



704

Pitch and Prosody Exercises

Pitch

Within your modal register, you have a range of up to two octaves to play with. You will naturally modulate your voice within this range depending on your level of excitement or agitation. Try saying “Why did you do that?” in your regular voice. Now raise the pitch, keeping the pace exactly the same. And again, raising the pitch even higher. You see how pitch alone can indicate excitement? Become conscious of the pitch of your voice, especially in conflict. Depth is calming and more authoritative. Practice your deep chest voice until it becomes natural.

Prosody

Pick some pages from a novel or a news source and get a recorder.

Record yourself reading the passage in a flat monotone, with no stresses or pace variations. Listen back. It sounds robotic and completely uninteresting, doesn't it?

Now read the passage in your normal voice. As you listen back this time, score yourself out of 10 for your natural style: to what degree are your



intonation, rhythm and stresses making the content more powerful and interesting?

If you detect that your prosody is on the restrained side, scoring yourself at less than 5, reread the passage, exaggerating your prosody to 10, as if you were reading it to a small child. Practice this until you feel you have extended your range and can naturally turn yourself up to a natural 6 or 7.

To become more sensitive to the impact of stressing words as you speak, try saying the sentences below, while stressing the words in bold and seeing the difference it makes to the sense.

I'm going to run to work today.

I'm **going** to run to work today.

I'm going to **run** to work today.

I'm going to run to **work** today.

I'm going to run to work **today**.

Simple stress can dramatically alter meaning!