

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

How to: Read body language

Listening to more than just words

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Having the ability to read body language can be useful in just about any situation.

Understanding what people are really thinking through their body language can help on a date, an interview or even when trying to figure out if someone is lying. Here are some useful tips about body language.

DATING:

Being able to read someone's body language on a date can be especially beneficial, especially on the first date.

"I think body language is really important on a first date," Sarah Davis, a sophomore majoring in pre-journalism and psychology major said. "It lets you know how confident and comfortable they are and also whether or not they're into you."

Body language expert Patti Wood is a credited expert who has been praised by both the Washington Post and New York Times for her expertise. She is known for her work on body language in relationships and dates.

One of her recommended tactics is to look at the other person's feet and how they are pointing. It can be a big clue on how the other person feels subconsciously.

"If they're pointed at you, great," Wood said in an article entitled "13 Warning Signs You're About to Get Dumped!" by Lisa Daily. "If they're pointed at someone else, your partner may be looking to walk."

Eye contact is another valuable trait to keep notice of during a date. In the article, Wood said making sure to keep good eye contact throughout a conversation is key.

"It shows that they are comfortable and interested," Wood said.

Although eye contact is important, too much eye contact can be odd to some. Keeping eye contact is great, but try not to stare too intensely. It may frighten the other person, and so it's good to have some breaks in between.

"Eye contact is good- staring is creepy," Amy Hoogasian, a junior English major said.

Body language is not only important in the dating stage, it is also vital throughout a relationship.

Daily's article also has tips from body expert Bill Raduenz, who said a significant change in the sexual pattern of a relationship can be a warning sign and may mean one of two things.

"A: the partner does not want any physical attachment to the other, or B: they're getting it from somewhere else," Raduenz said.

Also, simple things like the urgency to quickly end a phone conversation or even a dramatic change in style may be an indication of a failing relationship.

INTERVIEWS:

Staying calm in a questioning environment can be a struggle, but having the right body language can be beneficial.

Body language expert Tonya Reiman gives some helpful tips on her [Web site](#) about how to handle an intense job interview.

"Weak interviews can cost you a job," Reiman said.

Reiman said nervousness plays an important factor within an interviewing process, and it is very easy to detect. Rocking back and forth or hand fidgeting are both great indicators.

Many people also think that being poised can nail an interview.

"I think someone should have a firm handshake and sit up straight," Hoogasian said.

Reiman said having good posture and a firm handshake shows confidence, not just from within, but also in terms of what the person is capable of doing for their employer. She said it lets the interviewer know when a person is good at their job and are trustworthy.

LIAR, LIAR!

It can be the worst feeling to know someone is lying to you. Experts say that by reading someone's body language, it is easy to catch a liar on the spot by taking notice of their eye contact and mannerisms.

"I usually notice the lack of eye contact and quicker breathing," Hoogasian said.

Wood said having bad eye contact is one of the signs that a person is lying.

"People also tend to look up to the right or down to the right," Wood said.

Wood said another sign of a liar is someone who makes large hand gestures. She said that someone who is making huge gestures with their hands is trying to steer you away from the truth with their gestures. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some liars try to remain as motionless as possible.

"Being overly controlled can work against you," Wood said.

Wood also said another clue rests within the lips. Pursed lips show that someone is tightening their lips in order to keep the truth in.

Wood has also observed that another good time to catch a liar is when attempting to make a purchase. A great way to tell if a salesperson is lying is to see if they are overenthusiastic about the product. She said that if it sounds too good to be true from a salesperson, it usually is.

Many people also say looking at facial expressions can give clues about whether or not someone is lying.

"(It's) not so much the eye contact, but more of the face as a whole," said Mark Chun, a senior English major. "The face to me conveys a lot more."

Experts say that understanding body language is key to understanding what someone is really thinking. Whether it is for a date, an interview or to catch a lie in the act, these tips should be useful.

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