

30 MOST PRACTICAL PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

Speaking With Alex

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Practice in the environment closest to the actual speaking event

- If it's online, practice with your webcam to get comfortable speaking while looking at the screen (and your face)
- For a small meeting, try speaking standing in front of a mirror to get an impression of what your listeners will be seeing
- For big-stage event, practice walking around as you speak to learn to do both at the same time (harder than you think)

Why?

The closer your practice time simulates the actual setting, the less "new" and stressful it will feel in real life

01

Practice tongue twisters with a pencil in your mouth

Place a pencil or finger in your mouth and say some tongue twisters or even parts of your speech

Do it for a couple of minutes to see a longer-lasting difference

Why?

There are whole 8 muscles in your tongue, and they need a warm-up just like any other muscle

Practicing with a foreign object in your mouth will make it much harder to move, so once removed, you will feel how much easier it is to speak now

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Maintain eye contact with the entire audience

Don't fix your gaze in one spot, regardless of the audience size and the talk's format (online/offline)

For example, imagine the room in six or 9 sections and move your eyes across them

For online events, move your gaze across the screen and off the screen

Why?

It makes everyone feel included and keeps you more connected

Not getting any eye attention from the speaker is almost guaranteed to bore and switch off your listeners

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Use pauses wisely

Don't feel like you have to talk every moment

It's ok to pause to take a breath, to calm yourself a bit, to take a sip of water, etc

Also, a pause can help you emphasise an important point or pull the audience back in

Why?

Any change of cadence breaks the default mode network (when you daydream, for example) and "startles" the audience

Well-timed pauses are also often associated with confidence - similar logic to seeing "man of few words" as a virtue

04

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Watch famous speeches and break them down

Look at well-known speakers and figure out what about them makes you want to listen to them

Take apart their style and try some of it yourself to see if it feels natural and suits you

Why?

Apart from learning from successful examples, it's important to remember that there's no one "correct" speaking style

Compare Trump to Putin or Tony Robbins or Oprah Winfrey - they've got very different approaches to connecting with the audience

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05

Learn to eliminate the empty rubbish words like "um" and "like"

Few things give out a beginner speaker like parasite words "um", and "like" + overusing "really", "so", "I mean", etc

Notice when you say them - maybe keep a tally or a swear jar to break the habit

Why?

These words signal that you've got nothing better to say and that you would rather fill a pause with a parasite word - or, that your mouth runs faster than your brain

Either way, it's a good idea to eliminate these as much as possible

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Research your audience and try to understand their key goal

Find out who's listening and what they're hoping to get from you - in other words, why are they here today?

Why?

Whatever the reason, it's important to remember that people took the time to come listen to you

Meeting their expectations is the bare minimum you owe them as a speaker

Without understanding who they are and what they want, you won't be able to tailor your talk to their needs, preferred tone of voice, level of expertise, and such

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Prepare little cards with keywords for a quick rehearsal pre-talk

Write down a few short phrases on small cards - or add prompts to your slides if you're using them

Keep them at hand in case you need a quick refresh before or during the talk

Why?

First, making these cards will help you remember your speech better

Second, having a safety net will make you feel more confident

Third, you'll be able to quickly regain your footing if you forget your words mid-presentation

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Practice answering questions from the audience

Think about what your audience might ask and prepare some answers ahead of time

Why?

Impromptu speaking (and Q&A sessions are a form of it) is often seen as the hardest part of giving a public talk

But if you can anticipate a question and get an answer ready, you won't have to think on the spot

It will also show your audience you're prepared and engaged, which makes them trust you more

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Choose an outfit that makes you feel good and confident

Pick clothes that fit well and make you feel at ease before your talk

Just make sure they're appropriate for the occasion

Why?

Few things ruin your mood more than feeling uncomfortable in your clothes. And few things are more distracting than a speaker who can't stop fidgeting with the sleeves or pulling a dress down. Plus, enjoying the way you look is a great confidence booster.

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Open with a story, joke, or anecdote

Start your talk with something light - maybe a short story, a quick joke, or a personal anecdote, whatever fits best

Make short, sweet, and relevant to the topic of your presentation

Why?

It can be an effective way to win the audience and attract their attention
Plus, it breaks the ice, eases your nerves, and sets a friendly tone for the rest of your talk



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Practice starting a conversation in various scenarios

Use a conversation starter that I built to help you collect a few ideas and be ready to talk to anyone, anywhere

<https://speakingwithalex.com/Conversation-Starter-Generator>

Why?

Opening a conversation is the hardest part. Once you've got a chat flowing, it's easier to pick up on something and jump from topic to topic

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Practice on hard mode

Make your rehearsals tougher than the real thing - try speaking while walking fast, eating, or with someone interrupting you

Push yourself to keep going even when it feels frustrating or distracting

Why?

If you can handle a crazy practice session, the actual event will feel way less stressful

This trains you to stay focused and adapt when things don't go perfectly and regain your footing quickly

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Join a public speaking group or club

Sign up for a group like Toastmasters or a local speaking club where you can practice regularly

An acting class or a hobby group will also do - whatever gets you around people and forces you to talk

Why?

It's obvious - practice makes perfect

Speaking or hobby groups give you a safe space to try new things and mess up without judgment

You'll get constructive feedback and learn from watching others, which speeds up your progress

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Work on your lung capacity

Practice holding your breath for longer or saying longer sentences without needing to pause

Try simple exercises like deep breathing or reading a paragraph aloud in one go

Do this a few times a week to build stamina for speaking

Why?

Strong breath control keeps your voice steady and clear, even when you're nervous or talking for a while

It helps you avoid sounding out of breath, which can make you seem less confident

Plus, better breathing calms your nerves, so you feel more in control on stage

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Structure your speech logically

Plan your talk with a clear beginning, middle, and end - like a story that flows naturally

Start with an introduction to set the stage, follow with your main points, and close with a conclusion/summary to emphasise the key takeaway

Why?

First, a clear structure will help you remember what comes next so you'll be less likely to forget your lines

Second, you'll make it easier for your audience to follow

Third, repeating the key points will ensure they stick and get remembered best

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Come in advance and check everything

Arrive at the venue early to walk around and get comfortable with the space + test all the equipment to make sure they're working and you've got everything you need

Have the contact details of someone who can fix technical issues if something goes wrong

Why?

First, you'll have a bit of time to settle, catch your breath, and mentally prepare for the talk

Second, you'll avoid last-minute surprises that could throw you off and make your audience wait



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Find a friendly face in the audience

Look for someone in the crowd who seems positively engaged - maybe they're smiling or nodding along

Make eye contact with them when you need a boost, especially if you're feeling nervous

Why?

There will always be people in the audience who seem bored or disengaged. There might also be someone who visibly disagrees with you. And that can be discouraging

Knowing that someone is listening is uplifting and may help you relax when the pressure's on

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Drink water

(Yes, that's a legitimate public speaking tip)

Drink some warm water before the talk and always keep a glass or an opened bottle at hand (also room temperature or warm)

Why?

Warm water relaxes your throat muscles so you'll be less likely to feel hoarse
Also, nerves can dry your mouth which makes speaking harder
Plus, a quick sip gives you a second to breathe or remember what to say next if you're feeling overwhelmed

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Practice distracting yourself

Rehearse your speech while doing something else - like washing dishes, watching a video, or taking a walk

You may even ask someone to purposefully distract you with questions, loud noises, or minor physical interactions

Why?

Real talks often come with distractions - a noisy audience, a phone ringing, or your own nerves

Practicing with interruptions trains you to quickly regain your footing after losing the train of thought no matter what's happening

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Ask for feedback after the event

After your talk, ask a few people - friends, colleagues, or audience members - what they thought

Ask them to be harsh and specific: ask what worked well and what you could improve next time

If possible, record your speech and watch it later to see how you came across

Why?

You may think it was a disaster but the audience may think otherwise - and vice versa

Concrete feedback will help you know exactly what to improve on next time

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Learn to use body language

Read about how posture and gestures affect your message - like, the difference between standing tall or slouching

Practice these in front of a mirror or while recording yourself to see how you articulate

Focus on moves that make you look confident and approachable

Why?

Your body language speaks louder than words and can help you reinforce the message

Using the "wrong" body language may confuse or even repel your audience

For instance, you'll never find a confident engaging speaker glaring at their listeners with crossed arms

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Learn to tell a story, not facts

Make all your numbers and examples mean something and be a part of a wider picture

Use metaphors to make them feel more "real" and easy to understand. Like, "1 million seconds in 11 days. 1 billion - almost 32 years".

Why?

Single facts or numbers get forgotten easily

Adding some context or helping to understand the implications will help your audience make better sense of them and thus remember them better

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Set the rules and lead your audience

At the start of your talk, let the audience know:

- Can they ask questions anytime or wait for a Q&A?
- Can they step out to take a call/use a bathroom or wait until you've finished?
- How long is the talk going to be?
- What topics are you going to cover?

And whatever else you anticipate your audience may want to know

Find balance between keeping it friendly whilst setting necessary boundaries

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W/hv?

Smile!

Practice smiling naturally as you speak - maybe in front of a mirror to get it right and avoid looking like a Joker

Use smiles during your speech to highlight positive points or ease tense moments while answering a tricky questions or dealing with a tough crowd

Why?

First, a genuine smile makes you seem more approachable and nice, and it's much more difficult to dislike a nice-looking person

Second, smiling activates a particular set of your facial muscles that the send a signal to the brain so even a fake/forced smile will make you feel more calm and positive

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Practice public speaking wherever possible

Look for chances to speak in everyday life - chat with a shop assistant or a neighbor, compliment a stranger, ask your colleague about their project, etc

Aim to have at least one or two of these talks a day - you can even try to maintain a speaking streak for a week or a month

Why?

Practice makes perfect

Every small conversation is a chance to practice the skills you need for bigger stages

These moments help you get comfortable expressing yourself, connecting with others, and even facing rejections

The more you talk in daily life, the more natural public speaking will feel over time

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Don't be afraid to make a mistake

Every speaker has a story of how they lost the train of thought, or mispronounced a word, or said someone's name wrong, or suddenly got a hoarse or high-pitched voice, or lots of other "embarrassing" mistakes they made along the way

Just apologise or correct yourself and move on. The bigger deal you make of the incident, the bigger it'll seem to your audience as well

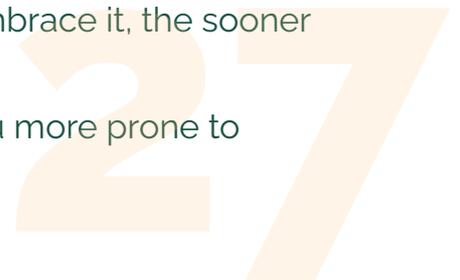
Why?

You will make mistakes. The sooner you accept and embrace it, the sooner you'll work out ways to avoid/deal with them

Plus, the fear of making a mistake, ironically, makes you more prone to making mistakes

So just get out there and practice as much as you can

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Imagine the worst-case scenarios

What's the worst thing that could happen to you during a talk? You lose your voice? Pass out? Pee yourself? Get booed?

Imagine that happening and plan how you'd respond, maybe even write down a few things you'd say or do

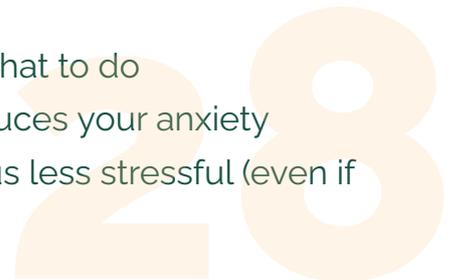
Why?

First, any small problems that are more likely to occur won't seem nearly as bad as your worst-cases

Second, if a disaster will indeed happen, you'll know what to do

Third, in general, thinking through the worst cases reduces your anxiety because the outcome no longer feel unknown and thus less stressful (even if it's a bad one)

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Learn to vary your speaking pace

Experiment with your speed - try speaking faster for excitement, slower for emphasis, make pauses then rush through a story

Record yourself to hear how different paces affect your tone and projected emotions

Why?

Monotonous speaking acts as a lullaby and puts your audience in a trance state - changing the pacing will keep your audience more tuned in

Also, a slower pace can make big points hit harder, while a faster one builds excitement

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Accept you'll suck before you become any good

Don't give up if your first talk doesn't end in a standing ovation

Your early talks will probably be clumsy and unprofessional - that's normal and expected

Keep practicing, even in small ways, like speaking up in meetings or recording yourself

Focus on trying new things, correcting past mistakes, and celebrating small wins

Why?

No one is born with a microphone in their hand, and we're all starting as complete beginners

There are so many aspects of being a good public speaker that you'll only really grasp them by doing it

So, keep calm and carry on!

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THANK YOU FOR READING

HOPE THESE TIPS HELP YOU BECOME A MORE CONFIDENT PUBLIC SPEAKER

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
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