



20 ways to spot stress in your dog

There are lots of clues that tell us dogs are stressed - some are obvious, such as the dog cringing or backing away, but most are much more subtle and so can easily be missed.

Be aware though - all body language needs to be 'read' as part of the whole picture. For example, not all human smiles are friendly - and we know this immediately from looking at the whole of the person's face and the rest of the context that we are in.



In the same way, a dog might yawn but be showing excitement and anticipation rather than stress - he needs more oxygen, but for different reasons!

If you think that your dog is stressed, then changing your own behaviour is the only answer! Back off, allow your dog space so that he feels better and reduce the social pressure that's on him so that his stress symptoms disappear.

Want to learn more about canine body language and facial expression?

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Indications of Stress



- 🐾 White rim seen around the eye (sometimes called 'whale eye')
- 🐾 Tense muscles - ready for flight or fight
- 🐾 Tight muzzle (dog may even hold its breath)
- 🐾 Tongue flicking over nose / lip licking
- 🐾 Shallow breathing

- 🐾 Excessive or frantic activity level
- 🐾 Obviously slow movements
- 🐾 Dog stays very still, or shows mini freezes
- 🐾 Lowering of body weight and height
- 🐾 Tension around the eyes - pulling forehead into a frown, a classic sign of worry



- 🐾 Panting, often with an extended tongue
- 🐾 Yawning (dog is taking in more oxygen, but will sometimes show its teeth too)
- 🐾 Dog sniffs or checks genital area
- 🐾 Sweaty paw prints
- 🐾 Dilated pupils

- 🐾 Ears back
- 🐾 Tail tucked down or under
- 🐾 Tail wagging low, and fast
- 🐾 Dog won't eat treats
- 🐾 Lips pulled right back into a 'Wallace and Grommit' grin

