

5. The Day

If possible, visit the room and the venue where you are going to speak beforehand. Look at the room and find out which facilities are available. Are you allowed to bring your own laptop, can you work with the beamer that is there? Actually try everything out and make sure you know how to set yourself up. Look at where you will be standing. (This will help you later when visualising.) A good guideline is to hold your hands at a 90-degree angle to each other and fit the audience within that. If that works, you are standing in a good place.

What do you wear? The choice of clothing can play a part. Some people feel better when they look their best. It is also pleasant for the audience to see someone who has made an effort to look well groomed. Wear something that brings out the best in you and shows something of who you are. Bas doesn't have to wear a suit, he feels uncomfortable in one. His clearly finest t-shirt with beautiful trainers can do the job just as well. Decide on the basis of what the audience expects of you and what you feel most confident in.

As preparation for the day itself, it works very well to visualise the presentation. Top athletes also use this technique to prepare for competitions. Visualise the whole day. How you get up, how you have a calm breakfast, how you arrive well ahead of time, how you set everything up effortlessly. How the audience comes in, how you begin, the presentation itself, the audience's reactions, the questions, the closing, the feeling afterwards.

Make sure you arrive in good time on the day itself. Get everything you need ready the day before. Your laptop or other medium you are going to use, any handouts, your clothes and so on.

nervous!

The day has arrived and you are on time. You may be nervous: unfortunately this can show itself in physical symptoms. The muscles in your arms and legs will tense up extra. Your body is preparing for the danger that is coming, with the [fight or flight response](#), it wants to be ready to fight or flee. The result is raised shoulders, fidgeting legs or trembling (sweaty) hands. The muscles in your bladder, on the other hand, slacken, so you need the toilet more often. You also quickly get a dry mouth, which makes speaking more difficult.

To avoid making things even harder for yourself, do not opt for coffee or tea before the presentation: these draw even more moisture out of you and only increase the chance that you will need the toilet during the presentation or end up with an even drier mouth. Go for a glass of water. Also make sure there is a glass of water within reach during your presentation. A sip can work wonders and is not disruptive.

Practical tips for keeping nerves under control: vitamin C helps to fight the stress hormone cortisol. Oranges are your friend. Another tip is to freeze berries and roll one berry around in your mouth at a time; this relaxes the jaw and gives you some vitamin C as well. Eating guacamole with wholemeal chips has a calming effect thanks to the vitamin B and the chewing. Mixed nuts, with their vitamin B and zinc, are also a good choice. Asparagus lifts the mood and a warm drink works excellently too. Choose a caffeine-free chai tea. Try breathing exercises and find out which ones you like. Two small exercises: roll your shoulders forwards and backwards, and put a cork in your mouth. This forces the lower part of your face to relax.

Nerves aren't entirely bad: they make you extra alert. Combined with good preparation, they can help you surpass yourself!

After the presentation, you are the last to leave. Note down any points of criticism and also note how you thought it went. This may come in useful for a future presentation. Do actually write it down, memory changes over time!

Exercises: The Day

1. Go to the room where you will be presenting. Stand where you will be standing and, if possible, practise your presentation there. Look at the equipment you will be using. (Also the lighting, the air conditioning, the windows; be prepared for everything.) Test all the equipment and know who to contact if something goes wrong.
2. Relax, meditate. Look for breathing exercises and relaxation exercises, try them out and see which ones work well for you.
3. Visualise the presentation in all its detail. Do it!
4. If you are disproportionately nervous, work out what is making you so nervous. The [Rational Emotive Therapy](#) (founder: Albert Ellis) uses the ABC model. It is not the trigger (A), the presentation, that causes the extreme nervousness (C, the consequence), but the lens (B) through which you view the situation. The lens you look through, your own beliefs, need not be realistic and is sometimes even irrational. ('I'll fail in my presentation and then no one at work will ever take me seriously again and I won't be able to face anyone and I'll have to resign.') If you put these beliefs into words and examine them for their validity, (How sure are you that no one will take you seriously any more? How bad is that? So bad that you would have to resign? How many presenters before you have actually resigned?) you can replace them with other beliefs. ('Of course I want to present well, but if it doesn't go so well, I won't lose my job over it.') A different lens produces a different consequence: healthy nerves! Search the internet for [more information about RET](#) and examine your own Lens.

5. Everything ready for the big day? We wish you every success! If you would like more personal guidance, we would be pleased to welcome you on our training course ['presenting persuasively'](#).