



Reducing anxiety before giving a presentation

Being nervous before giving a speech is totally normal. Anxiety is your body's way of getting ready to do the job. However, if nerves are getting in the way of you preparing or practising your presentation, then you might want to try some of the following methods to reduce anxiety.

It's OK to be nervous

First, remind yourself that it's OK to be nervous. One sure-fire way to reduce anxiety is to make sure you're really prepared – so practise, practise, and practise again.

Focus on your breath

Try some deep breathing exercises. Any time you slow down and focus on your breath you will calm both body and mind, but it's also excellent practice for public speaking because you need to breathe deeply to speak effectively. Take a big breath just before you begin your presentation, also.

Stay positive

Don't give in to negative self-talk. Instead of telling yourself, 'I'm so nervous about this speech,' reframe your thoughts in positive language. Tell yourself instead: 'This speech is a big challenge for me, but I'm ready.' Visualise yourself giving the speech and getting the result you want (thunderous applause, a good grade, or even just the relief that it's over).

Strike a (power) pose

If you can, find time before the speech to practise a high-power pose. Research by Dr Amy Cuddy suggests that two minutes in a power pose raises your testosterone levels and reduces your cortisol levels, making you less stressed and more confident for the task ahead (see her Ted Talk: '[Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are](#)', Online video, 21:02).

Just before you start...

Just before you speak, take a deep breath and smile. If you're still feeling anxious, channel that nervous energy into enthusiasm instead. If you're excited, your audience will be too!

It's OK to pause

During your speech, use pauses effectively. Don't be afraid to stop speaking at the end of a sentence to take a breath, smile at the audience, or sip some water. There's nothing wrong with a moment of silence.

Fake it until you make it

And last but not least, fake it until you make it! Put on your costume, act confident, and tell yourself that you're not nervous. No one will know the difference.