

Tips for Performance Anxiety

Prepare

Preparation is important. Anxiety will be worse if you are feeling underprepared.

Move

Move in ways that help you relieve physical tension before a performance (warmups, exercise, jumping jacks).

Reframe

Reframe anxiousness as positive excitement.

Beta blockers

Beta blockers are often used to reduce symptoms of performance anxiety. While they may reduce physical symptoms, the mental and emotional symptoms are still present. As with any type of medication, beta blockers should only be used in consultation with a doctor and with a prescription.

Nutrition

Consider what you eat and drink prior to a performance. Complex carbohydrates (such as whole grain pasta) are digested more slowly and can stave off hunger during a performance. Caffeine may increase nervousness so you might consider limiting your intake.

Rehearse

Practice putting yourself in situations where you can practice performing even when you are nervous. The nerves will not go away. What we can do is notice them and be able to play even when we are having performance anxiety symptoms.

Come up with ideas for performing in progressively more stressful situations over time so you can build tolerance.

Rest

Getting adequate sleep can help us manage stress and manage intense emotions more effectively. In the days leading up to a performance, clear out your schedule so you can be well rested.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
WELLNESS PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN