

## BODY LANGUAGE

How we communicate with each other is a combination of what we say (words), the tone we use (how we say it) and the body language we use.

In an interview situation, you can say all the right words and be the best person on paper for the role – but unless your body language portrays confidence and honesty you might not be the person getting the job offer.

Facial expressions communicate emotion. They take the form of smiles, frowns, eye twitches, nose wrinkles, eyebrow lifts, flushing or blanching. Such expressions can show respect or dominance, joy or sadness, fear or happiness, surprise or disappointment, love or hate, interest or boredom, disgust or approval.

Body motions or gestures communicate understanding or lack of it. When communicators like or are in agreement with each other, their bodies tend to move at the same time or rate, or in some similar manner. Passive listeners may scratch their chin, run their fingers through their hair, wipe their forehead, look at the ceiling or play with their watch to reduce anxiety.

Posture communicates attitude. When people are negotiating they will sit closer to the table if they are pleased with the progress of the talks and farther from the table if they are unhappy. Posture can convey alertness, boredom, disgust, eagerness, enthusiasm and energy – or lack of it.

Here are our top tips for portraying positive body language in an interview situation:

1. Give each interviewer a firm handshake at the beginning and end of the interview.
2. Maintain good eye contact. If there is more than one interviewer, look at the person asking the question when you reply but glance at the other interviewers from time to time.
3. Always pay attention to your posture – and try to sit up straight with your feet crossed underneath you. Any slouching, or sitting with your legs stretched out can convey a casual or sloppy approach to your interview.
4. Avoid crossing your arms (when standing or sitting) as this can appear defensive
5. Resist the urge to touch your face or play with your hair – this can sometimes suggest that you are being dishonest or withholding information.
6. Try not to fidget e.g. playing with a pen or dangling your feet as this can convey boredom or anxiety.
7. If you can, try to mirror the interviewer's body language to build a rapport with them.
8. Try to smile from time to time, nodding in moderation can also show you are understanding and agreeing with what the interviewer is saying.