

Master the Art of the Perfect Handshake

April 8, 2012 by Adrian Smith

Today's guest post comes from Adrian Smith writes for such prestigious publications as Labor-Arbitration.com- his main interest is in helping [labor arbitrators](#) to do their jobs better.



A person's handshake says worlds about them, and whether the handshake engaged individuals realize it or not, the handshake is a major factor in the way each person thinks about the other.

Before delving into some great handshake "how to" advice, let's consider the mistakes which you will want to avoid.

Inept Handshakes

Limp- A limp handshake gives the [impression](#) of being weak. I think that it goes without saying that the limp shake is a dud, what's the point of shaking hands in the first place if it's just going to be a limp experience anyhow.

Too Much Shake- A handshake with too much shake can come across as annoying, inappropriate, and social inept.

The Finger Grabber- Have you ever shaken hands with a [person](#) where instead of properly interlocking their hands with yours they only bothered clasping you around the fingers? I personally hate that one a lot. It's, well, weird.

Dominator Handshakes

Then there types of people that take advantage of the handshake as an opportunity to establish their domination.

The Arm Wrestler- The way that "arm wrestler" hand shakers operate is by trying to get their hand on top of the other persons, either by extending their hand with their palm facing downward initially so that the other person will be 'pinned' from the get go, or by finagling their hand on top after the initial contact. The "arm wrestler" handshake is immature and doesn't inspire friendship; it simply says that the perpetrator is trying to play mind games with you. I tend to avoid people like this the most.

Overbearing- Although [someone](#) who squeezes just a little too hard might just be trying too hard to do it right, they give off the impression of being overbearing and aggressive.

The right way to do it

Now that we have established a few of the wrong ways to shake a hand, let's look deeper into handshake best practices.

Eye Contact- displays confidence and establishes a personal connection

Clasp firmly- displays confidence and establishes a personal connection

Speak during the handshake- saying something as simple as "I've been looking forward to meeting you John Doe" goes a long way during the clasp. It brings the physical handshake to a new level because the speech adds a verbal and emotional element to the process.

Use your left hand too (optional)- using your left hand to touch the shoulder or double clasp the handshake makes the experience a more intimate one. Only do this if the intimacy will be appreciated.

Time it right- a good shake takes about a second and a half or two. Letting go too early can make it appear that you are not interested in the other person, or are disgusted by them- which can be insulting. Continuing the handshake the firm portion of the handshake grip for too long can appear intrusive. Getting the timing just right also depends on reading the social cues of the other person to decipher how long they hope to be hand-engaged with you.

Considering how much a handshake [communicates](#) about you, and how influential it can be in business, social, or personal relationships, it behooves you to take some time to practice getting your handshake perfectly right.