

# Preparation and Presentation

XR sessions are such a powerful and important tool, whether they are public-facing or for internal training. This might sound obvious, but it's good to keep reminding ourselves. When delivering a session, it is important to give it your best shot! You are XR's front line: making a good impression as well as an emotional impact could bring in new rebels, other supporters, and have ripple effects (both good or bad!) that you might not have considered.

## Preparation

For anyone speaking in public, even for a short talk, it is important to be prepared. A key aspect of preparation is warming up your voice and body.

Of course, you should experiment to find what works best for you - there's no one right way to do this, but it IS essential you do some kind of warm-up.

**Voice Warm-Up Exercises** [5-10 mins] Follow the steps below or watch and follow this [video](#).

1. Breathe deeply, relaxing your belly, so belly, ribs, and back expand with your breath.
2. Stretch out your neck, jaw, face and sides.
3. Activate your breath support muscles with a hiss exercise.
4. Begin vocalizing on something easy to start stretching out the vocal cords e.g.: lip roll, "HM" (hum), or "NN".
5. Sing on an easy, relaxed OO vowel to work on good, consistent resonance throughout your range.
6. Open up to an "AH", "YAH", "UH", or "YUH" to relax the jaw down and lift the soft palate up.
7. Get into mix voice with an "NG", "NYAH", "NAY", "MUM", or "BUH".
8. Warm down: If you spent quite a bit of time working out, warm down with a gentle hum or lip trill.

**Body Warm Up Exercises** [5 mins]

- Stretch your arms up above your head; drop them down. Repeat x 3.
- Bring your shoulders up to your ears; drop them back down; drop them further. Repeat x 4
- Roll your shoulders forward several times. Roll them backwards a few times.
- Wriggle out the tension. Take a deep breath and give a long exhale.

**Always remember to keep hydrated: have some water within reach.**

This will help

- to protect your voice
- if your mouth gets dry
- you need a minute to compose yourself
- you've lost your place in the script

It's okay to say 'Excuse me for one second' and take a drink. A tip from the theatre world is to put some lip salve on your teeth to stop your lips from sticking to them!

## Presentation

The way we speak and look when presenting information can have a big impact on how it is understood. This helps to make a quick and strong emotional connection with your audience. It is always useful to refresh our awareness of the broad range of presentation techniques and practical tips that help both presenters and participants to maximise the value of any session:

- practise your script out loud to familiarise yourself with it and build confidence
- speak slowly and clearly, with your mouth in full view in case anyone is lipreading
- break up sentences and use pauses to underline what you have just said, or to make eye contact
- maintain the quality of your talk in terms of clarity, tone and avoiding 'speech fillers'
- be mindful of your language. It's important to use people's preferred pronouns. Avoid terms like 'guys' or 'fellow' (as in 'my fellow rebels'!)
- make the most of your voice - vary its tone and pitch, and make sure everyone can hear you
- use your face. Your expressions can communicate a great deal. Do you look interested, excited, concerned about what you are saying?

## Dealing with Nerves

Even the most experienced speakers can get nervous - it's natural - but developing your confidence will help you to be clear and to minimise those verbal fillers such as "er" "um" or "like". These can become habits we don't even notice, but listeners can find them very distracting: this dampens the impact of your talk. Try recording one of your sessions and watching it to spot fillers.

Here are some tips and tricks to help with nerves and improve the quality of your presentation:

- speak clearly, in short phrases. Listeners need time to absorb your words.
- take deliberate breathing pauses. Don't worry - they will feel a lot shorter to participants than they do to you, but they help with your pacing and energy levels. Use the pauses to:
  - take a drink of water!
  - make eye contact with participants
  - create impact after something you've said
  - find your place in the script if you have temporarily lost it - but there is no harm in saying you've lost the place so 'Excuse me for a moment' until you find it. We're only human!

# Presenter's Environment

On Zoom, before you begin your session:

- close unnecessary browser tabs, make sure nothing is downloading, etc, and generally ensure you have nothing competing with your video bandwidth so you don't appear distorted to your participants.
  - try to ensure your camera is level with your eyeline, and not pointing up or severely down at your face - this helps you to appear natural.
  - put your phone on silent and make sure it's not resting on the same surface as your computer because vibrations/buzzing will still be picked up.
  - make sure the room you are in is well-lit! It's important that your face is clearly visible for lip readers. On that note, ensure you're looking straight into the camera for the appearance of making eye contact.
-