



The Speech Clinic®



Speaking Tips No 15 051003

The importance of breathing

It is a pretty strange that we attach so little importance to something we cannot be without but for a few minutes. AIR! That is as long as we have it. Breathing forms our existence and our wellbeing. Yet it is considered being such a matter of natural routine that we don't need to think about it at all. But many of you know that there is something called breathing technique. What happens when we are to speak in public and are somewhat unused? Well, our rather insufficient self confidence creates threatening pictures in our minds (see Speaking Tips 6) which in turn create insecurity and destructive nervousness. This nervousness blocks muscles and snares the chest which makes it difficult to fill the lungs with air. The voice cracks and weakens and the result is that we virtually advertise our nervousness to our audience. What to do?

The answer is – breathe correctly! But how do you do that? Well, here is a good method which we can call the “square” and which is suitable to use before your public appearance. The air should enter and exit your stomach, not your chest. Put your hand on the upper part of your stomach and feel it go up and down when you do the following exercise:



The picture originates from the internet with unknown source.

1. inhale through your nose for 3 seconds
2. hold your breath for 3 seconds
3. exhale through your mouth for 3 seconds
4. hold for 3 seconds

Repeat this as long as you feel worried, upset or nervous. You can do it standing or sitting down and it helps to close your eyes at the same time and see yourself performing successfully. Good breathing and positive thinking subdues nervousness. If, in addition, you do this on a regular basis, you will gradually start breathing in this way without thinking about it. But then of course not in 3 second intervals but at a normal pace.

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