

How to Be Relaxed

Try these relaxation exercises:

Deep breathing. Take three slow, deep breaths and slowly release them, then return to your normal breathing.

Remember to breathe:

As you sit or stand waiting to start your presentation—breathe.

As the nerves surge through you—breathe.

As you walk up to start your presentation—breathe.

As you begin your presentation—breathe.

Isometric exercises. Press your fingertips gently together, then press harder for a few seconds. This technique will work very well right before you begin speaking—and no one will be aware of it.

Press against a wall, or on a table for a few seconds with all your strength. This will open up your shoulders and help your voice be more powerful.

Tense up parts of your face, forehead, mouth, neck, and shoulders. Then consciously relax them. (Any conscious tightening and relaxing of muscles will work.)

Yawning. Yawn widely a few times to relax your face and throat. Now, with a lot of breath, try speaking or perhaps counting (1, 2, 3, up to 10). Next, count or speak while thinking about, but not actually, yawning. The throat will feel and stay open.

Try to relax your voice:

Warm up your voice with a hum. Hum gently, and when you feel your voice motoring easily, start to play with different notes. Hum a tune. Think of this process as a massage of the vocal chords.

If you have dry mouth drink pineapple juice, strawberry juice, honey or eat olives. Water, tea, coffee, milk and alcohol are all bad for your voice.

Smile. A smile will open the throat and pick up the vocal quality we associate with the high energy vocal tone of emotionally charged moments.

Use positive mental imagery and Power Posing (see Amy Cuddy's Ted Talk)

Visualize yourself giving a dynamic and engaging speech. Imagine the audience listening intently.

Breathing

Sit or lie down in a comfortable and quiet location. Breathe normally for a breath or two. Now try a deep, slow breath. Breathe in through your nose and imagine filling a balloon that is located in your lower belly. Let your abdomen expand fully. Now breathe out through your mouth or your nose. As you breathe out, imagine the balloon in your belly is being emptied of air.

Now practice deep breathing for several minutes. Place your hand on your abdomen, just below your belly button. Feel your hand rise about an inch each time you inhale, and fall about an inch each time you exhale. Your chest will rise slightly, too. Relax your belly so that each inhalation expands it fully. As you exhale slowly, let your belly fall.

