



## Petting Dogs and Consent

It's not uncommon for some dogs to have sensitivity to handling. It could be that they only like petting from certain people, or that they only like petting for a certain amount of time.

The great news is that it is easy to tell if your dog is appreciating petting, massage or handling or if they would rather you stop. There is a simple one-two-three test you can do with your dog called a consent test.

### How to do a Consent Test:

1. If your dog comes up to you, gently pet them.
2. After five seconds of petting, stop petting.
3. Observe what your dog does:

#### “YES”

- Moves in closer
- Puts his head under your hand
- Nudges your hand
- Leans into you

#### “NO”

- Turns head away or moves away?
- Shakes off?
- Yawns, licks lips, raises paw?
- Growls, briefly bares teeth or air-snaps?

These are votes for “YES.” Continue to pet your dog for five more seconds.

These are votes for “No, thank you.” Please stop petting your dog for now.

4. Even if the dog votes “yes” for petting, make sure to test every few moments. Votes can change!

Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation

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