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Body Language Messages

There are a lot subtle hints that can help you when presenting. Let's have a look at these body movements and see if you know what they are likely to mean. Please remember not every body movement is universal.

Body signal	What it means
Picking lint	
Touching the Neck	
Shifting from foot to foot	
Rubbing the back of the head	
Standing with arms crossed	
Standing with one hand on hip	
Inspecting fingernails or looking at a watch	
A lack of eye contact	
Sweating	
Excessive hand movements	
Biting of fingernails	
Chewing of the inside of the mouth	
Drying up of the mouth	
An open palmed hand spread wide	
Pacing The Room	
Lifting or removing glasses	
Shaking the head from side to side	
Nodding head up and down or from side to side	

Tip: If you are a nervous presenter, then keep your hands behind your back. That way if your hands are fidgeting then people will not notice, as your confidence grows you will be able to use your hands to enhance your message.

Teacher's Notes

This is what the body language means in Western society, remember that they maybe false indicators. For example they may have an itch or their eyes may hurt.

1. Picking lint: If someone picks imaginary lint from their clothes while looking down towards the floor, it can mean that they disapprove and feel constrained about giving their point of view.
2. Touching the Neck If a girl fancies a guy she rubs or touches her neck frequently. She also lifts her head so that more of her neck is exposed, particularly when she is actively flirting. If you watch people at parties you'll see them doing it.
3. Shifting from foot to foot: This shows that you're worrying about getting found out! Also, it indicates that you want to go somewhere else to get away so that no guilty expressions are spotted - eg looking out the door, backing up towards the door, half-facing the person and half-facing the door, etc.
4. Rubbing the back of the head: This demonstrates that you're comforting yourself when saddened. It also shows impatience.
5. Standing with arms crossed: This shows a sense of being 'closed'. It can also show anger, stubbornness and assertiveness.
6. Standing with one hand on hip: This is the opposite to the above. It's suggestive of 'openness'. It is a flirty, sexy gesture.
7. Inspecting fingernails or looking at a watch: Plain and simple, this indicates boredom or vanity.
8. A lack of eye contact - lying
9. Sweating - lying
10. Excessive hand movements - lying
11. Biting of fingernails - lying
12. Chewing of the inside of the mouth - lying
13. Drying up of the mouth - lying
14. An open palmed hand spread wide - an appeal to the audience
15. Pacing The Room - nervous
16. Lifting or removing glasses - A realisation of the importance of the point
17. Shaking the head from side to side - disagreement
18. Nodding head up and down or from side to side
 - Up and down - US & Northern Europe
 - Tilting forward, never back - Southern Italy
 - Side to side - India