

# Canine Body Language

## A Photographic Guide

Interpreting the Native Language  
of the  
Domestic Dog

# Table Of Contents

Dogs & Language	10
<u>Section 1: Expressions of an Emotional State</u>	
Relaxed & Neutral	17
Confidence	20
Curiosity	23
Rolling	27
Companionship	29
Stress Signals	32
Fear	40
Caution	43
Anxiety & Avoidance	48
Smile, Smile, Smile	54
Larko Meets Sheep	60
<u>Section 2: Calming &amp; Negotiation Signals</u>	
Blinking	65
Look Away	68
Tongue Flick	75
Sniffing	80
Shake Off	84
Scratching	86
Yawning	90
Paw Lifts	92
Puppy Licking	97
Group Stay & Calming Signals	102
<u>Section 3: Neutral &amp; Friendly</u>	
Butt Sniff	107
Inguinal Sniff	118
Friendly	121
Greeting "I Love You" Stretch	127
Greeting	131
Group Look away	136
Pass By	143
<u>Section 4: Space Invaders</u>	
Aggression	159
Alerting & targeting	164
Correction	172
Warning	185
Guarding	197
Guarding Among Friends	205
Rylie & Emma	208
This Is My Territory!	214
<u>Section 5: Predation</u>	
Excitement	242

# Table Of Contents

Prey Bow .....	.243
Stalking .....	.250
Pursuit .....	.258

## Section 6: Play

Dogs at Play .....	.269
Play Biting .....	.275
Play Bow .....	.282
Play Sequence: Role Changes .....	.289
Play Sequence: Prey-Predator .....	.296
Play Sequence: Conflict & Break .....	.303
Play Gone Wrong .....	.323

## Section 7: It's the Quiz Section!

Quiz .....	.333
Quiz Answers .....	.351

# 25 GREETING "I LOVE YOU" STRETCH

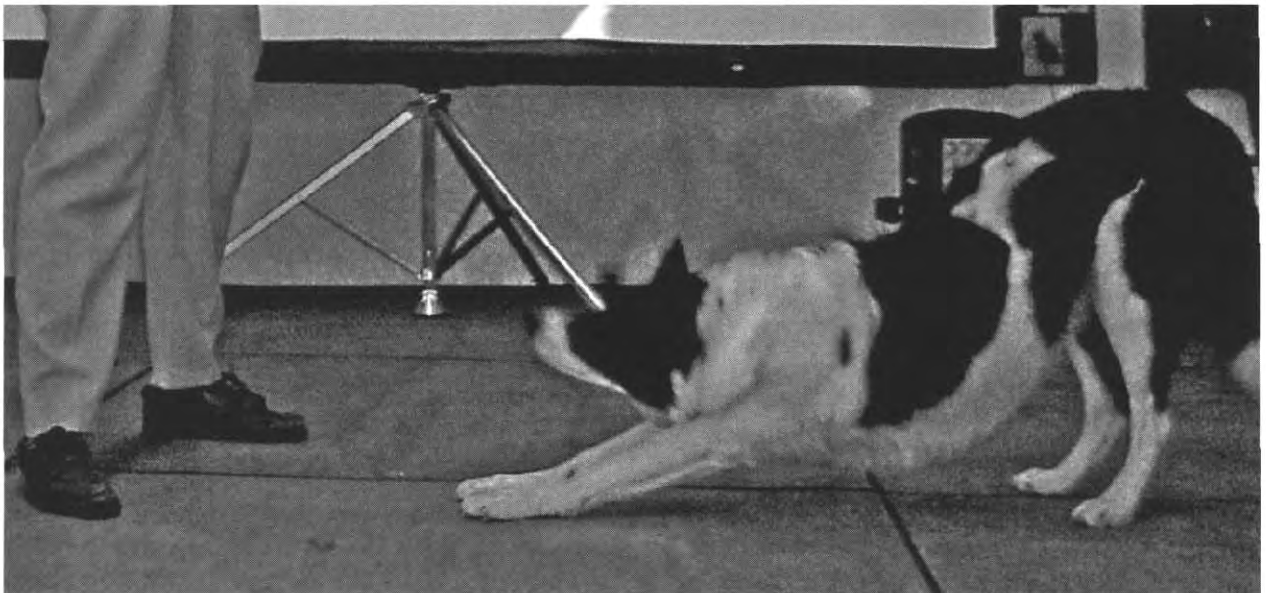
The Greeting Stretch is a posture used only towards someone the dog likes and with whom he is comfortable. There is also a version of this where the dog leans forward and stretches his rear legs out behind him. My dogs use this with me frequently when they approach me or I approach them. Sometimes the "front" stretch, where the dog lowers the elbows, is followed immediately by a "rear" stretch, in which the dog leans forward and drags the rear legs out behind him.

How does this differ from other kinds of similar body postures? In the Greeting Stretch, you do not get the feeling the dog will pounce forward as they do in a Prey Bow. This is not a "Ready-Set-Go" position. In the Greeting Stretch, there is usually not the extreme lowering of the body that you see in a Play Bow; the dog will just go partially down. In the Greeting Stretch, you will also see more relaxed ear carriage, and more squinty eyes.

The best way to tell of course, is the context. The activity level is indicative, too. You will see in these photographs that the dogs have a languid, liquid look about them, rather than the intensely coiled spring look of the Prey Bow or the lively anticipation of the Play Bow.

## #25.1: Greeting Stretch

- lowered forequarters
- raised hindquarters
- nose oriented up toward the person the dog is greeting
- elbows remain off the ground (usually)





### #25.2: Greeting Stretch

When dogs greet me like this, I get all mushy and gooey. It is very flattering to have a dog greet you in this unrestrained, friendly and very respectful manner. This greeting acknowledges your personal space and is a request for the two of you to interact.

The relaxed manner, combined with the body silhouette tell you this is a dog who is happy to be with whomever he is gazing at. The front legs are braced, but this is not a Prey Bow, not enough intensity. The ears are floppy, the tail is up and confident, but not forced or tense.

This is the equivalent of a child offering you a tiny bouquet of “I picked these just for you” flowers.



#25.3: Greeting Stretch

Notice the soft eyes and long lips of this dog as she gazes at her owner.



#### #25.4: Greeting Stretch - Rear Leg Stretch

As Willie greets his owner, (who luckily happened to have a camera!) he stretches his rear legs out behind him, stretches his tail out and Yawns. His eyes are squinty in friendliness. Sometimes dogs will greet you with a Front Leg Stretch followed by a Rear Leg Stretch.

On rare occasions I have seen dogs use a stretch like this when you are working them and they are a little confused about the task.

Photo Credits:

Photo #1 & #2: Joanne Weber

Photo #3: Rachel Plotinski

Photo #4: Joanne Weber

