



Need to make a presentation but are nervous about how well your message will be received? By focusing on your body language, you'll enhance the words you're delivering and connect better with the audience and enjoy a more positive response to what you have to say. Read on for some great tips to get you started.

### **Start with Addressing Your Stress**

It's not easy to get up in front of an audience and speak. To get past those opening jitters, start backstage (or in the hallway, or wherever you can have a private moment before beginning). Experts say to begin with centering yourself, looking straight ahead. Then take a deep breath, tensing your muscles as you do so. Then release the tension in your muscles as you breathe out. Do this until you feel steady. Going out to speak entirely relaxed means your body language will likewise be relaxed, making you more engaging and easier to connect to.

### **Define Your Emotions**

Whenever you speak, you're going to want your audience to connect to a specific emotion or set of emotions. Ask yourself before you begin what emotions you want them to experience. How can you like those emotions to your own? The more you connect on this personal level, the more authentic your message will sound, and the more your body language will be in tune with your message.

### **Begin in Confidence**

Walk into the room as though you own it. Be confident and proud, head up, back straight, with big, loose and easy strides. Audiences love confident speakers as they seem more trustworthy and will respond favorably right from the start to what you have to say.

### **Dodge the Lectern**

The last thing you want to do is to hide behind a piece of furniture while speaking. Instead, own the room by stepping out where everyone can see you. The same goes for notes. The less you read from something, the better. Have someone else handle the visual aids if you can to keep yourself further unencumbered.

### **Know When to Move...and When Not To**

Use your entire body to make a point. Shift your position on the stage when you need to change topics or move onto another point but stand still while making that point. These subtle shifts will guide your audience through your message, guiding them where you want them to go.

Being able to use your body to convey your message better will make what you have to say much more powerful and more likely to be heard. Do take the time to practice these skills beforehand as you rehearse your presentation, then relax and have fun with it.