

Passionate · Persuasive · Powerful

# Prevention

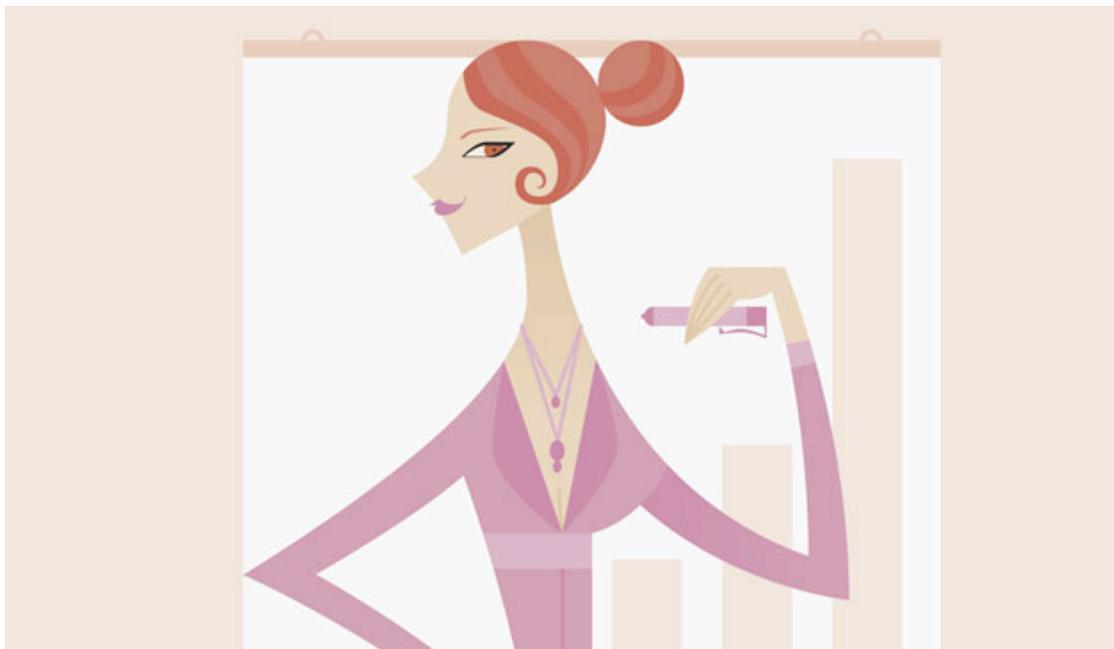
## *Prevention News*

How Posture And Body Language Affect Your Feelings - October 2012

# 4 Body Language Tricks

How to get what you want without saying a word

By [Holland Taylor](#)



No shocker here: Slouch your way into a room and people are going to think you're less-than-confident (okay, Mom, you were right about the stop-slouching thing). But here's what you probably didn't know: Your slouching is making you *feel* less confident, too. In fact, according to recent Harvard research, your body language—good and bad—can manipulate your hormones and mess with your mind.

The good news? It takes only two minutes to change it.

Social psychologist Amy Cuddy, an associate professor at Harvard Business School, gave a recent TED talk discussing how nonverbal body language affects how we perceive ourselves. Specifically, when you stand in a posture of confidence—making yourself bigger with things like opening your shoulders, standing up straight, and putting your hands on

your hips—your hormones respond accordingly. Study participants who spent two minutes in these postures had a 20% increase in testosterone levels and a 25% decrease in cortisol levels.

### **More from Prevention:** 5 Ways To Make Yourself Heard

The opposite is also true. When you sit or stand in a way that makes you appear smaller (back to that slouching), not only do you look more shy and insecure to others, but you'll actually feel that way, too. Study participants who spent two minutes in these postures had a 10% decrease in testosterone and a 15% increase in cortisol.

Bottom line: If you're not feeling terribly confident, you really can fake it 'til you make it.

Check out these other ways to make yourself feel (and look) more powerful.

**Do a fist pump.** Whether you've got a big presentation at work or are heading out on a blind date, you can help calm your nerves with this classic "I did it!" move, says Sharon Sayler, author of *What Your Body Says and How to Master the Message*. Just do it in private before making your entrance or you're bound to lose points on the awkward factor.

**Keep a consistent gaze.** Looking down when you're talking to someone is a dead giveaway of insecurity. "It's better to look someone in the eye and occasionally glance away," says Sayler, "and it's fine to look up or down when you're asked a question and need to think about the answer." Steer clear of constant staring, which comes off as aggressive.

**Open your palms.** When seated, have your palms facing skyward with your fingertips facing your companion. "Open hand gestures signify that you're open to exchanging ideas and information," Sayler says. Palms facing down implies you're not interested in hearing what the other person has to say.

Read more: <http://www.prevention.com/health/emotional-health/how-posture-and-body-language-affect-your-feelings#ixzz2AeoZPrwR>