

## KEYS TO FLUID TALKING

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### How to Talk Fluidly

*Key: Stay in Charge of talking movements. Focus attention on the “feeling” of fluid, forward movements while you are making the movements.*

1. Pace: Use gradual, easy pace when talking, especially when having difficulty. Think more slowly and make speech and other nonspeech movements more slowly in order to stay in charge.
2. Breathing: Use “middle”, relaxed breathing volumes when talking and when you feel nervous. Focus on using gradual inhalations and exhalations, especially when you start and stop talking.
3. Starting and Stopping: Start and stop all movements naturally and gradually - feel that you are moving speech forward fluidly. Never rush or use abrupt movements to start and stop fluent speech or disfluent speech.
4. Forward Talking: Always feel you are moving speech forward fluidly. Use the natural order of sounds, words, and movements. Feel the movements blend together. Never add, subtract, or change words or movements to help you begin talking or to keep from stuttering.
5. Pausing: Pause gradually and naturally when you talk. Stop and restart movements gradually at each pause while breathing continues forward. Never rush to restart talking.

### How to Recover From Stuttering Fluidly

*Key: Good speech is not perfect speech! Occasional disruptions are natural conditions of talking. Allow yourself to experience these hesitations openly without fighting, avoiding, or hiding them. Focus on gradually regaining the feeling of fluid forward talking - NEVER RUSH!*

1. Forward: Move forward gradually into the stutter without recoiling, pushing, or stopping. Never add or avoid words to keep from stuttering.
2. Pace: Slow your pace and the disrupted movement down gradually.
3. Focus: Allow yourself to feel the disrupted movement and shape it without trying to rapidly or forcefully escape, fight, or push the word out - this makes it worse!!
4. Readjust: Gradually shape your speech movements forward and fluidly. *Never Rush the Recovery!*
5. Stay in Charge: Maintain gradual pace and fluid, forward talking well beyond the disfluency. Forceful or abrupt recoveries often trigger more disruptions - like a snowballing effect.

## Understanding Emotions and How They Affect Talking

Key: Emotions have a natural and significant influence on everything we do, especially talking. Learning to adjust to emotions rather than avoid emotions is a major key to success!!

1. Emotions, both positive and negative, occur naturally and frequently - even when we talk.
2. There are different types of emotions that trigger different reactions in our bodies. When we experience something we consider to be frightening or threatening, or even when we think we might experience something frightening there is a sudden increase in negative emotional arousal. What we feel as nervousness, butterflies, fear, etc. are actually involuntary changes taking place in our bodies that alert and prepare us to physically fight or flee from whatever we perceive is threatening. This reaction is typically involuntary and is called the “fight or flight” response.
3. Several things happen to our bodies when we experience this arousal that are geared to develop strength rapidly for defending ourselves. While this helps in times of physical conflict, unless we make appropriate adjustments these same reactions disrupt thinking processes and movement coordination. When talking these changes make it more difficult to focus on what we want to say and to produce fluid, natural speech. This is when we are most vulnerable to hesitations and disruptions in fluency.

The following are normal reactions to negative emotional arousal.

- time seems to speed up, creating the perception of “time pressure”
  - it is more difficult to focus attention on details
  - muscles (especially speech muscles when we’re talking) become more tense and rigid as if bracing for a fight or preparing to run away
  - fine movements (like speech) become more rapid, abrupt, and less coordinated
  - breathing becomes more shallow and rapid and we tend to hold our breath - we also tend to fill our lungs with more air
  - we talk faster
  - we often fragment our actions into smaller parts. For speech. Talking becomes choppy and hesitant rather than continuous and fluid
4. The more we try to hide from or avoid what frightens us, the worse the fear becomes.
  5. Focusing on the negative thoughts or pictures in our mind about what frightens us can trigger the “fight or flight” response without the actually event ever occurring. When talking, this more frequent disruptions.
  6. The more we fight and fear the disruptions in speech, the worse the response pattern gets. This is the part of stuttering that feels like we are out of control.

**What to Do When Emotion Kicks In** (this section is in progress)

1. Allow the emotional changes to occur. Fighting the feelings is difficult and often makes it difficult to focus on what needs to be done to talk easily.
2. Reduce both non-speech pace and speech pace. Breathe slower and more deeply with relaxed shoulders, arms, and neck. Slow body movements to get the feeling of a more relaxed pace.
3. Focus attention on the feeling of forward, fluid speech movement. Keep onsets and offset gradual (but natural). The key is not to let the emotion create abrupt, tense, isolated movements.
4. Understand that speech might not be as good in these situations as in others (like when you are more relaxed). This is normal. The key is to not respond negatively to the arousal by anticipating what might happen. Keep focused and fluid, making the necessary adjustments as they come.