



# *Power of Gestures and Postures in Body Language*

Perhaps the most fundamental form of visual communication – indeed of all communication – is body language. This is a language which we have all learnt to speak and understand and yet it is. As body language is an important part of public speaking, your body language includes your posture, movement, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and voice. The way we carry ourselves, the gestures we use and our postures communicate much more than we realize.

**Here are the most common gesture and posture mistakes that should be taken care of:**

### **GESTURES**

Not using gestures at all. If you keep your hands locked at your sides, you will look nervous and your presentation will lack the visual element to accompany and enhance your words.

**Fidgeting with your hands.** Be aware of what your hands are doing, such as “washing” each other, grasping each other tightly, fiddling with your watch or jewelry, etc. One of the common mistakes can be rolling and unrolling shirt sleeves while presenting. If you must hold something, such as your notes or the PowerPoint remote, be conscious of how you are holding it.

**Holding your hands behind your back.** This gesture usually resembles that of a child reciting a poem at a school assembly. When not gesturing, your hands should be in the “neutral position,” hanging loosely at your sides.

**Folding your arms across your chest.** Even if you are only doing this because you feel cold, this gesture will most likely be interpreted as your closing yourself off from the audience.

**Moving without purpose.** Most of the time you should stand confidently in one place rather than pacing back and forth or walking aimlessly. If you do need to move, it should have a purpose. For example, walk confidently to the front of the room before you begin speaking and walk with purpose to the flipchart or to the computer.

**Shifting from your weight from one foot to the other.** Many people do this unconsciously and sometimes because their feet hurt. Instead, stand with your feet firmly planted on the floor, with your weight equally distributed on both feet.

### **POSTURE**

**Standing too stiffly.** Yes, you should stand up straight but it should be natural, not like you are frozen at attention. Keep your shoulders back and hold your head up so you can make eye contact. This posture conveys confidence and helps you breathe more fully.

**Slouching and keeping your head down.** Not only does it prevent you from looking at the audience, but it also conveys nervousness and makes it harder for the audience to hear you.

## ***How to Improve Body Language***

*Some of us do not naturally possess the personality or body language that is required for making a good impression on others. Body language is the biggest way that others perceive you. Overall, you should appear relaxed, confident and engaging in order to attract the positive attention you want. Try some of these out today!*

### ***Smile***

*Most people do not realize that their “neutral” face is boring, which is an obvious turn-off. You do not need to be beaming from ear to ear 24/7; however, it is a good idea to remind yourself to smile a bit.*

### ***Uncross your arms***

*Having your arms crossed signals that you want to be left alone or that you are upset. Uncrossing your arms will signal to others (and yourself) that you are at ease in the situation.*

### ***Talk more with your hands***

*The right gestures add immeasurably to your words. Think about how you talk and act when you’re not “on.”*

*Then act the same way when you’re in professional situations. You’ll feel more confident, think more clearly, naturally punctuate certain words and phrases, and fall into a much better rhythm.*

### ***Relax your shoulders***

*There is a balance with the shoulders: shoulders too high will make you appear nervous, but slumped shoulders give off a sad or self-conscious vibe. Try to work somewhere in the middle, your shoulders falling to a natural and comfortable height.*

### ***Straighten your entire spine—including your neck***

*Unless you are looking at someone who is shorter than you, your entire spine should be straight. Try to remind yourself to keep your “chin up” and your neck will straighten out in a positively confident manner.*

### ***Think before you speak***

*Eye contact is important, but it's hard to maintain eye contact when you have to think. Most of us start talking and look up or down or away and then swing back when we've gathered our thoughts.*

*Here's a better way. If you have to look away to think, do it before you answer. Take a pause, look thoughtful, glance away, and then return to making eye contact when you start speaking. Then your words are even more powerful because your eyes support them.*

### ***Claim your space***

*Those with a small frame naturally take up less space and appear timid. A way to counter this is to imagine that you are claiming your space on the floor. Stand with feet apart; not together.*

### ***Do not stare at the floor***

*Unless you are checking out the new carpeting or someone's sparkly shoes, your eyes should be close to others' eye level.*

### ***Take a deep breath***

*This is one good way to calm your nerves and make your whole person more relaxed.*

### ***Do not touch your neck or face***

*This is a signal to others that you are protecting yourself or are nervous.*

### ***Nod when someone is talking to you***

*This is a positive form of body language that will let others know you are listening and engaged in the conversation.*

### ***Lower your voice***

*Studies show that people with deeper voices are taken more seriously.*

## ***How to be effective in Public Speaking***

*Most normal people start off fearing before starting a public speech. It's one of the most valuable business/career skills you'll ever have but It's a skill that most definitely can be learned. Of the universe of outstanding public speakers and presenters, some of them are just born that way; give them a stage and microphone and they rock the stage as the saying goes. The other 99% of us, however, have to work at it.*

***Rules that can make us effective public speakers are:-***

***Make the Audience the Center of Your Universe:***

*You're not the focus of the speaking engagement! No matter how many times you may tell yourself this obvious truth, you'll have a hard time until you get it into your presentation. Ultimately, every good speaker cares more about the audience than themselves. This can be a tough prescription to fill if you have speech anxiety, which tends to wrap you in a cocoon of anxiety and self-consciousness*

***Focus on Relationships:***

*If the audience is the center of your universe, you're already pointed in the right direction concerning what you're there to do: establish a relationship and maintain it throughout your talk. If your content could live on its own, it would—there would be no need for anyone to gather to hear you, and you could make your information an email attachment*

***Give Your Purpose Most of Your Attention:***

*Too many speakers confuse topic and purpose. For instance, I'll ask a client, "What's your purpose with this presentation?" And the response will be, "Well,*

***Use Your Body:***

*Your body is a natural tool of communication—and a powerful one at that. After all, there's a reason you're not a brain in a bell jar communicating telepathically. Audiences need you to give physical expression to the things you're saying.*

### ***Use Your Vocal Delivery:***

*Your voice is the most flexible communication tool you own, apart from the brain itself. It's capable of a wide range of coloration and effects, from astonishment and incredulity to mockery and seduction and a hundred other intentions. To speak without vocal variation means using a "mono" or single tone; and from the combined word monotone derives the derogatory monotonous*

*To be effective in your speeches and presentations accept the strong relationship between performance and success. In fact, the more you can connect with audiences rather than remaining in the comfort zone of your content, the more successful you'll be.*



## ***How to Develop Listening Skills***

*Listening is imperative for proper communication. An important part of communicating is listening. Listening involves more than what you hear with your ears. It involves what you hear with your mind. You may hear the words, but unless you really listen to what is being said, you won't be able to respond to anyone.*

### ***Difference between Hearing and Listening***

*The hearing is a physical act. Hearing acknowledges sounds. Listening is an intellectual and emotional act. Listening requires that you understand what is said.*

*Listening is much more intricate and complicated than the process of hearing. Hearing is done with the ears while listening is an intellectual and emotional process that integrates physical, emotional, and intellectual inputs in a search for meaning and understanding.*

***Being a good listener is beneficial in many ways. For example, it:***

*Improves communication*

*Puts you in control of the situation*

*Lessens arguments*

*If you have misunderstood, the talker can immediately correct your impressions. You learn more about people.*

*Shows that you care*

*Shows respect to the speaker*

*Four types of listening:-*

***Inactive listening: You hear only the words, not the meaning. "Goes in one ear and out of the other."***

***Selective listening: You hear only what you want to hear. You filter—although usually unconsciously—the message.***

## BM English Speaking

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**Active listening:** You make a conscious effort not only to hear the words but also to listen to the complete message the customer is sending. Active listening takes into consideration the intent and nonverbal communication of the customer. Active listening also uses empathy and is nonjudgmental.

**Reflective listening:** You listen for the whole message. This is particularly important when dealing with a complicated issue or resolving a conflict. Reflective listening is used to clarify what is being said and to convey mutual understanding.

### **Ways to Improve Listening**

#### **Stop Talking**

Don't talk, listen. When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them.

#### **Focus on what is being said.**

Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.

Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.

#### **Try to be impartial.**

Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking – some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking – others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

#### **You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.**

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.

## ***How to Develop Voice Quality***

*A positive impression can be created initially with good dressing and grooming in the minds of the audience. However, if your voice is squeaky, your words meaningless, or your voice too loud, then their positive impression quickly will become negative. When you speak, your voice is the primary link between you and your listeners. So if you would like to develop a perfect speaking voice, start with the steps below.*

### ***Speak loudly***

*It's important to be heard when you speak, so raise your voice! However, this doesn't mean you should shout – rather, you should vary the loudness of your speech depending on the situation. But, if you tend to whisper, mumble or speak with your head down it is much easier for people to talk over you or ignore you.*

### ***Adjust you pace of speaking***

*It's important to slow down your speech by saying your words more slowly and pausing between sentences. Speaking too quickly is a bad habit and it can be difficult for people to keep up with you or even understand what you're saying. This makes it easy for them to tune out and stop listening. The ideal speaking rate is somewhere between 120 to 160 words per minute.*

### ***Speak clearly***

*Make sure to open your mouth, loosen your lips and keep your tongue and teeth in the correct position as you speak. Speaking clearly is possibly the most important aspect of developing a good speaking voice. You need to pay close attention to each and every word you say – pronouncing it fully and correctly. Some commonly mispronounced or poorly articulated words include saying “gonna” instead of “going to”, saying “axe” instead of “ask”, or saying “jist” instead of “just”.*

### ***Practice deep breathing***

*Practice your breathing by inhaling deeply, allowing the air to fill your belly. Breathe in for a count of 5 seconds, then exhale for another 5. Get used to this method of breathing, then try to work it into your everyday speech. Try to breathe at the end of every sentence – if you use the deep breathing method, you should have enough air to get through the next sentence without having to pause for breath. This will also give your listeners a chance to absorb what you're saying.*

### ***Practice loud reading***

*In order to work on pronunciation, pace and volume, it is a good idea to practice reading aloud. Keep practicing until you are happy with what you hear. Then try to employ the same techniques as part of your everyday speech.*

### ***Record your own speech***

*Recording your own speech can help you to pick up on any faults that you wouldn't normally pick up on, such as mispronunciations and speed or pitch problems. Though most people don't like listening to the sound of their own voices, it's a good idea to record yourself speaking.*

### ***Smile while you speak***

*A good way to make your tone more friendly and warm is to smile while you speak. Smiling can help people judge your content of the speech more favorably. Avoid grinning as it can mean something else but even a slight upturn of the corners of your mouth can make the sound of your voice more appealing – even over the phone.*



## ***11 Tips to Speak English Fluently and Confidently***

### ***Develop a Mindset:***

*To conquer any problem in life, you need to have the right mindset. The same is true for languages. In the absence of a right mindset, you may either fail in your endeavor or it may take you a lot longer than necessary. To have a correct attitude, you must*

1. Always know why you want to learn a new language
2. Have a solid commitment
3. Be realistic about your goals and have patience
4. Practice positive affirmations regarding language
5. Be open to learning from everyone

### ***Just start:***

Raj is a salesman. He is from Bihar. He can speak 5 languages fluently. When he was asked, how he learned speaking English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, and Telugu. He said, "When I came to Mumbai, I could speak only Hindi which is my mother tongue. After getting a job in Mumbai, I realized that if I could understand and speak other languages, my work will become easy."

He continued, "What worked for me is that although I could speak only two or three sentences (with mistakes) initially I always learned something as my friends corrected me. Speaking also gave me confidence. As it was not necessary for me, I enjoyed the process. And very soon, I was able to speak many sentences by following a simple process.

Speak ----- Learn from mistakes ----- Get better (fluent very soon)

### ***Think in English:***

Translating is not an easy thing to do. It takes time and is confusing. You can develop the habit of thinking in English by starting small, just frame simple and short sentences. (Don't worry about the correctness of the sentence, everyone starts imperfectly.)

### ***Use it to enhance it:***

You must have come across people who score well on an English test but fail miserably when it comes to speaking the language. Knowledge and application of knowledge are two different things. It's like knowing how to play a sport and in reality playing a sport. The way we become proficient at a sport by playing it, the same way we become fluent in a language by speaking it.

Remember

Playing a sport ----- Proficiency at the sport

Speaking the language ----- Fluency in the language

### ***Yes, grammar is important but not much:***

Your peers, friends or colleagues may have told the opposite. Yes, grammar is important but we should not focus on it too much. We shouldn't try to learn all the grammar concepts. Why? As kids before we were enrolled in schools, we were able to speak our mother tongue with quite correct grammar. We did not know the rules of the language but we were applying the rules. It shows that we learn most of the grammar rules intuitively. **Just learn the basic grammar rules of tenses, articles, sentence structure.**

### ***Learn from everyone, practice speaking at every situation:***

Don't wait for a convenient situation to speak in English. You may feel awkward speaking in English initially but it becomes easier if you continuously grab the opportunities to speak English.

### ***Read a lot:***

Books are the source of a richer language. By reading a lot of books in English, you can improve your vocabulary exponentially. Reading brings precision to our speaking. It automatically develops thinking in English skill. A book provides us with ready-made, correct language material which can be used immediately.

### ***Listen a lot:***

Listening is a fundamental tool for learning a language. It is a right method to internalize the English language. The various ways to learn English are:

- Videos: They help you learn the language with visual context
- Podcasts and Radio: Podcasts and Radio cover a lot of areas which helps in developing our knowledge and having a diverse vocabulary.
- Music: It is a fun way to learn English. It is very effective as we listen to our favorite songs many songs without getting bored, learning the language deeply effortlessly.
- News: News is a good platform for to learn formal, standard use of the language, combined with contemporary themes.

### ***Pay attention to Pronunciation:***

Most of the English learners feel shy to use their English because they are not sure of their pronunciation. Improper pronunciation can lead to negative impression, misunderstanding and ineffective communication. You can learn the correct pronunciation of English words by listening to native speakers and from online dictionaries. Online dictionaries give you the pronunciation of the words in written form and in audio form.

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## ***Mirror Practice:***

Mirror practice is very effective in learning English because it gives you instant feedback about your body language, facial expressions, and gestures. It also helps when you don't have many people around you to practice your English. While speaking in front of the mirror, you can also audio-record yourself for analyzing other aspects of speaking like modulation and pronunciation.

## ***Fumble is not the End:***

“If you want to increase your success rate, double your failure rate.” – Thomas Watson

Failure is the key to success; each mistake teaches us something. So think of mistakes as a gateway to taking your English to next level. Keep speaking English, allow yourself to make mistakes, keep learning from those mistakes and definitely, you will achieve your goal of speaking in English.



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