

Acting Tips for Beginners

Every single working actor has one thing in common: They were all once beginners. But where should you start if you want to take up the art form?

Here's some of our best acting advice for newbies and novices, from learning technique and finding inspiration for your characters to professional pointers on navigating the emotional side of the business. These acting tips for beginners can help you get started on your creative journey.

Stop Calling Yourself “Aspiring”

It doesn't matter if you've only done one show in high school or you just made your debut on Broadway: If you act, you are an actor. Don't sell yourself short, and do recognize the merit of your accomplishments. “Don't consider yourself an ‘aspiring actor.’ Just do that. Do the ancient, universal art of acting. Don't worry about being a Hollywood actor,” says Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Only by taking yourself seriously can you convince others that you are ready to take the next step—be that getting admitted into a college theater program, [landing your first agent](#), or nabbing that coveted big break.

Go Beyond Learning the Lines

One of the actor's most essential tools is [text analysis and interpretation](#). When you're handed [sides for an audition](#), dig as deep as you can into the information you're given. If possible, read the whole play or script—this will give you important details about your role and how it relates to other characters in the story. [Ask yourself questions](#) about what your character is doing within the scene and how they go about achieving the things that they want. This will inform the decisions you make during your actual performance and help design the roadmap for your character's journey.

Remember, the First Year Will be Tough

Starting anything new is hard, but the early stages of acting can be especially grueling. If you're just getting out of college, you'll have to navigate living in the “real world” at the same time you're establishing your career. And if you've been pursuing a different career path and are just beginning your acting journey, there will be a lot of road bumps along the

way. The first year can be tough, but just remind yourself why you decided to take up acting in the first place, and believe that with patience and perseverance, you will make progress in your craft and career.

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"This business is not for the faint of heart," writes veteran TV actor Timothy Davis-Reed ("The West Wing"). "It takes a lot of hard work and belief in yourself to even feel like you've got a hold of the bottom rung of the ladder. Learning to be patient and wait your turn are skills you can work on every day."

Find a Community

Though acting is a personal pursuit, you don't have to go it alone. In fact, one of the hallmarks of film, television, and theater is the emphasis on collaboration—why should your acting career be any different? Make friends with other actors in your area, take classes, and go see your fellow artists work. You can run lines together, prep auditions, and offer perspective and support when needed. Writers, producers, and directors who are early in their career make great contacts, too. These are the same people who will make casting decisions later down the line.

Read, Watch, and Listen

Examples of great acting are all around us—in films, commercials, Broadway houses and regional productions. Once you commit to pursuing the craft, you can learn a lot just from [watching other actors](#). Enjoy a certain performance in a film? Try to pinpoint exactly what the actor did to pique your interest. Particularly moved by a local theater production? Go back a second night and take note of how the cast achieved those moments. Can't stop laughing at that new car commercial? Listen to what the actor does with their voice in order to perfectly land the joke. Don't

forget to read plays, scripts, and [books about acting](#)— these can offer invaluable insight, especially when you're just starting out.

Lean In to What Makes You Unique

Think about an actor whose work you admire. Odds are, their career stands out because of something singular about them. As audience members, we love the little details that make a person wholly unique. The same goes for casting directors and producers: They're looking for actors to bring personality, individuality, and a rich sense of who they are outside of the audition room. "There is bravery in being fully yourself. Your personality is your secret weapon, both as an actor and in your career," says acting coach Joseph Pearlman.

Once you identify what makes you unique, don't shy away from bringing that into your auditions and character work.

Treat the World Like Your Acting Class

When you're on stage or in front of a camera, your goal is to truthfully portray your character as a living, breathing human being. Luckily for both experienced and beginners, the world is full of people living out their lives with all those messy complexities on full display. [Observe those around you](#). How do they walk? How do they talk? In what ways do their actions reveal their dreams, desires, and neuroses? These are the same details you can use to breathe authentic life into your performances.

Be Kind

It might seem like common sense, but you'd be surprised by how far a little bit of kindness and professionalism can take you. At the end of the day, everyone you meet—teachers, fellow actors, agents, directors—is a person with a life outside of the industry. And while good work inside the audition room and onstage or in front of the camera is every actor's goal, your behavior and how you treat those around you ultimately makes much more of an impact.

"Actors, be kind to each other," writes producer and casting director Heidi Levitt. "You need each other's support and sharing information and insight is not the only kind of support you need. You need kindness—it's a necessity to succeed in the long run."