

# Top Ten Ways to Conquer Your Fear of Public Speaking

Edited from Jennifer Hennings and Lindsay Schauer

## **1. Breathe deeply.**

Practice breathing deeply and slowly. Think yoga style: breathe deeply while you're practicing, before you go on stage, and during your speech. You can also try the "calming sigh" exercise: inhale deeply, then let out a vocalized sigh as you exhale.

## **2. Warm up your body before speaking.**

Exercise reduces tension and helps you concentrate. Getting a little bit of physical activity before your speech will calm you and help you get rid of excess nervous energy. Try taking a walk outside, doing arm circles or stretching gently.

## **3. Practice.**

Formal practice before a speaking event will help you feel more confident about what you're going to say and how you'll say it. But informal practice in social situations (talking in class, speaking to people you don't know at a party, etc.) will also help you conquer some of your speaking anxiety and fears.

## **4. Visualize success.**

Picture yourself succeeding and having fun. Close your eyes and do a mental rehearsal of your speech once or twice before you deliver it.

## **5. Get enough sleep and have a good breakfast.**

It's important to take good care of yourself and follow your morning rituals before a speaking event. Don't drink coffee if you're not a coffee drinker (or if you're a regular coffee drinker, make sure to get that daily cup the day of your big speech). Being rested will also help you feel less anxious.

## **6. Use a visual, but use it to your benefit.**

Visuals help draw the audience into the presentation, but use them to your benefit. Use more pictures and fewer words. Don't read directly off the visual.

## **7. Use notecards for the information you want to share with the audience.**

Notecards allow you to present to the audience without reading on off the visual aid.

## **8. Play the Worst Case Scenario game.**

What's the worst thing that could happen? What will you do if that does happen? Often, even the worst possible situation isn't as bad as you think.

## **9. Take the pressure off yourself.**

Very rarely does anyone give a completely perfect speech. Your audience will understand if you make mistakes. Think of every speech you give, and the mistakes you make, as stepping stones toward becoming a more effective speaker.

## **10. Work as a team.**

Everyone in the group should speak during some part of the presentation. Knowing you're "in this" with others will help reduce your stress!