

10 steps you can take to reduce your speech anxiety

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Know the room

Become familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early and walk around the room including the speaking area. Walk from where you will be seated to the place where you will be speaking.

Know the Audience

If possible, greet some of the audience as they arrive and chat with them. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

Know Your Material

If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech or presentation and revise it until you can present it with ease.

Learn how to Relax

You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortable with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, then slowly exhale. To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, then close them tightly.

Visualize Yourself Speaking

Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.

Realize people want you to succeed

All audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They want you to succeed - not fail.

Don't apologize for Being Nervous

Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you'll only be calling attention to it. Had you remained silent, your listeners may not have noticed at all.

Concentrate on Your Message

You should concentrate on the message; not the audience. Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience, not yourself.

Turn Nervousness into Positive Energy

The same nervous energy that causes stage fright can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.

Gain Experience

Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Most beginning speakers find their anxieties decrease after each speech they give.