

How do I calm my nerves before an acting audition?

The best way to calm your nerves before an audition is to build confidence around your preparation process. Knowing your lines backwards and forwards will do wonders for quelling whatever doubts you have in your head.

Another great way to calm audition nerves is to focus on your breathing. Take centered, focused breaths that actually calm you. A good breath to try if you are feeling a little edgy is a 'heart breath. Sitting still, breathe deeply and slowly into your solar plexus or heart center, and then, just as slowly, let it out. Do this a few times, really letting the breath fill the entire area of the heart. When you surround the heart with your warm, expansive breath, it feels protected, and you begin to feel safer in your body. When it's time for the audition, you'll feel more secure, centered, and strong in your body, mind, and heart.

Try visualizing your audition from start to finish, is great way to ease tensions and get your head in the game. But ultimately, remember: what's the worst that could happen? You don't get cast? So what? There's no use trying to fit into a box you don't belong in—so [on to the next!](#)

Do you have a love/hate relationship with auditions? Most actors want more opportunities to audition, but the process can be nerve-wracking. And we all know that audition nerves can kill your chances of getting the role.

Thankfully, you can learn to love auditions!

Here are some things you can do to calm your fears:

1. Ask why.

If you often feel extremely nervous during auditions, ask yourself why. Keep asking until you find out where the fear is coming from. Sometimes the simple act of naming your fear gives it less power over you.

2. Go to the gym.

The actor gym, that is. Go to studio class and go regularly. This is not self-serving advice on my part! If you work every week, you're constantly

exercising those acting muscles, which will, in turn, help you overcome your nerves.

3. Prepare.

Work on the on the audition material so you know it like the back of your hand. If you've done your homework, you can audition with confidence, not fear.

4. Breathe with intention.

Learn how to breathe. Deep meditative breathing helps ground you. Learning how to breathe deeply and with intention was game-changing for me.

5. Focus on the work.

Practice letting go of any expectations and just focus on the work. No one is forcing you to be an actor—it's what you love! If you remember your love of acting, it's easier to embrace the audition as an opportunity to act, which is a great mindset to have at your audition.

Start to audition like a kid and if you still are a kid, that's great! Audition for the pure love and joy of acting, singing and dancing and with zero expectations. Doesn't that sound like fun?

As a teacher, the question I am asked most often is: “What can I do about my nerves?” It's a hard question to answer because there can be a number of reasons why your nerves ramp up during the audition process, as well as many things to be nervous about! So let's examine some of the reasons actors get nervous and see if we can't come up with some solutions by exploring the four “R's.”

1. Relax. If you're a little nervous at your auditions, don't fret; it just means you're human. Our fight, flight, or freeze mechanisms are hardwired into us. It's actually part of our DNA to have feelings of anxiety when we are in new and uncertain situations. Imagine if, instead of running, our ancestors tried to hug every woolly mammoth and saber tooth tiger they met. We wouldn't be here, end of story. Our flight mechanisms are in us to help ensure our survival, and thank goodness for that.

Auditions engage the flight part of the brain because you are literally exposing the softest part of yourself to a room full of strangers. The increased heart rate and butterflies in the stomach are actually your body trying not to run. Remember, we come prepackaged with these instincts so relax and accept the fact that if you're a little nervous, it's not your fault. Beating yourself up by thinking that you're doing something wrong by having some nerves only adds another level of anxiety and tension and the nerves become even worse. It's like screaming, "Shut up!" at a crying baby—it doesn't work. When you accept the nerves and see them as a natural part of being alive, they calm down and you're less likely to be taken over by them.

2. Remove. Carl Jung created a paradigm that deals with anxiety/nerves, and it's one of the simplest paradigms that exist in psychology. It contains the three elements: doubt, fear, and anxiety. By definition, the last element of a paradigm can't exist without the elements that go before. So, if you can remove doubt from the equation, the fear and anxiety won't have a lot of reason to exist.

I've had actors go on and on about how nervous they get in their auditions, and sometimes when I see what they're doing, I understand why. Their work is unspecific, unfocused, and predictable; they are actually right to doubt what they're doing. In these cases, the fear and the nerves are the body's and mind's way of saying, "Get out of there, you're not ready!"

You need to be removing doubt and instead build strength with every step of your preparation. If your process is shaky and unspecific, you'll have doubts about the effectiveness of the piece, and as noted above, those doubts will lead to fear and anxiety in the audition room. If on the other hand, you trust and believe in the technique you use to prepare, your audition will be free from doubt, fear, and anxiety, and instead, it will be rich in power, confidence, and ease.

3. Restore. When nerves are present, it's important not to fight them or push them away. However, you also don't want them to run wild through your mind and body and leave you exhausted. A simple way to keep nerves from taking over is to breathe—but not just random, heaving gasps for oxygen. Rather, take centered, focused breaths that actually calm you. A good breath to try if you are feeling a little edgy is a "heart breath." Sitting still, breathe deeply and slowly into your solar plexus or heart center, and then, just as slowly, let it out. Do this a few times, really letting

the breath fill the entire area of the heart. When you surround the heart with your warm, expansive breath, it feels protected, and you begin to feel safer in your body. When it's time for the audition, you'll feel more secure, centered, and strong in your body, mind, and heart.

4. Remember. One way to keep nerves from totally taking you over is to remember your own bravery. Think of all the times in your life you've been in situations that were new and unknown and remember how well you handled them. You have lived a life and are still on the planet. That is not a small thing, and you have no doubt taken big leaps of faith and shown great courage many times in your life. The fact that you're still here means you're strong—stronger than you might think—and nothing has defeated you and neither will this audition. Also, remember that just because you feel a little nervous, it doesn't mean that you can't also feel confident; they are not mutually exclusive. You are a big container that can hold and handle many different emotions at once. Let them all be present and see them for what they are—just emotions, not instructions of how to behave.

The four “R’s” are a tool to help you stay conscious and manage your audition anxiety so that you'll be able to feel what you're feeling and still remain in control. So, go ahead and feel the strength, the nerves, the confidence, and the excitement. If you don't block any of it out, you'll feel what it's like to be totally alive and brilliantly human in all of your auditions.