

PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS:

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR FEAR AND SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE

Speaking or giving a talk publicly can be very nerve-wracking. If you find it hard to speak in front of a crowd then doing so may make you panicky, break out in a sweat or just extremely nervous. Everyone who has spoken in front of a group has experienced stage fright at one time or another. The good news is that once you begin your talk and warm to your subject, the stage fright usually goes away. To avoid nervousness and to speak confidently, you must be prepared.

1. Unless it can't be helped, always try to speak on a subject you know well and are comfortable talking about. The better you know the topic and the more information you have on it, the easier it will be for you to talk about it.
2. Prepare your speech well ahead of time. Write out exactly what you are going to say at the beginning and end of your speech and the main points of the body of the speech. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel about giving your speech.
3. Try to look at your audience as you talk to them. If you find it hard to look them in the eye, try looking just above their heads or at their foreheads/noses and be sure to move your eyes around the room, so that everyone feels like you are talking to them.
4. Try to stand with good posture because this will make you look confident even if you are not. Relax your shoulders and arms. Balance your weight between both feet, being careful not to rock back and forth.
5. Try to pace yourself and not talk too quickly, and remember to pause at moments when a pause is needed, so that you can catch your breath and get your thoughts together. Don't be afraid of being silent for a few moments to remember what you were going to say next; the audience will wait with excitement for your next point.
6. If you are really anxious about speaking publicly, try to build confidence one step at a time. Try speaking in front of smaller groups first and gradually increase the size of your audience.
7. Confidence can be gained through practice. Once you have practiced something and feel safe in the knowledge that you can do it, in this case – when you know what you are talking about - you will feel more confident about doing it. Practice your speech prior to your speaking engagement. Get someone you trust to listen to you and ask them to give you their opinion and any suggestions that may help you. Although it may sound stupid, practicing in front of a mirror is another good way. This helps you to see what you look like as you give your speech. You can get your posture right and see how your hand movements look to the audience.
8. Don't worry too much about it. Just relax and try to enjoy it. The more relaxed you are, the easier you will find it and the better you will appear to your audience.