



Work Smart Live Smart

Stress And Public Speaking

By
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Public speaking is a common source of stress for many people. Many people report that they would rather be naked in public than have to deliver a speech to their peers. Few of us can avoid public speaking entirely and for some of us, our success in the workplace is determined by our ability to effectively and efficiently present our ideas to others – whether it be to a large or small group.

Speaking effectively in public is rarely a natural talent, but it is one that can be learned. Expecting that your heart will race, your hands will sweat, that your throat will become tight, and that your mouth will dry up will help you to ignore them when they do occur. Public speaking can be an invigorating and satisfying experience if a few further, simple hints and tips are kept in mind.

1. Believe that public speaking does not have to be stressful. Our fear of public speaking can lead us to a self-fulfilling prophecy
2. You don't have to be perfect. You just need to be able to deliver your message. Preparation and rehearsal will help to smooth out your delivery
3. Keep your message to key points (three or less) and relevant to the audience
4. Drink plenty of water before and during your presentation to avoid dry mouth. If necessary, gently bit the end of your tongue to increase saliva in your mouth
5. Plan a bathroom break before you speak
6. If you visibly shake during a presentation avoid caffeine, as it will exaggerate this stress response. You may wish to discuss Beta Blockers with your doctor if the shaking is severe and interferes with your presentation
7. Breathe deeply several times before you begin your presentation to elicit the relaxation response and to open up your chest cavity
8. Do not smoke prior to your speech in order to keep your voice clear
9. Massage the “v” between your thumb and index finger to help release endorphins that promote calmness
10. Keep the room slightly cooler than normal as this will cut down on perspiration
11. Finally, during the speech make eye contact with members of the audience. Greet them, appreciate them and in the end thank them.

Good public speakers have a passion for their message, know their material and are aware of how to take care of themselves to ensure that their voice and their body helps to communicate their message as opposed to detracting from their message. By keeping their public speaking challenges in perspective and practicing good speaking habits everyone can decrease the stress associated with public speaking.

Stress and wellness specialist, **Beverly Beuermann-King** translates current research and best practices information into a realistic, accessible and practical approach through her dynamic stress and wellness workshops, on-line articles, e-newsletters and media interviews and through a collaboration called *Awakening The Workplace*. Visit www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com for more on Beverly and her wellness work.

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