

Handshaking

Archaeological ruins and ancient texts show that handshaking was practiced in ancient Greece as far back as the 5th century BC; a depiction of two soldiers shaking hands can be found on part of a 5th-century BC funerary stele on display in the Pergamon Museum, Berlin and other funerary steles like the one of the 4th century BC which depicts Thrasesas and his wife Euandria handshaking. The handshake is thought by some to have originated as a gesture of peace by demonstrating that the hand holds no weapon.

There are various customs surrounding handshakes, both generically and specific to certain cultures:

- In Anglophone countries, in business situations. In casual non-business situations, men are more likely to shake hands than women.
- In Belgium, handshakes are done more often, especially on meetings.
- In Switzerland, it may be expected to shake the women's hands first.
- Austrians shake hands when meeting, often including with children.
- In Russia, a handshake is rarely performed by opposite sexes. Men shaking hands with women can be considered impolite, since hand-kissing is preferred as a ritual for greeting a lady. However, kissing the hand is considered unsuitable for business situations.
- In some countries such as Turkey or the Arabic-speaking Middle East, handshakes are not as firm as in North America and Europe. Consequently, a grip which is too firm will be considered as rude. Hand shaking between men and women is not encouraged in countries where the majority religion is Islam.
- Moroccans also give one kiss on each cheek (to corresponding genders) together with the handshake. Also, in some countries, a variation exists where, instead of kisses, after the handshake the palm is placed on the heart. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handshake#History>]

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