

Audition Tips & Tricks for Actors

What do we mean by **audition tips & tricks**? We mean the small stuff. Stuff you may never have thought about. But it makes a huge difference.

Over the years, we've been to hundreds of auditions. And every time, we've made a mistake. But every time, we learned something new. So shave a few years off your learning curve by following our advice.

The Arrival

First audition tip: Bring something to do. Do a crossword or read a book. Anything that occupies your full attention.

Why, you ask? Because you're usually stuck in a room with other actors who are there to audition, just like you. One of them is going to start a conversation. Either because they're nervous, or they want to make you nervous.

Listen, we're all for networking with other actors. It's a great way to find work. But at an audition, keep to yourself and stay focused.

Also, reading a book will prevent you from pacing the hallways and reciting your lines. Don't do that either. It will only serve to jitter your nerves. (See the article about [dealing with fear](#) and stagefright.) And besides, if you don't know your lines by now...

How to Memorize

Speaking of your lines, do you know [how to memorize](#) them? One of the best audition tips we can offer: Your lines should be so ingrained into you, that you could recite them in a *coma*.

First Impressions

Here's a good audition tip: When you walk in the room, be confident. The human brain makes over 27 judgments about another person within seconds of meeting them. These judgements are based on your posture, body language, voice tone, breathing rate, eye contact, etc.

Make a bad first impression, and everything you do thereafter is filtered through that impression. (Called a *cognitive filter*.) You'll smile and they'll think you're afraid and nervous.

If you make a good first impression, you'll smile and they'll think you're relaxed and confident.

Why is this important? Because acting is a business. And people do business with those that they know, like, and *trust*.

The Auditors

The powers that be. The folks behind the desk, in the dark, eating their sandwiches, drinking their coffee, smoking their cigarettes, and taking their notes. All the while, ignoring you.

When actors walk in the room, they usually think they are subject to . Now I walk in and think the exact opposite. *They're at my mercy* for two minutes. I can make 'em laugh, cry, or at least yawn. Whatever the case, I'll be having fun.

Try not to place the auditors on a pedestal. They are there to do their job, just like you're there to do your job. You are equals. You're selling, and they're buying. Treat them with respect and courtesy, and they'll do the same.

But don't ask who they are. Introductions waste time, time you could use for showing off your acting chops.

And don't use them in your monologue. (Unless they ask.) They're there to observe and evaluate, not engage.

The Room and the Space

Actors audition in all sorts of places. Living rooms, kitchens, rooftops, you name it. But typically, it's either in a theatre or a studio space.

Wherever it is, there's usually an X on the floor, done with tape. Find it and go stand there. That's called a *mark*. (X marks the spot.)

Why? Because the auditors get antsy when you're too close. (We had a professor in college who would throw a pen at you if you came too close to the table.)

But don't stay rooted to that X. Remember, the space is yours for two whole minutes. So feel free to move around.

The Slate

Another great audition tip: After you hit your X, tell them who you are. This is called *slating*. There's the good slate, and the bad slate.

The Bad Slate: "Hello, my name is so-and-so, and I'll be doing Viola from *Twelfth Night*."

Boring! Imagine how many times a day the auditors must hear that. It'll go in one ear and right out the other.

The Good Slate: "Good evening, I'm so-and-so and this is Viola in the first act."

That has class and distinction. Or what about this? "Hi everyone, my name is so-and-so and this piece is from *Twelfth Night*."

Now they're listening! (Just remember to keep it simple.)

The Time Limit

If you prepared a monologue or a song, you (usually) get two minutes starting from your first line. And two minutes is *plenty*. (In fact, the auditors will have made their decision in about 30 seconds.)

So as to be respectful of everyone's time, cut down your monologue or song. Rehearse with a stopwatch to measure how long it is. Then when you get to the audition, you won't be rushed.

And if they cut you off, don't take it personally. It doesn't mean you're bad, it means they're renting by the hour.

Eye Contact

Actors love to stare. Especially in auditions. They think it makes them look ultra-concentrated on their scene partner. The end result looks like someone who might be slightly deranged. And who wants to hire that?

One of the best audition tips on [making eye contact](#) is the 90/10 rule.

The Bottom Line

These little audition tips & tricks took us years to collect. And they can make or break your audition. Follow them, and you'll be light years ahead of the competition, and so much closer to becoming an actor.