



MY FIRST trainers

Low Drama No Excuse Warm Up



Here are three quick and easy ways to get yourself in the zone for moment-of-truth meetings and presentations. Find somewhere out of the way and private. If your presentation or meeting is first thing in the morning, you can do this at home before you leave.

Tense and Release

The objective for for this exercise to unlock any tension trapped in your body. Give it a try and afterwards you should feel a lot more relaxed, and perhaps a bit taller.

- Take off your shoes so that you can feel the floor and remove any restrictive clothing such as a jacket, tie or belt.
- Starting with your feet, gently but firmly tense and release them three times, one at a time. After you've done this, allow your foot to go limp and enjoy a bit of a shake and release from the knee downwards.
- Repeat this 'tense and release' trilogy for the rest of your body in this order:

Ankles ➡ Calves ➡ Knees ➡ Buttocks ➡ Hips ➡ Hands ➡ Arms ➡ Shoulders ➡ Face

Connect the breath

This exercise connects your breath to your diaphragm and encourages you to fuel your voice properly.

- Work out where your diaphragm is - in front of a mirror, place your right hand on your stomach with the tip of your thumb resting just below the end of your breastbone.
- Breathe in deeply, keeping your shoulders still. As you inhale, you should feel your hand being pushed out as your lungs expand. As you exhale, you'll notice your hand being sucked back into its original position.
- Repeat this three times. Try to increase the movement of your hand each time, both the rise and the fall. Release your shoulders followed by a shake down; ready for part two.
- For part two, you need to be alone in a space where you won't be overheard, because I'm going to ask you to repeat the above exercise, only on the exhale impersonate a neighing horse.
- Commit to neighing and it won't be as silly as it sounds! Keeping the shoulders still on the inhale, force the air back out and make your lips vibrate as fast and for as long as you can. Try moving up and down your natural scale, from the lowest bass note to the highest.

Engage your resonators

Your final task is to engage with your natural resonating chambers and pull your voice forward from the back of your throat. Humming is your access code, and that's where it starts..

- Take a deep diaphragm breath and exhale on a steady hum. The aim is to make both lips vibrate vigorously so that you can only just prevent them from parting. You'll probably feel a bit of a tickling sensation.
- Once you've mastered humming on the lips, open the hum out into a 'Mar'. As you do this, your jaw will open in the vertical plane. You'll know you're opening your mouth wide enough if you can stick your index and middle fingers between your lips as you do it. Repeat several times and explore your resonating chambers by gently tapping your palm around your upper chest.
- On another cycle, place both hands on the top of your head. You'll hear and feel the effect of tapping on your chest as you 'Mar', and if you concentrate, you'll also feel the vibration on the top of your head.