How to keep your cool during presentations

- Being well prepared and comfortable with your material will help to reduce anxiety
- Remember, it is your knowledge/understanding/skills that are being evaluated, not you as a person
- The skills of presenting are something you can learn and improve on. Practise in front of friends, relatives, pets, the mirror. Get used to hearing your own voice
- Focus on your material, not what the audience is thinking about you
- Be enthusiastic about your material. The more interesting you find the material, the easier it is to convey that enthusiasm to your audience
- The anxiety you experience may never go away completely, so learn how you can live with it and use it to your advantage
- Visualise yourself doing a presentation being confident and relaxed
- Practise deep breathing, relaxation and grounding techniques to keep anxiety under control

Gain an interest in the material and sense of purpose to the task

People are often bored by what is not relevant to them. Therefore, you may need to create relevance — by talking to others or by relating the material to what interests you. In addition, it helps to always sit down and work with a clearly defined purpose and task.

Establish rewards for accomplishments

People work best with positive reinforcement. Reward yourself along the way as you complete things.

Manage worries

If you find yourself frequently worrying about your study write down what is concerning you. Examine the validity of these worries and develop a plan of how you can overcome or minimise them. Use the Counselling Service if you need some more help.

Contact us

Counselling Service
Email: counselling@uws.edu.au
Phone: (02) 9852 5199
Web: www.uws.edu.au/counsellingservice
www.uws.edu.au/ecounselling

Planning for success

Improve concentration and minimise distraction

Examine your place of study

Look at lighting, ventilation and room temperature. Is the space free from distractions? Make changes if you can, or consider alternatives like the library or an empty classroom.

Establish a regular routine of eating, sleeping and exercise

The ability to concentrate well is supported by getting adequate sleep, eating nutritious foods, drinking water and participating in regular exercise.

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**Time management**

To manage your time effectively you need to:
- **Be aware** of how you spend your time each day
- **Set priorities** so you know what's important to you and what isn't
- **Establish goals** for your personal, work and family life
- **Plan a strategy** to meet your goals
- **Develop habits** that support what you want in life

**9 Keys to motivation**

**Write out a plan for yourself**

List down personal and academic goals and priorities, and review them regularly.

**Break difficult assignments into small tasks**

For example, an essay can be broken into a number of tasks including: understanding the question; initial research; summarising and organising the information; first draft, editing. Be proud of each task you complete.

**Expect a certain amount of tension**

Use that tension as energy to get yourself moving.

**Be in control**

You can influence your academic outcomes through careful planning and hard work. Academic successes are linked with study skills, organisational skills and your effort.

**Bouncing back**

Don’t accept failures as a final outcome. Reframe them as a learning tool.

**Face your fear**

Don’t let your fear stop you from trying.

**Learn how to succeed, learn about motivation**

Dependency on others for knowledge is a slow, time consuming process. You have the ability to learn without instructors. Regularly remind yourself of the reasons why you chose to study at university.

**Socialise with others of similar interest**

Mutual support is motivating. Research shows you will develop the attitudes of your five closest friends.

**Procrastination stoppers**

We all procrastinate at different times for different reasons. Avoid those distracting thoughts by asking yourself why you are procrastinating and what it is doing to you.

- **“It's too big. I don’t know where to start!”**
  - Do anything related to the task just to get it started
  - List the steps you need to complete the task and concentrate on one step at a time
  - Work on a large task for a minimum of 10 minutes per day
  - Do warm-up tasks to get started e.g. brainstorming, re-reading notes, organising your material

- **“It’s too boring!”**
  - If you can't get out of it, get it out of the way so you can focus on more interesting tasks
  - List the advantages of getting the task done and the disadvantages of not getting on with it

- **“I’m frightened of failing”**
  - Fears are more manageable if you do something about them. Write them out, talk them out
  - Visualise yourself successfully carrying out your task and enjoying the benefits
  - Consciously change your language patterns to become more positive about yourself and your abilities

- **“I’ve always put things off and managed to get by”**
  - Procrastination is a habit that you can break if you are prepared to work on it, but you need to find your own reasons to change
  - University study is very intense and the stress of cramming does not always produce good results and can be damaging to your health

Clarify the critical point at which procrastination becomes a real problem and work out how you will get past it. An example would be the point of time when a decision has to be made e.g. starting that essay or handing in an assignment which you have thoroughly reviewed and “know” is ready.

Adapted from “Uni is Easier When You Know How” by Vivekananda, K. & Shores, P., 1996, Hale & Irremonger