

POWER SPEAKING AT MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Sadhana Nayak

Here's to a more confident you. Below are a few tips to prepare your voice and body for a presentation.

- Tap into the full potential of your breath. Learn to effectively use your abdomen to power your voice.
- Take a few relaxed diaphragmatic abdominal breaths before you start speaking
- Do not hold your breath when you are planning what to say next.
- Learn to make effective use of pauses. Breathe whenever you pause. Don't use fillers like ' Uhm, Er, Uh' when you pause.
- Avoid using long drawn out sentences that will strain your breathing.
- Ensure that your pace of speaking is not too fast or slow. 145 to 180 words per minute [an average of 160 words per minute] is recommended during presentations depending on the nature of matter you are presenting.
- Always keep your spine and body aligned, both in the sitting and standing positions. Align your body and spine before you start the presentation.
- Avoid wearing high heels and waist hugging clothes during presentations and meetings.
- Do a daily voice workout if your job involves a lot of talking.
- Practise modulating your voice, using the right intonation, pace and tone of voice by practising your presentation, recording it

and listening to the playback for at least a week before the presentation. Check if you are sounding monotonous, too fast or slow, too soft or high pitched. Listen to the recording and improvise.

- You may have put together your brilliant ideas on a powerpoint presentation and notes. You may have planned your wardrobe and accessories. Don't forget to check if your voice is enhancing your ideas and image rather than undermining it.
- Avoid smoking.
- Drink at least 3 litres of water daily. Be sure to hydrate yourself well, 2 to 3 days before the presentation.
- Use amplification while addressing a large audience