Tips on how to deal with stage fright

* OVER prepare for what you are singing
* Repeat your song(s) over and over
* Sing to your pets first, if people are too scary
* Sing for your family and friends
* Ask your friends and family for feedback
* Remember the audience is on your side
* Make sure the first 2 or 3 songs of your set are easy songs
* Save your more difficult material for later
* Stay hydrated with filtered room temperature water
* Eat healthy
* Eat something at least 1 hour before showtime
* Exercise
* Expect the unexpected
* Turn the fear of performing into the thrill of performing

## [How to Deal with Stage Fright: 5 Quick-Fixes for Singers](http://performancehigh.net/latest-singing-tip/2009/10/13/how-to-deal-with-stage-fright-5-quick-fixes-for-singers.html)

The ability to reset your mental state using an anchor is a great way to handle performance anxiety... if you've learned to anchor.  But sometimes you just need a quick fix!

Maybe you're tired.  Maybe you didn't get enough sleep.  Maybe you are dealing with some strong emotions.  Maybe you feel unprepared.  Maybe you simply haven't had time to learn how to anchor well!  Whatever the reason, there are a lot of ways to reduce performance anxiety without doing weeks of mental training.  This article describes a few such techniques.  There are lots more!

### Stepping Behind Yourself

This technique can allow for a mental/emotional distance that frees you to perform at top level:

* Normally, you see the world from the eyes on the front of your head, right?  Try stepping back and seeing the back of your head.  See the scene as if you are standing behind yourself.
* Then, step back again.  See the back of the head of the person looking at the back of your head.
* Try stepping back again and again, seeing a succession of back-of-heads with the “performing you” in front.

### Role Play

This technique is a variation on Bringing Your Perfect Self, but doesn't require advance mental preparation.  (And, for anyone who couldn't quite identify with the Perfect Self idea, Role Playing can be a bit less of a stretch.)

* Think of a musician who embodies the characteristics you wish you had.  See how this musician performs.  Feel how it must feel to be this musician.
* Now, imitate this musician.  What would this musician do in your challenging situation?  How would he/she enter the stage?  What would he/she say between songs?  How would this person interact with the audience?  Role play as if you are this person.

### Experiencing the Nerves

Sometimes nothing we do makes the shaking go away.  So, try allowing the nerves.  Welcome them in and experience them.  Then, finally, dismiss them.  Here is the procedure:

* Find a place where you can be undisturbed for ten or fifteen minutes.
* Sit down and breathe in and out slowly ten times.  Simply observe without judgment if you are unable to take a full breath.  That's OK - just breathe slowly.
* Scan your body head to toe, and find places that express your nervousness.  Do you feel tension in your forehead?  A clamped jaw?  Tightness in the sinuses or throat?  Are your hands shaking?   Is there a knot in your stomach?  Is your leg bouncing?  Are you fidgeting?
* Each time you find a place where you are storing your nervousness, just focus on it without judging it.  Just observe the phenomenon:  “Oh, that's interesting, my tongue folds in half when I'm nervous!”  “Wow, I didn't realize my thighs tingle when I'm nervous!”
* Spend some time allowing each place in your body to express its nerves.  If your hands are shaking, hold them up and make them shake more and more.  If your jaw is clenching, let it clench tighter, until it's tired.  If your stomach is tight, tighten it more, until you're tired of holding it.  Next, physically release that part of your body.  As you do so, tell your hands, your jaw, or your stomach that you appreciate the warning, but everything's just fine.  Tell it that if it wants to, it can start to express anxiety again, but it doesn't need to, because you've already received the message.  Repeat for each anxious part of your body.
* Take five slow breaths without thinking about anything except how calm and alert you feel.  Get up slowly knowing that although your body may act up again, you have already told it that you've heard and dismissed its message of anxiety.

### Single Musical Focus

You know your music.  You know how to play it.  Even if you make a mistake, no one is likely to notice.

Consequently, you must realize that you don't have to consciously manage everything you're doing, from singing to interacting with the audience to remembering the structure of the song.  You can afford to narrow your mental focus to just one aspect of the music.

Try focusing on just one thing:

* Rhythm or tempo
* Harmonies among instruments or notes
* Dynamics
* Emotional expression or song meaning
* Note articulation and duration
* Space between the notes
* Phrasing

Whatever one element you pick, focus on that one element for as long as you can throughout the performance.

### Focus on your Strengths

We are perceived as masters when we play something well, not necessarily when we play something difficult.  A simple, rock-solid groove feels better than a complicated, but imperfectly executed, beat.  A plain melody played with feeling expresses far more emotion than a rigid, nervously executed passage.

So, if you are nervous because you are thinking about your weaknesses, well - stop thinking about them!  Focus instead on your strengths.  Work within your comfort zone.  Do what you know how to do well, and rest comfortably in your knowledge that you are good at this thing.

Are you afraid of singing those high notes in the middle of the song?  If you know you can hit them accurately but not strongly, then just focus on singing them accurately.

Are you afraid of playing all the notes in the tricky keyboard passage?  If you know you can feel and express the passage's meaning without accurately hitting all the notes, focus on your strong emotional feeling about the passage, rather than the individual notes.

Know what you're good at, and focus on that.  Your confidence will shine through, and you will execute a compelling performance.