



92 Non-Verbal Cues During Interviews

Only 7% of our communication are the words we use. 23% of our communication is through vocal inflection. The remaining 70% of how we communicate is through nonverbal physical movements. Before you enter a hiring process, it would be good to review this list of 92 nonverbal communication techniques.

Don't feel that you have to memorize all of these; just running through them a couple of times will make you aware of nonverbal signs from the interviewer (the way they communicate without even knowing it), so that you know how your answers are being received, either positively or negatively.

You can also use these communication techniques purposefully to convey positive emotions to the interviewer or the panel of interviewers.

1. A tilted **head** symbolizes interest in someone or something.
2. A lowered head is a negative signal that communicates acceptance of defeat.
3. Running fingers through **hair** can mean that someone is frustrated or that they're preening themselves because they feel attractive.
4. Fondling or patting down hair demonstrates insecurity and a lack of self-confidence.
5. The occasional **nod** from a listener to a speaker is a positive message; it's an indication that they are listening and are interested.
6. Too much nodding implies that a listener has lost interest, is not really listening and is simply nodding to be polite.
7. Rubbing an **eye** is an action associated with disbelief or doubt.
8. Touching or tugging an **ear** indicates indecision; though it's also sometimes done when a person is being untruthful.
9. Someone may touch or slightly rub their **nose** if they are doubtful about what is being said or if they are rejecting an idea.



10. People often pinch the bridge of their nose and close their eyes when making a negative evaluation.
11. People place their hand on their **cheek** when they're thinking or evaluating.
12. A **genuine smile** engages the whole face (including the eyes) and is usually larger on the right side.
13. A **false smile** will often only engage the lips, and will be fairly symmetrical or larger on the left side.
14. A person stroking their **chin** is evaluating or making a decision.
15. Projecting the chin towards another person demonstrates defiance or aggression.
16. Clearing the **throat** or swallowing air is a sign of anxiety.
17. Failing to look someone in the eyes displays a **lack of confidence**.
18. **Lowering** the eyes is a sign of submission, fear or guilt.
19. **Staring** is interpreted as aggression and implies a person feels dominant and powerful.
20. Looking directly into another person's eyes without staring signifies **self-assurance**.
21. **Sizing up** a person by looking at them from head to toe is associated with assessing them as either as a potential threat or as a sexual partner.
22. Continual **glancing** at something or someone suggests a desire for that thing or person.
23. **Blink rate** increases when someone is nervous or assessing something.
24. Looking **upwards** and to the **right** indicates that someone is recalling a memory.
25. Looking **upwards** and to the **left** implies that a person is using the imaginative / creative part of their brain.
26. Some people's brains have the memory and the imaginative / creative sections in reverse.
27. When a person looks **directly upwards** they are thinking.
28. In **conversation**, the talker looks at the listener less than the listener looks at the talker.
29. A **widening** or **brightening** of a person's eyes shows an increased interest in a situation / conversation.



30. People often take brief looks away from the other person because **extended eye contact** can cause others to feel uncomfortable.
31. People who feel insulted, caught-out or threatened, will likely break eye contact.
32. A **quick glance sideways** during a conversation can be used to show irritation at the last comment made.
33. Eyes moving from **side to side** whilst talking suggest that what is being said is not meant to be heard by other people.
34. A person who consistently looks around them is bored with a situation / conversation and is mentally looking for an escape.
35. Looking at another person's **eyes** lets you identify whereabouts they are looking; most people have this skill.
36. Pushing the **chest** forward draws attention to it; for women this is seen as a provocative romantic display whereas for men it's a show of strength and power.
37. A person may push their **shoulders** back to demonstrate their power and signify that they don't fear attack.
38. A pulled back chest with forward curled shoulders is a defensive position taken by people who want others to know that they are no threat to them.
39. A person with folded / crossed **arms** is placing a barrier between themselves and their surroundings; indicating that they're not happy with what is being said or done.
40. Open arms, particularly when combined with showing palms, mean that someone is approachable and willing to communicate with others.
41. Upward facing **palms** signify that a person's defenses are down and that they're speaking sincerely with an open heart.
42. Outward, upward **hand** movements express an open and positive message.
43. Open palms occasionally touching the chest imply honesty.
44. Using hands with downward facing palms symbolizes a calming action.



45. A palm facing outwards towards someone signals to that person to stop what they are doing or not come any closer.
46. Positioning **hands** behind the **back** shows that someone is relaxed and comfortable; though it can also be used on purpose to convey a message of power and confidence.
47. **Finger** pointing is interpreted as either a sign of assertiveness or a sign of aggression.
48. Tapping or drumming fingers communicates impatience or frustration.
49. Biting **fingernails** represents insecurity and nervousness.
50. **Fiddling** with items (e.g. keys or a pen) can be a sign of nerves or anxiety; alternatively it may be done as a result of boredom or impatience.
51. Interlinked fingers, finger tips touching or index fingers pressed together, are positive gestures that show a person is thinking, evaluating or deciding.
52. Sides of the **palms** close together with extended **fingers** (forming the shape of a plate) is an action often used when offering thoughts or ideas to people.
53. Fingers held together and curled upwards (forming the shape of a cup) is a gesture used when someone is pleading for something.
54. Touching the front of the **neck** symbolizes concern about what another person is saying.
55. Touching another person can be interpreted as either an act of friendship or an act of domination.
56. Approaching a **handshake** with a vertical palm shows respect for the other person whereas engaging in a handshake with a downward facing palm implies a feeling of self-superiority.
57. Walking briskly with an upright **posture** shows confidence.
58. A normal, **relaxed standing pose** is with the feet positioned at shoulder width.
59. The wider a person's feet are positioned from each other, the more dominant and powerful they feel.
60. Standing with **hands on hips** expresses either readiness or aggression.
61. Leaning back with the hips pushed forward is a provocative and suggestive gesture; it can also signify that a person feels powerful.



62. In a **relaxed sitting pose**, the thighs are typically slightly open, with legs running in parallel from the hips.
63. Sitting with **legs open / apart** means that a person is comfortable and is feeling secure in their surroundings.
64. Sitting legs may point (with knees or feet) at the most interesting person in a room or in a person's desired direction of travel (i.e. towards a door).
65. **Crossed legs** can be either a negative, defensive position or a relaxed, comfortable one; it depends on how tense a person's leg muscles are.
66. Legs crossed towards someone suggest a greater level of interest in them than legs crossed away from them.
67. A slightly kicking / bouncing foot when sitting with crossed legs suggests boredom or impatience.
68. Crossing **ankles** is a sign of being fairly relaxed, especially when the legs are stretched forward and the person is leaning back.
69. The 'figure-of-four cross' occurs when one ankle is placed on top of the other legs' knee, with the top leg's knee pointing sideways; this signals confidence and power.
70. A person telling a lie finds it difficult to look the listener in the **eye**.
71. Sometimes liars, knowing that low eye contact is a sign of lying, will over-compensate and look at you for a longer than usual period.
72. When being false, people will often **blink** less than they normally would.
73. People tend to look **down** and to the **left** when lying.
74. The **voice** takes a higher pitch when being dishonest.
75. Deception can result in **mismatched** or **unsynchronized** expressions and words.
76. If someone is faking an emotion, their **facial expressions** will likely be limited to mouth movements.
77. A person who is lying may appear to be **physically smaller** than they normally are; taking up little space around them.
78. People may slightly turn their **head** or **body** away when lying.



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- 79. A deceitful person's **physical expression** will be limited and stiff, with few arm and hand movements.
- 80. **Fidgeting** or looking **uncomfortable** during silences or pauses can be a sign of deceit.
- 81. Touching or slightly rubbing the **nose** is a sign of possible deception.
- 82. Exhibiting one or more indicators of deception doesn't automatically make someone a **liar**.
- 83. Subtly copying another person's body language communicates a liking for that person; this is called **mirroring**.
- 84. Mirroring occurs with: emotions; gestures; body position; arm / leg movements; eye movement; speech pattern / tone.
- 85. A common **flirting** action is to look at a person, break eye contact and then look immediately back at them.
- 86. **Pupils** tend to get bigger if a person really likes who they're talking to.
- 87. A person who has an interest in someone will have an increased **blink rate**.
- 88. The **eyes** may be lowered when someone has a strong affection for the other person but is trying to hide their feelings.
- 89. Flushed / red **cheeks** indicate interest in the other person.
- 90. Someone may look directly at a person's **mouth** if they have a desire to kiss them.
- 91. A person may lightly **touch** or **stroke** parts of their body that they would like the other person to touch or stroke.
- 92. A woman who is interested in someone will often cross and uncross her **legs** when seated.

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