



## Interviews: Body Language

*Avoid letting poor body language affect the outcome of your interview.*

### Body language is still language.

Non-verbal cues account for a considerable portion of our in-person communication, along with words and tone of voice. Think of the last time somebody rolled their eyes at you – didn't that send a signal? Whether you're aware or not, body language often reveals what we're thinking and feeling, regardless of what your mouth might be saying. Interviewers will take notice of what messages your body language may be sending.

### Going beyond the handshake.

By now you know to clean your fingernails, show up early, introduce yourself, and answer questions concisely. So, now it's time to learn the facts about non-verbal cues that could weaken your contention.

**Firm grasp.** The initial and parting handshakes should be your only physical contact with an interviewer, so you have to make sure it's neither limp and lifeless nor bone-crushing.

**Sit up.** Slouching suggests lack of interest, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or lack of enthusiasm. Keep your chin up, and lean forward slightly to express attentiveness and interest. Avoid sitting on the edge of your seat so you don't appear tense.

**Don't get cross.** Never cross your arms – it suggests arrogance, detachment, or disinterest. Keep your hands out of your pockets to avoid looking too casual.

**All hands on deck.** Keep your hands away from your face and neck. Don't

scratch yourself, play with your hair, or play with jewelry. Avoid shrugging – use your words. All these movements convey nervousness, uncertainty, or even dishonesty.

**Gestures.** Excessive hand gestures are distracting and put some people off. Less movement shows quiet poise and calmness. Rest your hands on your knees, in your lap, or on your portfolio. Use hands only to stress a point and avoid pointing any fingers.

**Crazy legs.** Men: Crossing your legs or resting an ankle on a knee suggests smugness and arrogance. Keep both feet steady on the ground. Women: It's fine to cross your ankles, just be sure to keep your knees together. Avoid pointing your feet or leaning toward the door because that can suggest eagerness or desire to leave.

**Made you look.** Although it's second-nature, remember to blink – it's not a staring contest. Maintain eye contact, however, to show confidence. If you're thinking over an answer, look down; otherwise you may be mistaken for rolling your eyes.

**Face yourself.** Be aware of your facial expressions throughout the interview. Smile often to show enthusiasm.

**Stay away.** Keep your distance from the employer. It's called "personal space" for a reason.

**Keep the noise down.** Don't fidget, tap, shuffle your feet, or drum your fingers on anything.

**Rummaging.** Have papers ready and in order to avoid fumbling around. Clip together handouts for easiness.

## Simply put:

How to be fluent in body language:

- Don't slouch – sit up and maintain good eye contact.
- Avoid fidgeting and gesture only when necessary.
- Be conscious of your facial expressions – smile often and sincerely.
- Lean forward to show you're listening attentively.
- Be aware of the interviewer's body language, as well as your own.
- Have neat and easy access to papers.
- Practice answering questions in front of a mirror or with a friend – they can help you figure out what you need to work on.

### Perception is everything.

Giving the interviewer the wrong impression may set you apart from the competition, but not in the way you want. You may cross the line from appearing confident to arrogant, or nervous to incompetent. Sometimes it takes effort to look dignified and relaxed, so practice answering questions in front of a mirror or video yourself in a mock interview. You'll be surprised by habits and tics you never knew you had, but then you can change them and be ready to show off fluent body language in any interview.

Visit **RAMTRACK** to explore our school's job search database and **MORE!**

<https://www.myinterfase.com/framingham/student/>