

What Your Handshake Says About You

Rules for Meeting and Greeting

By AMY S. CHOI

BusinessWeek online

Nobody likes a limp handshake, but you probably don't realize just how much you communicate through your hands, says Jacqueline Whitmore, author of 'Business Class: Etiquette Essentials for Success at Work.' Here's one handshake to use, one to be careful of, and three to avoid.



Illustration: Erik Larsen

1. The Fail-Safe

Connect the web between your index finger and thumb firmly with the other person's and pump two or three times. This is confident and always appropriate.



Illustration: Erik Larsen

2. The Rubber Glove

While shaking hands, cover the other person's hand with your left hand. A favorite of politicians and clergy, this should be used only with someone you know well.



Illustration: Erik Larsen

3. The Queen's Handshake

Offering just your fingertips, rather than your palm, indicates a sense of superiority.



Illustration: Erik Larsen

4. The Dead Fish

A limp handshake conveys weakness and a lack of self-confidence.



Illustration: Erik Larsen

5. The Terminator

Turning the grip so your hand is on top is a sign of aggression.

Things You Should Do

Be Friendly You should always be ready to initiate a handshake, demonstrating your eagerness to meet the person. Although etiquette rules once dictated that a man should wait for a woman to offer her hand, that's no longer the case.

Show Respect Make sure you're standing when you shake hello or goodbye. It shows respect for yourself and the other person.

Be Direct Look the other person in the eye. Don't allow the handshake to linger too long, but you can show an extra bit of sincerity by holding their hand a second longer after the last pump.