

The Natural Greeting Sequence

Most polite greetings follow this pattern:

- 1 Curve toward each other
- 2 Sniff faces or bodies
- 3 Move to the rear (bottom/genitals)
- 4 Assess, then move apart

❌ Fixation on one body part can create discomfort. Watch for tension and intervene if needed.

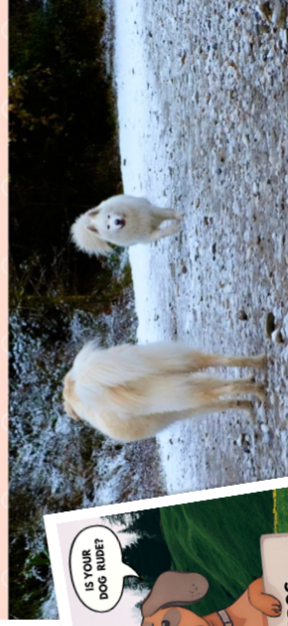


The Curve, Not the Charge

Dogs greet best when they approach in a curve rather than a straight line. A direct approach can feel overwhelming or confrontational.

- Guide your dog into a curved path
- Avoid letting them rush straight in

This gives both dogs space to assess each other calmly.



Relaxed Body Language

A polite interaction should be loose and easy-going. Watch for:

- ✓ Soft, relaxed posture
- ✓ Fluid movements
- ✓ Neutral or gently wagging tail
- ➔ If you see stiffness, a hard stare, or raised hackles, step in before tension escalates.



Pauses: Essential for Self-Regulation

Pauses help dogs check in with themselves:

- ✓ "Am I still having fun?"
- ✓ "Do I want to keep playing or take a break?"

Dogs may briefly separate, shake off, sniff, or reassess before continuing play.

- ➔ No pauses = rising arousal levels. If a dog tries to pause and is ignored, tension can escalate, leading to overcorrections or rude play habits. Step in to prevent things from boiling over.



Balanced Play: Fair & Reciprocal

Healthy play should have give and take:

- ✓ Dogs take turns chasing, pinning, and wrestling
- ✓ No single dog should be doing all the chasing or all the biting
- ✓ Larger dogs should handicap themselves by slowing down or lowering their bodies when playing with smaller or younger dogs

- ➔ If play is one-sided or intense, step in before frustration builds.



Your Role as a Guardian

Dogs don't need to meet or play with everyone!

- ✓ Advocate for your dog's space when needed
- ✓ Encourage polite interactions, not forced greetings
- ✓ Step in if things become unbalanced

Your dog's polite greetings and balanced play are the foundation of a happy, well-adjusted companion.

Keep practicing these key skills for a calmer, more confident dog!

