

# Communicate Better with Your Dog: The Scientific Approach

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## Introduction

When talking to babies, adult humans tend to develop a peculiar style of speaking, usually incorporating more gestures than everyday communication. Did you know that when communicating with your dog, the way you speak has a direct impact on the way your pet will react?

According to a study <sup>1</sup>published by The Royal Society, this type of communication is 'dog-directed speech'. Depending on your pitch, tone, and gestures, you will be able to get your message across to your pet canine.



Research <sup>2</sup>shows that genetics play a part in this. Puppies can begin recognizing human faces from the time they are a couple of months old.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2016.2429>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822\(21\)00602-3](https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(21)00602-3)

The bottom-line is that science can provide a great deal of guidance in helping you improve communication with your dog. Read on to find out more.

## **Communicating with Your Dog: The Scientific Approach**

As mentioned above, we tend to change our pattern and style of speech when communicating with babies. The same thing happens when we talk to dogs. The responsiveness of your dog depends on certain factors, as per this report<sup>3</sup> from Cambridge. This fact leads us to the first thing that you need to keep in mind:

### **Dogs Understand Spoken Speech**

This study<sup>4</sup> shows that dogs' respond to human speech in different ways. Their reaction may vary based on the style of communication but what you say can act as a stimulus for their response. In addition to words that you teach your dog during training, you can also incorporate other words that will elicit a response and enable your dog to follow what you are saying.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-child-language/article/abs/doggerel-motherese-in-a-new-context/79FF5CF27F5B78316BBD8976A309A46B>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-68821-6>



## Eye Contact is Important

The University of Salford conducted a study<sup>5</sup> involved 37 dogs. The results showed that almost all the dogs made gestures involving maintaining eye contact with their owners. By maintaining eye contact with your dog, you cannot only understand what they might be asking for and at the same time, communicate to them what you want them to do.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10071-018-1181-3>



Moreover, dogs tend to follow our gaze and therefore, you can use your eyes to direct your pet to something or someone.

An important thing to keep in mind here is that your dog will maintain eye contact with you if he or she trusts you. Holding eye contact with you for an extended period is a way for your pet to show affection. This reason is why you should also reciprocate the gesture and use your eyes as part of the process of communicating with your pet canine.

### **Pay Attention to Cues**

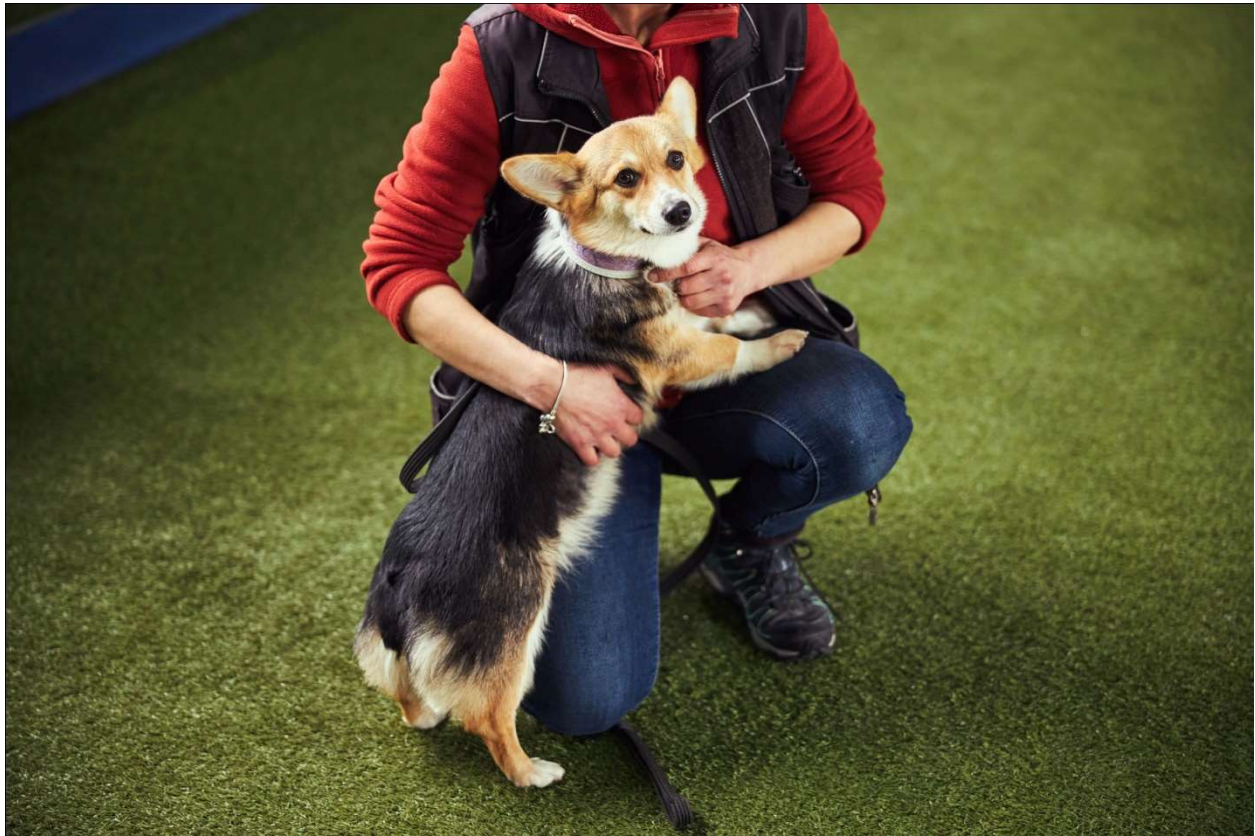
Just like you change your voice and gestures depending on what you want to communicate to your dog, your dog will also adjust his/her position, posture, and even breathing pattern. This study<sup>6</sup> on interpreting dog language shows the importance of picking up visual cues that will help you understand your dog better. There is no limit on the different signals and cues that

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<sup>6</sup> <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/canine-communication---interpreting-dog-language>



your dog might be giving off when trying to communicate with you, so the more you read<sup>7</sup> on this topic, the better.



An example of the cues that you can pick up from your dog's body language is when he or she leans against you. This gesture is your pet wanting to cuddle with you. Obviously, dogs cannot hug, and therefore, they lean on you. Simply put, this is a way for your dog to show love.

## **Conclusion**

Our perceived understanding of how dogs function will continue to change and evolve. Researchers around the world are performing different tests and studies to further our understanding of how we can communicate better with our pet canines. That said, the information provided above is sufficient to help you maintain a healthy relationship with your dog. Trust us, if you speak to your dog properly, instead of using just one-word commands, you will face less resistance!

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.petcoach.co/article/10-ways-dogs-try-to-communicate-with-us/>