

Mark

Many body language experts would have you believe that the way you look and move in a presentation makes up more than half your overall message. But this is a bit of an exaggeration. A presenter's main objective is simply to come across as natural and comfortable. And focusing too much on what you might be doing wrong is only going to make you self-conscious.

So relax. Take it easy. There aren't any hard and fast rules about this. In general, slower movements and subtle gestures will communicate calm and confidence, whilst faster movements and more expansive gestures will communicate energy and enthusiasm.

So get the balance right. If you tend to be a bit static when you speak in public, then you might think about loosening up a little. If, on the other hand, you're more the hyperactive type, then try to tone it down a fraction – especially at the start.

Certainly there *are* things you can do which may distract your audience – particularly if you do them repeatedly. But you can check for these by watching yourself present on film. Here are some common body language no-nos:

- pacing up and down,
- swaying or wobbling as you speak,
- creating a barrier by folding your arms,
- doing funny things with your hands,
- fiddling with clothes, hair or jewellery,
- appearing too casual or too aggressive,
- or simply doing nothing at all.

Avoid these if you can. But, above all, remember that your movements and gestures should always support what you are saying and never contradict or distract from it.

Watch how these presenters use gestures to illustrate, enliven and reinforce the points they're making ...

PRESENTERS

There are three things I want to talk to you about today and they all concern coaching for performance. So let's take them one at a time. Firstly, ...

I really think this new initiative has huge potential, but it means us all working together as a team.

So, how are we going to address this problem? Well, on the one hand, we could just ignore it and hope it goes away. But, on the other hand, this is losing us a lot of money.

Now what we have seen across all divisions is a significant increase in pre-tax profit margins from three to nine percent.

At every stage, from start to finish, this project has been carefully monitored and benchmarked against best practice.

So, looking further ahead, what are our long-term objectives?

Who'd have thought that such a tiny defect in the system would have caused such chaos? But fixing it is now our top priority.

So that is the situation. Any ideas? Yes, Mark?

Mark

Unless you have a particularly distracting habit, your body language usually becomes less important as your talk progresses. But be aware that, especially in the opening moments, you are your most important visual aid.