

# Chapter 1

## Getting Down the Basics

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Sounding off with Korean phonetics
- ▶ Pronouncing the basic vowels and consonants
- ▶ Working on sounding fluent
- ▶ Practicing some Korean phrases
- ▶ Using Korean gestures

Surprising a **woneomin** (*won-uh-min*; native speaker) of Korea by perfectly pronouncing a **mungu** (*moon-goo*; phrase) or a **munjang** (*moon-jang*; sentence) of their language can be **jaemi** (*jae-mee*; fun). And the purpose of this chapter is to help you do exactly that. Here you will learn how to pronounce Korean and get a hang of a few common **haengdong** (*hang-dong*; gestures). It shouldn't take long for you to begin fooling your Korean **chingudeul** (*chin-goo-deul*; friends) into thinking that you've secretly been spending time mastering the language.

Like **unjeon** (*oon-jun*; driving), riding a **jajeongeo** (*ja-juhn-guh*; bike) or tightrope **geotgi** (*gut-gee*; walking), the only way to get better at pronouncing Korean is by practicing. And the only way to fix your mistakes is by making them. So in this chapter, I introduce words like **chimdae** (*chim-dae*; bed), **angyeoung** (*an-gyoung*; eye glasses), **chitsol** (*chi-sol*; toothbrush), and **keopi** (*kuh-pee*; coffee) so you can practice saying words throughout your daily routine, and also teach you some basic sentences and phrases so you can start communicating in Korean. The more Korean you incorporate into your daily routine and **daehwa** (*dae-hwa*; conversations) you have, the better your understanding of Korean will become. Try to get a Korean friend to work with you. Practicing accurate pronunciation will not only help you **deutgi** (*deut-gee*; listen) and **malhagi** (*mal-ha-gee*; speak), but it will also win you brownie points, as Koreans will think highly of you for taking the time to master the finer points of their native language.

In the following sections, I present the sounds in their Romanized alphabetical order. Although it might take a while to get used to Korean sounds, there are no new concepts to learn such as tone or pitch.

## Getting the Basic Sounds

Korean, like English, is a phonetic **eoneo** (*un-uh*; language). Each character of the Korean **sseugi** (*sseu-gee*; writing) system represents a sound, be it a vowel or a consonant. Although Korean has its own writing system, Hangeul, learning Korean using Korean script will require that you learn various sound change rules. So instead throughout this book, I will Romanize (write the sounds of Korean out in English) Korean phonetics, or sounds, using the English alphabet.

The Romanization method that I have chosen is the revised Romanization of Korean approved by the Korean government in year 2000. Using Romanization, I will write out how the characters sound so you can jump into conversation immediately without learning these rules. In addition, I have also included the pronunciation of the Korean words in brackets with English translation.

If you have the time, I highly recommend that you learn the Korean script, Hangeul. Hangeul was developed in the mid 1400s by the King Sejong's mandate to create a writing system that could easily be learned by commoners. Today, almost all of Korea relies on Hangeul for written communication, and Romanization is used exclusively for foreigners. Learning Hangeul will give you access to a wealth of online resources, so if you want to learn Korean more effectively, make sure you eventually take the time to learn Korean script.



Pronounce Korean words as though you are British, Scottish, or Australian rather than an American. For example, pronounce *an-gyeong* as *ahn-gyeong* not *an-gyoung*. Pronounce the *an* as *ahn* rather than *an*.

## The Basic Vowel Sounds

Every Korean consonant must be accompanied by a vowel. Sometimes a group of vowels can form a word, as in the case of **uyu** (*oo-yoo*) which means *milk*, and **yeoyu** (*yuh-yoo*) which means *leisure/ease*. You should have little difficulty pronouncing most of the vowels, but some will sound almost indistinguishable from one another, and some will simply be tricky to pronounce.

First, try going over the sounds listed in Table 1-1. Don't worry if you have trouble figuring out how to pronounce some of the sounds. I go over how to distinguish and pronounce some of the trickier ones later in this chapter.



Phonetically, *ae* and *e* are two different sounds. Hence, they should be distinguished as such, although their difference may be blurred by most native speakers in casual speech.



<b>Table 1-1 Vowel Sounds</b>		
<b>Vowel</b>	<b>English Word with the Sound</b>	<b>Korean Word with the Sound</b>
a	ah-ha	<b>jadongcha</b> ( <i>ja-dong-cha</i> ; car)
ae	hand	<b>chaek</b> ( <i>chaek</i> ; book)
e	get	<b>gagye</b> ( <i>ga-ge</i> ; store)
eo	uh	<b>geoul</b> ( <i>guh-ool</i> ; mirror)
eu	gull	<b>oneul</b> ( <i>o-neul</i> ; today)
i	eat	<b>i</b> ( <i>ee</i> ; teeth)
o	so	<b>chitsol</b> ( <i>chi-ssol</i> ; toothbrush)
oe	wet	<b>hoesa</b> ( <i>hwae-sa</i> ; company, corporation)
u	boo	<b>mul</b> ( <i>mool</i> ; water)
ui	boy	<b>uija</b> ( <i>ui-ja</i> ; chair)
wa	water	<b>hwajangsil</b> ( <i>hwa-jang-shil</i> ; bathroom)
wae	wet	<b>wae</b> ( <i>whae</i> ; why)
we	wet	<b>wigyeyang</b> ( <i>we-gae-yang</i> ; stomach ulcer)
wi	we	<b>wiheom</b> ( <i>wee-hum</i> ; danger)
wo	won	<b>mwo</b> ( <i>mwo</i> ; what)
ya	yam	<b>chiyak</b> ( <i>chi-yak</i> ; toothpaste)
yae	yesterday	<b>yae</b> ( <i>yae</i> ; that person; informal)
ye	yeti	<b>jipye</b> ( <i>jee-pae</i> ; dollar bills)
yeo	yuck	<b>angyeong</b> ( <i>an-gyoung</i> ; eye glasses)
yo	yo	<b>yokjo</b> ( <i>yog-jo</i> ; bathtub)
yu	you	<b>hyusik</b> ( <i>hyoo-sheeg</i> ; rest)



In Korean, pronounce *a* as *ah* (like *spa*) as in British English instead of *ae* (like *day*) in U.S. English.

## *Distinguishing among vowel sounds*

Can Koreans tell the difference among the following three groups of sounds?

*ae* (sounds like the *a* in hand), *e* (sounds like the *e* in get), and  
*oe* (sounds like the *o* in hope)

The answer is **ye** (*yae*; yes) and **aniyo** (*a-ni-yo*; no). If native Korean speakers were to **anjias** (*an-ja*; sit down) and split hairs over the **bareum** (*ba-reum*; pronunciation) of the three groups of sounds, they most likely could. But for the most part, especially in **maeil** (*mae-ill*; daily) conversation, they don't. So do not worry if you cannot distinguish between the sounds *ae*, *e*, and *oe*, because most Koreans do not worry either. The only way to distinguish between them is when you see them written down. Therefore, just by hearing them, most Koreans cannot tell the difference between above sounds.

Try these examples:

*wae* (sound like the *we* in *wet*) **waegeurae** (*wae-geu-rae*; what is it)

*oe* (also sound like *we* in *wet*) **oetori** (*wae-to-ree*; alone)

*yae* (sound like *ye* in *yeah*) **yaeya** (*yae-ya*; hey, kid)

*ye* (sound like the *ye* in *yesterday*) **ye** (*yae*; yes)

As you can see with the pronunciations written in brackets, above words are very difficult to distinguish just by hearing the words itself. It is more important to listen to the words used in sentences.

## *Pronouncing eu and ui*

The *eu* sound does not exist in English. Fortunately, it isn't that **eoryoepda** (*uh-ryup-da*; hard) to **baeuda** (*bae-oo-da*; learn). Imagine that a friend or a sibling has hit you hard in the **bae** (*bae*; stomach) and you've just had the wind knocked out of you. Most likely you'll be clenching your **i** (*ee*; teeth) and groaning. Keep imagining the pain that you are in, but now focus on your groaning. Your teeth should be clenched tightly and your **mom** (*mohm*; body) should be tense. Now, try groaning a few times, and focus on the sound that you make. Keep your **ip** (*eeep*; mouth) in the same position. Now try making a clear sound while keeping your mouth in that same shape.

The *ui* sound is a combination of the *eu* sound and the *i* sound. You start off with an *eu* sound, then quickly shift into an *i* sound. It might have been easier to remember if *ui* were written as *eui*, but I'd like you to learn standard Romanization so just keep this in mind.

By this point, you should have the *eu* and *ui* sounds down. I hope that wasn't too painful.

## The Basic Consonant Sounds

Try saying the words *ski*, *gas*, and *kid*. You should notice that you let more air out when you pronounce *gas* than when you do *ski*, and again that you let even more air out when you say *kid* than you do when you say *gas*. Korean pronunciation relies heavily on how much air you let out when you pronounce consonants.



As you listen to the CD, try to focus on how much air is being let out for each letter.



Table 1-2 lists some basic consonant sounds. Please note that when a same consonant has two different sounds, I have **bolded** the consonant in question to differentiate between examples being used. *Note:* The revised form of Romanization no longer uses apostrophes.



Table 1-2		Consonant Sounds
Consonant	English Word with the Sound	Korean Word with the Sound
ch	chat	<b>chimdae</b> ( <i>chim-dae</i> ; bed)
h	hat	<b>haneul</b> ( <i>ha-neul</i> ; sky)
j	chose	<b>jigeum</b> ( <i>jee-geum</i> ; now)
jj	match	<b>jeo jjok</b> ( <i>juh-jjok</i> ; that way)
k	cap	<b>kal</b> ( <i>kal</i> ; knife)
<b>k,g</b>	kooky	<b>gukgi</b> ( <i>gook-gee</i> ; national flag)
<b>k,g</b>	good	<b>gilga</b> ( <i>geel-ga</i> ; roadside)
kk	ski	<b>kkeut</b> ( <i>kkeut</i> ; end)
m	mom	<b>meori</b> ( <i>muh-ree</i> ; head)
n	no	<b>namu</b> ( <i>na-moo</i> ; tree)
ng	sung	<b>sang</b> ( <i>sang</i> ; table)
p	pass	<b>pal</b> ( <i>pal</i> ; arm)
<b>b, p</b>	paper	<b>japida</b> ( <i>ja-pee-da</i> ; get caught)
<b>b, p</b>	baby	<b>babo</b> ( <i>ba-bo</i> ; dummy)
pp	happy	<b>ppang</b> ( <i>ppang</i> ; bread)
r, l	roll	<b>ramyum</b> ( <i>ra-myun</i> ; instant noodle)

(continued)

<b>Table 1-2 (continued)</b>		
<b>Consonant</b>	<b>English Word with the Sound</b>	<b>Korean Word with the Sound</b>
s	so	<b>sul</b> ( <i>sool</i> ; alcohol)
ss	boss	<b>ssal</b> ( <i>ssal</i> ; rice)
t	tada	<b>tada</b> ( <i>ta-da</i> ; to burn or to ride [depends on the context])
<b>t, d</b>	tone	<b>datda</b> ( <i>dat-da</i> ; to close)
<b>t, d</b>	ed	<b>badak</b> ( <i>ba-dag</i> ; floor)
tt	star	<b>ttokttok</b> ( <i>ttog-ttog</i> ; knock knock)

*k*, *g* and *d*, *t* are read as *g* and *d* before a vowel, as in **gilga** (*geel-ga*; street), **gagu** (*ga-goo*; furniture), **doldam** (*dol-dam*; stone wall) and **don** (*don*; money), and as *k* and *t* when followed by another consonant or form the final sound of a word, as in **dokdo** (*dok-do*; dokdo island), **yokjo** (*yog-jo*; bathtub), **chaek** (*chaeg*; books), **geotda** (*guht-da*; to walk) and **datda** (*dat-da*; to close).

The *r, l* sound differs in that it is pronounced as *r* before a vowel, as in **baram** (*ba-ram*; wind), **ramyun** (*ra-myun*; instant noodles) and as *l* everywhere else as in **balral** (*bal-ral*; energetic).

## ***Pronouncing jj, kk, pp, and tt***

Most people have little trouble pronouncing *j* and *ch*, but the *jj* sound is often a source of frustration. To understand first how the *jj* sound is pronounced (and later, the *kk*, *pp*, and *tt* sounds), try saying *jazz*, *match*, and *champ*. You should notice that the *ch* sound has the most air coming out of your mouth and *j* the next. It should seem as though you are trying to prevent any air from coming out. For this reason, the *j*, *ch*, and also *jj* sounds are called *affricates*. They are phonetically a combination of a stop and a fricative, hence the term *affricate*, which involves a friction of airflow as well as the obstruction of airflow at different stages of its production.

In fact, the *jj*, *kk*, *pp*, and *tt* sounds are actually stops of the *ch*, *k*, *p*, and *t* sounds. So when you pronounce *jj*, *kk*, *pp*, and *tt*, try letting less air rush out of your mouth than you would when you are saying *ch*, *k*, *pp*, and *t*. Try these examples:

**chong** (*chong*; gun)  
**jeojjok** (*juh-jjok*; over there)  
**jjok-jii** (*jjok-jee*; memo)  
**kkeut** (*kkeud*; end)  
**kkot** (*kkot*; flower)  
**kong** (*kong*; bean)  
**pal** (*pal*; arm)  
**ppalli** (*ppal-li*; fast)  
**ppang** (*ppang*; bread)  
**tang** (*tang*; bang)  
**ttang** (*ttang*; ground)  
**tteok** (*tteog*; rice cake)

## *Telling the difference between s and ss*

Again, the name of the game in pronouncing the *s* and *ss* sounds is airflow. However, the defining characteristic of these two sounds is that they involve hissing sounds when they are produced, hence their name ‘sibilant.’ The *ss* sound involves more friction of airflow compared to the *s* sound. The *s* sound in the words *sound* and *cinema* is like the Korean *ss* sound. Try saying the words **ssal** (*ssal*; rice) and **ssada** (*ssa-da*; cheap).

On the other hand, the Korean *s* sound is closer to an English *z* sound compared to the *ss* sound. But, *s* is quite different from *z* in English in that the former is voiceless and the latter voiced. Try saying *zada* first, but then say the *z* sound imagining that you’ve lost your voice. You should have an *s* sound that is significantly softer, and also longer, than what you are used to. If you have trouble differentiating the two, try pronouncing the *s* sound twice as long as you would the *ss* sound. Try these examples:

**ssal** (*ss-al*; rice), **sal** (*sal*; skin)  
**ssada** (*ssa-da*; cheap), **sada** (*sa-da*; buy)

One more thing to know about the *s* and the *ss* sound is that when they are combined with an *i* sound, as *si* and *ssi*, they are read *shi* and *sshi*, as in these examples:

**ssi** (*sshi*; Mr., Mrs., Miss), **si** (*shi*; poem)

## Pronouncing the Korean *r, l* sound

If you **gullida** (*gool-lee-da*; roll) your **hyeo** (*hyuh*; tongue) across the **cheon-jang** (*chun-jang*; roof) of your mouth, you should notice a flat hard part near the teeth and a ridge where you should notice an incline. When you say *d* as in *day* and *dog*, or *l* as in *lamb* and *log*, your tongue stays on the hard part near your **i** (*ee*; teeth). In the case of *l* in English, the tip of your tongue touches the alveolar ridge, but when you pronounce an *r* sound as in *run* and *rock*, the tip of your tongue stays behind the ridge on the roof of your mouth, somewhere on the incline.



The key to pronouncing the Korean *r, l* sound is to keep only the tip of your tongue on the ridge between the *r* and *l* sounds. If you have trouble pronouncing the *r, l* sound, just think of it as the *l* sound pronounced by putting the tip of your tongue on the ridge that I was talking about earlier. Try these examples.

**chitsol** (*chi-ssol*; toothbrush)

**hangari** (*hang-a-ree*; jar, pot)

**nara** (*na-ra*; country)

**pal** (*pal*; arm)

**ramyun** (*ra-myun*; instant noodles)

**uri** (*oo-ree*; us, we)

## Muting consonants at the end of a syllable

When Korean syllables or **daneo** (*da-nuh*; words) end in a *g* or a *d* sound, Koreans will mute the *g* or *d* sound. More specifically speaking, syllable-final *g* and *d* are unreleased sounds. When pronouncing these sounds, the airflow is closed very rapidly. Koreans do this by not letting as much air rush out of their mouths as they would when they would pronounce a *g* or a *d* sound at the beginning of a syllable. As **isanghan** (*ee-sang-han*; strange) as this may sound, even English speakers do this when they say the *d* in *good morning*.

For practice, try these examples (*kkeut* should sound a lot like *good*):

**kkeut** (*kkeud*; end)

**chitsol** (*chi-ssol*; toothbrush)

**chaek** (*chaeg*; book)

**yok-jo** (*yog-jo*; bathtub)



**hyu-sik** (*hyu-sheeg*; rest)

**jeojjok** (*juh-jjog*; over there)

**ttok-ttok** (*ttog-ttog*; knock knock)

**badak** (*ba-dag*; floor)

## Sounding Fluent

Once you have a grasp of the basic Korean **sori** (*so-ree*; sounds), mimicking the intonation, and cadence of a Korean speaker should take just a **jogeum** (*jo-geum*; little) more work. But this does not mean that path to excellent Korean pronunciation is one without **yuhok** (*yoo-hok*; temptations). In this section, I provide three tips for mastering Korean pronunciation and making your Korean sound even more natural.



Koreans use many English words on a daily basis. A few of them sound similar to the original English words but for others you might have to use your imagination. Most of these words should be easy to memorize and help you better understand Korean pronunciation.

## Don't stress

English words and sentences are full of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, the sentence “*Ko-rean pro-nun-ci-a-tion is sim-ple*” is stressed at three points. The same sentence in Korean, “**Hangugeo bareumeun swiwoyo** (*han-goo-guh ba-reum-eun shee-wo-yo*; Korean pronunciation is easy),” is said with no stress at all. It is possible to emphasize a particular word in a sentence by saying each syllable in that word **cheoncheonhi** (*chun-chun-hee*; slowly) and **keuge** (*keu-gae*; loudly), but if you ever feel tempted to put stress on a syllable within a word in Korean, resist.

## Pronounce each syllable

In this book, I provide the Romanization for the Korean word and sentences, then I write out how each word is pronounced breaking words up into syllables. Although it may be tempting read each syllable quickly, if you enunciate each syllable clearly it will be easier for you to pronounce words accurately, and easier for Koreans to understand you. Remember to speak like an Australian or British person, such as pronouncing *a* as *ah*.



## Puzzling English words in Korean

Some English words have had their meanings changed over the course of their assimilation into the Korean language. Don't be surprised when you hear familiar English words used with different meanings.

- ✓ **Panties:** **Paen-tee** does not only refer to women's underwear; it also refers to men's underwear. Do not get the wrong idea if your male co-worker says he prefers boxer-style **sa-gag-paen-tee** to briefs.
- ✓ **Training:** **Choo-ree-ning** does not mean *training*. Instead, it refers to the gym pants that you wear when you train.
- ✓ **Villa:** **Beel-la** is not a house in the countryside, but a condominium or apartment complex.

## Speak in a steady rhythm

At times, English sentences can sound like a waltz, a minuet, a serenade or sometimes even like a jazz piece. This is all because speakers of English can vary the rhythm of the words within a sentence. Although Koreans may raise or lower the tone of their **moksori** (*mok-so-ree*; voices), the best rhythm of Korean speech is a steady one, almost like a march. It might even help if you clap your hands at a steady beat and pronounce each syllable as you clap. Remember, if you feel the **piryo** (*pee-ryo*; need) to vary the rhythm of a Korean sentence, resist.

## Basic phrases

Table 1-3 provides some basic phrases that you can begin practicing now so that even if you don't sound fluent, you can show that you're trying.

Table 1-3 Basic Korean Phrases		
Korean	Pronunciation	Translation
cheoncheonhi malhaejusaeyo	chun-chun-hee mal-hae-joo-sae-yo	Speak slowly please.
[some word] eui tteutsi hangugeoro/yeongeoro mwoyaeoyo?	[some word] eui tteut- shee han-goo-guh-ro/young- uh-ro mwo-yae-yo?	What does [some word] mean in Korean/English?
[some word] eul bareumhae jusaeyo	[some word] rul ba-reum- hae-joo-sae-yo	Please pronounce [some word].

<i>Korean</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<b>gomawoyo</b>	<i>go-ma-wuh-yo</i>	Thank you.
<b>anieyo</b>	<i>a-ni-yae-yo</i>	No, or No thank you.
<b>gwaenchanayo</b>	<i>gwen-chan-a-yo</i>	It's all right.
<b>joayo</b>	<i>jo-a-yo</i>	Good, I agree.
<b>byeolmalsseumeseyo</b>	<i>byeol-mal-sseum-e-se-yo</i>	Don't mention it.
<b>silyaehaeyo</b>	<i>shil-lae-hae-yo</i>	Excuse me.
<b>mianhaeyo</b>	<i>mee-an-hae-yo</i>	Sorry.

## Talkin' the Talk

Jessica and Jewu are friends. Jessica has learned some Korean and surprises Jewu.

- Jessica:**     **jaeussi annyeonghaseyo**  
*jae-woo-sshi an-nyoung-ha-sae-yo?*  
 Jae-Woo, are you doing well? [literal translation: Are you in peace?]
- Jewu:**         **ye. geureondae jaessikassi hangugeo gongbuhaeyo?**  
*ye. geu-ruhn-dae jae-ssi-ka sshi han-goo-guh gong-boo-hae-yo?*  
 Yes. By the way, Jessica, are you studying Korean?
- Jessica:**     **ye. jinanjuae babodeuleulwihan hangukeochaekul saseo bwaseoyo.**  
*ye. jee-nan-joo-ae ba-bo-deul-eul-wee-han han-goo-guh chaeg-eul sa-suh bwa-ssuh-yo.*  
 Yes. Last week, I bought *Korean For Dummies*, then started reading it.
- Jewu:**         **jeongmaryo? bareumi cham jeonghwakhaneyo.**  
*jung-mal-yo? ba-reum-ee cham-jung-hwak-ha-nae-yo.*  
 Really? Your pronunciation is very accurate.

- Jessica:** anieyo. ajik mani bujokhaeyo. jaeussi, "eoryeowoyo" reul hangugmallo eotteoke bareumhaeyo?  
*a-nee-ae-yo. a-jeek man-ee boo-jok-hae-yo. jaeu sshi, "uh-ryuh-wo-yo"-reul han-gug-mal-lo uh-ttuh-kae ba-reum-hae-yo?*  
 Not really. I'm still far from fluent. Jae-Woo, how do you pronounce *difficult* in Korean?
- Jewu:** Eoryeowoyo. "Eoryeowoyo"ga eoryeowoyo? (*Uh-ryuh-wo-yo. "Uh-ryuh-wo-yo"-ga Uh-ryuh-wo-yo?*)  
*Difficult. Is "difficult" difficult to pronounce?*
- Jessica:** ye, jaeussi gomawoyo.  
*ye, jae-woo sshi go-ma-wo-yo.*  
 Yes. Thank you, Jae-Woo.

## Words to Know

beoseu	(buh-sseu)	Bus
haembeogeo	(ham-buh-guh)	Hamburger
hompeiji	(hom-pae-ee-jee)	Home page
imeil	(ee-mae-il)	E-mail
inteonet	(in-tuh-net)	Internet
kamera	(ka-me-ra)	Camera
keopi	(kuh-pee)	Coffee
keumpeuteo ma-u-seu	(kum-peu-tuh ma-oo-sseu)	Computer mouse
neetai	(nek-ta-ee)	Necktie
radio	(ra-dee-o)	Radio
syeocheu	(syuh-cheu)	Shirt
tel-le-bi-jyeon	(te-rae-bee-juhn)	Television

## *Saying It with Body Language*

If actions speak louder than words, when in the company of Koreans, *respect* is the word that all your body should be saying. Although the repertoire of Korean has expanded to handshakes and sometimes even hugs, aside from bows, it is up to the person of seniority who initiates all of these activities. Juniors are to keep their hands at their sides and listen attentively, unless their seniors initiate a hug or a handshake.

Amongst peers, Koreans will use a wide range of body language. Most body language will translate without any problems, but you should be careful about a few gestures. Before you try these gestures yourself, first try to observe the native Koreans around you and maybe even ask them to explain why they are doing what they are doing. Once you get a sense of what's going on try them yourself. Doing so will pleasantly surprise the people around you.

### *Beckoning*

When Koreans beckon their peers or friends they will use an arm and make a scooping motion in the direction that they want the listener to go. When Koreans signal or beckon their superiors they will use both arms and at times it will seem as though they're trying to signal a fighter jet on a runway.

One thing you will most likely never see, and should avoid is beckoning anyone using a single finger. It is insulting and rude. Apologize immediately if you catch yourself doing so.

### *Bowing*

There are two kinds of bows done in Korean culture:

- ✓ An informal bow, in which you tilt your head slightly
- ✓ A more formal bow, in which you bow with the upper half of your body

The informal bow is used when greeting a co-worker or an acquaintance. To your boss or anyone else you meet in a formal setting (or when addressing someone older than you, whom you respect), make sure you use the formal bow. And for your close friends, you can wave your hands, do an informal bow, or whatever else strikes your fancy like a high five, or even air guitar but expect to get some strange glances.



If you've taken tae-kwon-do, you were taught to look at the other person's feet, but there's no need to do this in social settings. In fact, it might be preferable to look a foot or two in front of your feet.

## *Nodding*

When listening to a senior you will see Koreans put their hands to their side, tilt their body a bit forward and listen attentively while nodding slightly and saying **ye** (*ye*; yes) at appropriate intervals. The more frozen the listener seems, the more important the speaker is to the listener.

But even amongst friends you will see Koreans sometimes nod and say **geuraeyo** (*geu-rae-yo*; Is that so?) or **jeongmal** (*jung-mal*; really?) to show that they are paying attention to the speaker.

## *Shaking hands*

As I had told you in the introduction, it is up to the senior to initiate a handshake. The grip of the handshake should be like any handshake anybody from America should be used to, only if you are shaking hands with a senior or in a formal setting, put your left hand below your right elbow as if you were supporting your right arm. However, there is a gender difference when it comes to shaking hands. Generally speaking, Korean women do not shake hands that much, unless at a business setting. Even at that time, Korean women do not use two hands the way it's described here. However, there are always exceptions.



# Fun & Games

Fill in the blanks with equivalent Korean words:

1. Bicycle

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2. Bed

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3. Greetings

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4. Shaking hands

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5. Body

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6. Danger

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7. Friend

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8. Over there

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9. Toothbrush

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10. Bread

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