

## Why is our handshake so important?

Cindy Kinder, Extension Educator

The way you shake hands speaks volumes about who you are as a person. For some people a handshake is just a useless formality but to others it is a massive indication of a person's depth of character, trustworthiness and strength. When you shake hands with a person you are doing much more than saying "hello". You are saying "**this is who I am**".

It is extremely important for all people, regardless of your race or way of life, to learn how to shake hands with meaning.



## How to shake hands like John F. Kennedy

JFK's study into handshakes found that the most effective handshake was the "double handshake" where the **left hand is placed under the right** hand to "cup" the clasped hands. Positioning the left hand in this way adds an extra dimension of enthusiasm and trust to the shake and conveys a great sense of friendship and trust in the other person.

However, the actual shaking of the hands is, in reality, **only a small part** of the business of shaking hands. Here are a few tips on how you can make the perfect handshake:

### Look the person in the eyes

Always make sure you look a person in the eyes when you shake their hand, no matter how busy or brief the handshake might be.

### Use a firm grip

A firm grip, shows confidence, strength and enthusiasm, be careful not to go overboard.

### Don't be too hasty

A handshake should be inviting but not rushed. When you go in for a handshake offer your hand with your fingers straight and your thumb high and make sure you do not grip until the person's thumb is firmly locked next to yours.

### Don't shake too much

It is fine to do two or three small shakes but that is enough. Make sure you don't overdo the shaking.

### Make correct use of the left hand

Give a firm shake with the right hand and you may use the left hand to touch them on the shoulder or elbow region, but sometimes the "correct" use of the left hand is not to use it at all. Use your own intelligence to determine the best use of the left hand.

### Use your speech in conjunction with the handshake

Remember, the act of shaking hands is more than just the two hands meeting. It involves eye

contact, shoulder touching, a firm grip, and many other factors. One thing you should never forget to do when shaking someone's hand is use your speech in conjunction with the handshake.

The most important speech to remember when shaking hands is the **person's name**. ALWAYS call them by their name and never use lazy substitutes like "mate", "brother" or "dude". People love to hear **their own name**. When you shake a person's hand and greet them by their name you are effectively saying "you are important enough to me that I bothered to remember your name". Using a word like "mate" shows you don't really care.

### **Remind people of your name straight away**

It is important to realize that other people want to remember your name just as much as you want to remember theirs – nobody likes forgetting a name.

### **Conclusion**

The handshake is extremely important to our society. Peace treaties have been promised over a handshake. Wars have been ended by a handshake. Great business deals have begun because of a good handshake. Make sure you follow the tips above whenever you shake someone's hand. A good handshake is a first impression that will last a long time in person's mind.

<http://www.thedaily mind.com/how-to/the-perfect-handshake-how-to-shake-hands-like-jfk-and-make-an-impression/>