

## A Guide to British Hugging

### Andy Cope

Is there a best way to hug? There are a lot of things to factor in. For example - warmer climates tend to produce cultures that are more liberal about physical touch than colder regions. That explains why the Spanish and Italians seem more affectionate and the Brits are a little more reserved.

The truth is, there's no "best practice" yet we know that matching the right hug to the right person at the right time can be tricky.

**There are 9 levels of hugging.** This could assist in pairing the right hug with the right person at the right time.

Level	Hug Name	Description
1	Bro-hug	Technically, not quite a hug. Usually man-on-man when a proper embrace doesn't seem right. Think Murray v Djokovic. Often done with the younger generation, it's a right shoulder to right shoulder bash, accompanied by a clasp of hands (but definitely not either a proper hug or a handshake). Quite often seen in sport.
2	No frills	The no frills is your average hug. It lasts 2.1 seconds. Standard fayre. Better than nothing. Good for friends, family, pets... in fact almost any situation.
3	Selfie-hug	A thoroughly modern staged-managed hug that often captures a fake moment of happiness. Squeezed together, arms around each other, silly grins are mandatory. Often has to be taken several times for everyone to be posing with their correct selfie face.
4	7-second hug	No frills, but longer. A proper lingering embrace with someone you adore. It takes 7 seconds for love to properly transfer so experiment, and see if you can hang on for the full 7 seconds. Don't count out loud, it ruins the effect.
5	Run-up hug	A euphoric outburst of affection. Often seen at airports when long lost relatives come through the arrivals door (long haul flights only. It never happens after a RyanAir flight). Quite often ends in 7 seconds and tears of joy. Not one to do with your boss.
6	Snuggle	Technically a snuggle isn't quite a hug, but it has the same effect. A snuggle is reserved for someone for whom you feel huge affection and can vary from cuddling close to your pre-schooler or your partner, and yes, even teenagers secretly adore them. Best done with your children or grandchildren on the sofa. Snuggles are special and must absolutely be reserved for those you love. With young children, best done while reading a bedtime story. With your partner, best done while binge-watching something on TV.

7	20-second hug	Advanced level, for experts only. The full 20 seconds is a thing of wonder. It's a full bear hug that lasts and lasts.... and lasts. Sometimes the hug can rock, as the huggers become one and their weight transfers from left to right legs. The full release of oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins means that those in the vicinity will also feel the love. For a non-hugger to jump straight in at this level is downright dangerous. Remember, the 20-second huggers are experts, professionals in their field. Both parties have to be professional 20 second huggers for this to work, otherwise one of you gets queasy.
8	The pick-up-and-swing hug	Does what it says on the tin. Delivered and received with genuine glee. A combination of the run-up and 7-second hugs, the length of this one depends on the strength of the picker-upper and the weight of the one being swung. It's a beautiful thing to see, if done properly. Once again, the full release of chemicals creates a genuine feel-good factor for anyone watching. Another airport classic. Quite often grandparents do the pick-up-and-swing with their grandkids. Probably best to avoid in the office.
9	Group hug (aka 'Duggee Hug')	For the ultimate feel-good factor, why not indulge in the Duggee Hug, the warm embrace of family, friends or work colleagues. A true celebration of love, warmth, friendship, family or success, perfect for any occasion. Even for beginners, it's perfectly okay to jump straight in at level 9. The group setting takes away the pressure so even non-huggers will enjoy a Duggee hug. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lhl3m3GjLLQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lhl3m3GjLLQ</a>

**Andy Cope is a qualified teacher, author, happiness expert and learning junkie. Having spent the last 10 years studying positive psychology, happiness & flourishing this is now culminating in a Loughborough University PhD thesis. Andy appreciates that his 'Doctor of Happiness' label is terribly cheesy but it affords him an important media platform. In times of rising depression and an epidemic of 'busyness', he believes there has never been a more appropriate time to raise the happiness agenda.**