



10 QUICK TIPS FOR MANAGING JOB INTERVIEW ANXIETY

Anyone who has ever gone through the interview process experiences some heightened level of stress or anxiety before and during an interview. Remember that feeling anxious about an important interview is a great sign you want to do well! It is your body's way of saying, "We need to be prepared for this because this matters." With practice, you can master your anxiety and use it to fuel your success in any nerve-wracking interview situation.

Before The Interview

1) Be mindful of what you eat and drink.

Interviewees may feel anxious the night before the interview and then, feeling tired the next day, drink coffee or soda in an effort to "stay sharp." Anxiety heightens and grows more difficult to cope with as you increase your caffeine and sugar intake. Eat something light before the interview to keep from getting light-headed. Be sure to bring water with you as nerves and a lot of speaking can lead to a dry mouth.

2) Prepare well for the interview.

A well-prepared interviewee puts themselves at an advantage over their potential competition. One great way to prepare for an interview is to PRACTICE DOING ONE! At the Business Career Center, you can discuss interviewing strategies or do a practice interview. You also can prepare with UNL's Big Interview online platform.

3) Double check the details.

Confirm the date and time of your interview. Plan to arrive 20 minutes early to account for potential in-transit hiccups. Have printed directions ready in case your phone malfunctions on the way to the interview. Prepare relevant materials, including your résumé, cover letter, pen and notepad.

4) Stay cool.

Here are some tips for staying cool and avoiding sweat:

- Apply antiperspirant (not deodorant) **before** bed
- Avoid caffeine and spicy foods
- Use the restroom to touch up your face and hair before you go in the waiting room
- Carry a tissue or handkerchief in your pocket to wipe your palms or face
- Wear darker colors to hide sweat marks
- Keep your jacket off until you enter the building

5) Breathe.

When you grow anxious, your breathing shallows and your natural body rhythm gets out of sync because of its heightened state. Try this simple breathing exercise before the interview:

- Breathe IN for a count of FOUR > Hold for TWO counts > Breathe OUT for a count of FOUR (do this for a minute or two as needed).

6) Engage in small talk.

Engaging in small talk with the interviewer(s) during the walk from the waiting area to the interview room is a great time to build rapport that will help you relax during the interview.

During The Interview

7) Take your time in the interview.

You do NOT have to answer questions immediately, and often, a brief pause to collect our thoughts will give you the valuable time needed to come up with a meaningful and genuine response. If you get flustered in the middle of answering a question, don't be afraid to ask to start over. If you cannot think of an answer, ask if you can come back to that question at the end.

8) Control your voice.

Individuals dealing with anxiety may talk too fast, too loud, too monotone or their voice may tremble.

Here are some tips for sounding your best even when you're stressed¹:

- **Posture** – Good posture allows your lungs to fill up properly, which can improve the quality of your voice.
- **Get your voice out of your throat** – Before an interview, try to relax your throat and jaw muscles, as this will help you project your voice properly. Here are some ways to do this:
 - Yawn and drop your jaw as far as it will go.
 - Hum quietly with your lips closed and jaw loose.
 - Massage your throat muscles to get rid of tightness.
 - Try counting while you relax your jaw muscles. See if you can get to 25 seconds while you wait to be called back to your interview.
- **Breathe from your stomach** – When you speak, it should be as though your breath is entering from your stomach, rather than being pulled down by your throat. Proper breathing means letting your stomach rise when you inhale and fall when you exhale. Try to do this before the interview to help you establish good body rhythm during a stressful situation.
- **Warm up your voice** – Just like the rest of your bodies, your voice does better when it has been properly warmed up. One good way to warm up your voice is by reading out loud from a book or magazine. Practice your greeting and basic introduction out loud on the way to the interview. Use the first few minutes after arrival to let the staff or interviewer know you have arrived, which is also a great time to give your voice one last warm-up before the interview starts.

9) Avoid fidgeting.

One of the telltale signs of nervousness is fidgeting during the interview. Shaking your leg, clicking a pen, or picking your fingernails can be distracting for the interviewer.

Here are some tips to deal with the nerves you are experiencing during an interview:

- **Talk with your hands** – By making gestures with your hands while speaking, you will be unable to fidget – and will come across much more confident and passionate as a result.
- **Clasp your hands when listening** – Gently clasp your hands on or under the table and make an effort to avoid moving them, unless you need to explain something with a hand gesture.

10) Take time to be proud of yourself.

You did it! You survived the interview and faced your fears of talking to someone professionally. Take a moment to be proud of what you have accomplished, while also being mindful of ways in which you could improve before you face the challenge of an interview again.

¹ Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/developing-a-strong-voice-with-social-anxiety-disorder-4080146>