

### 3 Ways To Axe The Filler Words In Your Vocabulary Once And For All

You know when you're talking to your manager, and you notice that your speech is littered with a whole bunch of "ums" and "likes," but it's already far too late to correct yourself?

Here are three ways to stop using filler words like these once and for all.

Start tracking these words in your speech

Lisa B. Marshall, host and creator of The Public Speaker podcast, writes in a blog post that to become a better speaker, you should first "become aware of your distracting speech habits" by asking a friend or recording yourself.

"Once you've got some sample recordings, the next step is play back your recordings several times. Listen specifically for your disfluences — go ahead and make of game of it. First just list them and then start counting them. If you are counting past three or four, you'll know you have a problem," she writes.

Don't freak yourself out

Whitson Gordon, currently a freelance writer, wrote in Lifehacker that the first thing you should do is "relax."

"Let's start by saying: don't fret over this too much. The more stressed you get by it, the more anxious and nervous you're going to sound, which is really what we're trying to get away from in the first place," he writes. "It's okay to let a few filler words slip out. After all, it's a natural part of speaking. No one's going to think less of you if you say 'um' once in awhile. The goal is to avoid saying it every three words. Take your hands out of your pockets, untense your shoulders, and let yourself relax a bit."

Don't talk too fast

Steven D. Cohen teaches at the the Harvard Division of Continuing Education is an assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School and president of Summit Presentations, LLC. He wrote in a Harvard Extension School blog post about why it's important to slow down if you want to stop saying "um."

"The next time you are asked a question, take a couple seconds to think about what you want to say. This pause serves two important purposes: it will help you begin powerfully, and it will help you avoid using a filler word. Pause, think, answer," he writes. "The same public speaking technique applies when you are transitioning from one idea to another. While you may be tempted to fill the silence between ideas with a filler word, remember to pause and give yourself a moment to think about what you want to say next. It is important that you don't begin speaking until you are ready. Remember: Pause, think, answer."

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