

# DOES PUBLIC SPEAKING MAKE YOU

# ANXIOUS?



YOU AREN'T ALONE! HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING WHEN THOSE PRESENTATION NERVES REAR THEIR UGLY HEADS..AND HOW YOU CAN STOP THEM FROM TAKING OVER YOUR BRAIN!

First, let's look at the symptoms of anxiety. When we get up to speak, we feel exposed and vulnerable, and our brain reacts in the same way it would if we were facing a maurauding tiger - by going into

## FLIGHT OR FIGHT

**THREAT:**  
Speech or Presentation

**REACTION:** Brain registers the threat & sends a hormonal cascade that preps the body for fighting or fleeing the threat



### POUNGING HEART:

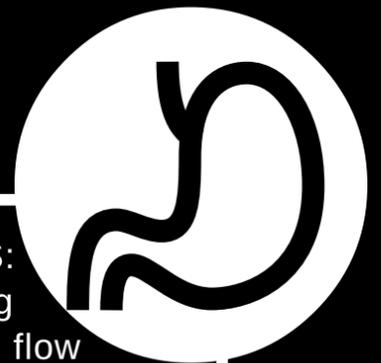
Heart rate and blood pressure increase, sending blood more quickly to major muscle groups



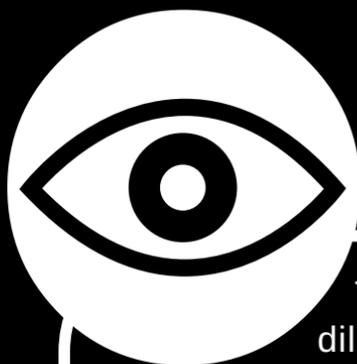
**HEAVY BREATHING OR BREATHLESSNESS:** Breathing increases to supply more oxygen to the brain and major muscles



**NAUSEA OR BUTTERFLIES:** Digestion shuts down, saving energy and diverting blood flow to major muscle groups



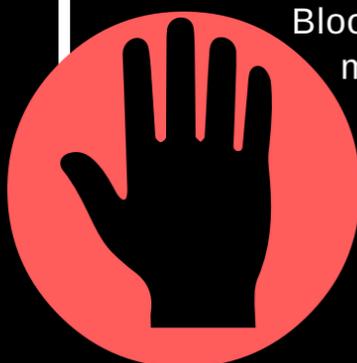
**RACING THOUGHTS OR BLANK MIND:** Brain becomes highly focused & effective at searching for & evaluating threats...leaving no space for higher-level thinking



**TUNNEL VISION:** Pupils dilate, focus increases, peripheral vision decreases



**COLD HANDS, CLAMMINESS:** Blood is diverted away from extremities & towards major muscles. Sweating increases to cool body more efficiently



**SHAKING:** Muscle tension increases, reaction time decreases to prepare for rapid movement



You might get some or all of these symptoms, or other flight-or-fight related reactions like a flushed face, tingling fingers, or lightheadedness. Even if you're able to hide your anxiety, it still makes public speaking a really unpleasant experience

## SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?



# PRACTICAL, REAL-TIME STRATEGIES FOR CONFIDENT SPEAKING

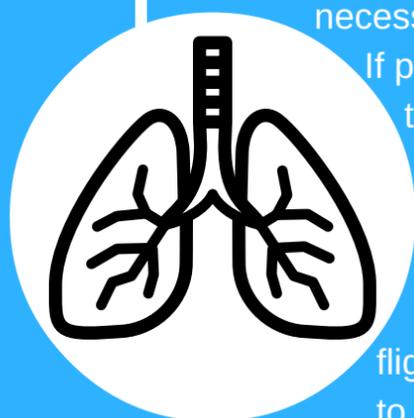


PRACTICE IS DEFINITELY A BIG PART OF CONFIDENT SPEAKING, BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN DO BEFORE AND DURING YOUR PRESENTATION TO HELP YOU PUT ANXIETY IN ITS PLACE!

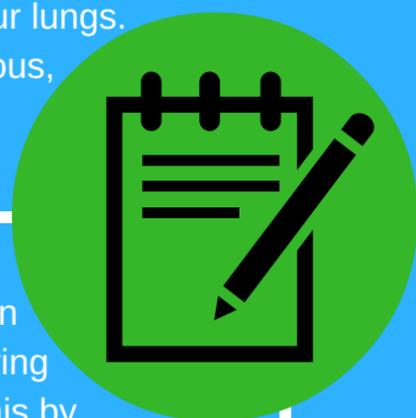
## GOAL: Conquer Flight-or-Fight

A bit of nervousness is OK and can boost performance. But you don't want anxiousness to take over. These steps will help you control Flight-or-Fight symptoms, increasing your confidence and enjoyment.

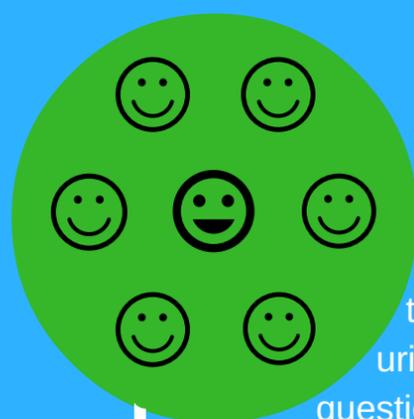
**BREATHE OFTEN & DEEPLY:** This is the #1 thing you can do to reduce anxiety when speaking! Anxious breathing is rapid & shallow. Relaxed, deep, frequent breaths lower your heart rate & reduce panic. Breathe often - every 10 words & mid-sentence if necessary! Draw air deep into the bottom of your lungs. If pausing to breathe makes you self-conscious, try sipping from a water bottle.



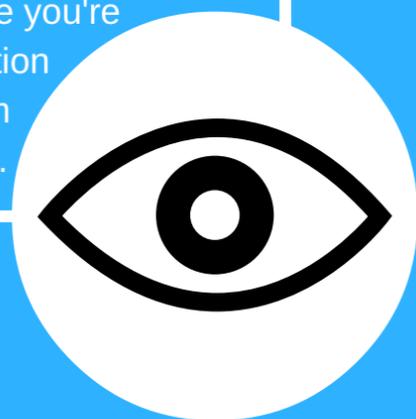
**SIMPLE NOTES:** Using dense notes takes brain power you don't have when in flight-or-fight mode. Losing your place or trying to not read your script boosts anxiety. Fix this by using ultra simple bullet points outlining only your main concepts. Speak to those points instead of reciting a memorized script. Don't fret if your things come out differently from how you intended - the audience will never know!



**EYE CONTACT:** Avoiding eye contact increases nervousness. Look directly at the people you're speaking to - it reduces the perception of threat. The crowd won't seem nearly as intimidating.



**CONVERSATION:** Have a conversation with your audience instead of lecturing at them. Involve them by asking questions or taking polls. This reduces anxiety by making you feel part of a group instead of isolated and vulnerable.



**BIG GESTURES:** These dissipate pent-up energy & muscle tension caused by flight-or-fight. As a bonus, they also increase feelings of confidence. TIP: To make gestures bigger but still looking relaxed & confident, keep your elbows pointed out & away from your sides, like you're hugging a beach ball.



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