

# 5 Secrets of Powerful Body Language

How important is body language? For influencing listeners and getting your message across, it's vital. Don't forget that your most important visual aid is *yourself*. Add the fact that your voice is physical, and you realize just how much the way you look and sound matters.

At Public Speaking International, we make working with the body a key element of our coaching and training. Here are 5 body language “secrets” that we teach:

1. **Movement and gestures.** To keep your audience from nodding off, just think NODS: Neutral, Open, Defined, and Strong. Begin in a *neutral* position with hands at sides, which keeps you *open* to your audience. Use gestures that are *defined*, and make them *strong*.
2. **Fill your space.** When you speak in public, a certain amount of space is yours by right—and you should claim it. Avoid standing still, and don't minimize. Move in a “size” that's appropriate for the audience and room. Fill the space that is yours!
3. **Use objects purposefully.** Stage actors know that good actors use props, and bad actors are used *by* their props. Any object you employ in a presentation should help further your message and its impact. Is it necessary? If so, how can you use it effectively?
4. **Facial expressiveness.** Do your facial expressions help clarify what you're saying? Your face helps an audience believe you're trustworthy. Go to the mirror and practice your talk silently. Is your face helping you communicate?
5. **Voice.** As mentioned above, the voice is physical, so it's part of body language. Learn how to use your voice to help you indicate meaning and intention. Listen to speakers good and bad. Then record yourself. Do you sound like the person you are?

For communicating effectively and advancing your career, you need to use body language consciously. It makes a difference in how people perceive not only what you say, but who they think you are.