

When asked what activity causes the most stress in a person's life, speaking in front of an audience will often be at the top of the list. Like most pursuits that we choose to devote our time to, being on the platform and speaking in front of an audience is one of those exercises that, with time and practice we can develop a high level of comfort with and find extremely rewarding.

A number of studies have been done around ways that we can deal with stress and how to remain calm when we find ourselves in stressful situations.

Dr. Stuart Brody, a psychologist at the University of Paisley in Scotland has conducted a number of such studies. One of his more recent studies showed that Vitamin C supplements may provide beneficial effects for people under stress. The study results indicated that individuals with high blood levels of ascorbic acid exhibit fewer physical and mental signs of stress when subjected to acute psychological stressors than do subjects with lower levels of vitamin C.

A second study conducted by Professor Brody found that "hitting a home run" in the bedroom can help keep stress at bay and that nothing is more calming before a speech or presentation.

Experts also agree that deep breathing will relax you before a stressful public speaking engagement and to satisfy an appetite of a different kind you may want to eat a banana or two. Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system. They also deliver a good dose of potassium a mineral that helps normalize the heartbeat and sends oxygen to the brain. When we are stressed, our metabolic rate rises, thereby reducing our potassium levels. These levels can be rebalanced with the help of a high-potassium banana snack.

Breathe using your diaphragm

Deep breathing or diaphragmatic breathing is the healthiest form of breathing and is very effective in helping you overcome anxiety or a panic attack that can be bought on by the idea of public speaking. Breathing from deeper within the body and engaging the diaphragm is also the most natural way of breathing. We all breathe that way naturally as babies and children. Then after years of poor posture, anxiety, stress and tension have taken their toll, our breathing becomes shallow and we breathe from the upper chest in a "fight or flight" pattern. .

Coaching

Coaching is another way to get over your fears and build confidence on the platform. Ivy Naistadt consultant and executive coach has been helping business professionals deliver successful public presentations since 1986. Ivy's book *Speak Without Fear* addresses How to Reach Your Highest Potential through the Art of Communication.

As an author, speaker and coach Ivy works with executives to improve their platform skills, trains high-profile individuals for video and television appearances and frequently lectures on

related topics.

To learn more about Ivy Naistadt and her availability for speaking engagements and coaching call 1-800-420-4155.

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