



Eliminating Vocal Fillers

Um, uh, like, you know, and other vocal fillers can be very distracting to your audience and take away from your credibility. Fortunately, they are surprisingly easy to get rid of - all it takes is perseverance.

Step 1: Know your patterns.

Spend a week observing your vocal filler patterns. Acknowledge when you use them. Keep a tally of how many times you say it in a given day. *Optional: Enlist the help of a friend to signal when you use vocal fillers.*

Step 2: Start actively avoiding your fillers.

You are able to feel the vocal filler coming before it arrives, in a movement in your vocal chords. Start nipping it in the bud and just be silent instead! People generally are made uncomfortable by silence, but you should realize that one to two second pauses while speaking are less obtrusive than *um*. Pauses will also feel more uncomfortable to you than to your audience, so don't worry too much about pausing instead of filling the void with your habitual vocal filler.

Step 3: Go the extra mile.

Practice speaking non-stop for one minute and start over every time you use a vocal filler. It's a fun, challenging, and extremely effective way to finally eliminate those pesky vocal fillers!

Final tip:

Take deep breaths, and slow down. The extra time gives you a chance to organize your thoughts, and will cut out many of your fillers.