

7 Easy Habits to Conquer Public Speaking

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Public speaking can be daunting, but with preparation and the right outlook, it's possible to execute a notable delivery. Listed below are some high yield tips I've found helpful for public speaking.

1. Know your audience

- a. This includes location, the listener capacity, and current situation of the audience. For example, a group of lay people with no medical education may come to a talk for “anti-aging” tips. Another group may be 3rd year residents looking to prepare for their boards and wanting exam tips. Location in the sense of time and venue is important to consider. For example, a postprandial student population may have a harder time focusing during an academic talk in a dark lecture hall.
- b. What is the one objective or item you want your audience to take away from your talk? Make it clear to them throughout the talk. You may have additional objectives and items for your audience if you have an academic talk. If this is the case, try to create high yield take-away points.

2. Have a cursory outline

- a. Break it into easy segments.
- b. You don't have to memorize every line, but easily recall your segments and their flow.
 - i. For example, your speech or presentation will have different sections. You can break these into their natural segments, such as an introduction, section A, section B and conclusion. Within each segment, have in mind what you want to discuss and the order. Know what key point you want to get across. Make these segments as simple as possible to recall and reference from your materials.

3. Practice until you have mastered your flow

- a. This serves multiple benefits. It helps minimize stress and allows you to optimize to your talk.
- b. Refine and rehearse until you feel comfortable with the layout and ease of your talk.

4. Watch for visual and oral ticks

- a. Here are some examples: "um", "oh", "okay", or staring at one spot or person.
- b. I personally find it helpful to record myself then try to catch these ticks.
- c. Practice looking at different areas of the room while speaking. Consider even changing your visual resting point every sentence or two.

5. Tackle your anxiety

- a. Anxiety can steal your joy in preparing for a talk. Ultimately each person is different in how they can or should tackle public speaking related emotions.
- b. Practice helps minimize anxiety. As do breathing exercises, wearing comfortable clothes, avoiding excessive caffeine, etc.

6. Breathe and pause

- a. Don't forget to breathe and pause.
- b. Consider having built in breath pauses in your layout. For example, at the end of each segment.
- c. In these pauses, consider looking out to a different section of the audience.

7. Make it unique

- a. You don't have to follow an algorithm to have a great speech. Many people remember how they felt during a talk or something that they could do differently because of the talk. Energize, encourage, or inspire. Leave an impression and leave behind something valuable, something they couldn't get if they just read on the topic their own.

There are many things you can try to publicly speak more effectively or give an impressive delivery. These are just a few. But with practice, you can embrace and master your next lecture or talk.