create a positive and safe environment for everyone.



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