

## **The World's Most Nontechnical Instructions For Talking Into A Microphone** which everyone should read

Imagine enjoying a movie with the pictures removed. Just the sound. With a little narration, it would be fine. People have been happily listening to radio plays for 90 years now. In fact, they're actually getting *more* popular now.

Imagine the same movie without sound. There's not much there.

Given a choice, people would prefer the sound. Sound is important.

Sound can be done well and it can be done badly. And that goes for every person who uses a microphone. You don't need to be a technical whiz. But if you ever speak into a microphone, you probably should know a little bit about it. Because it can be done well and it can be done badly.

If you don't know much about microphones, you ought to read this.

Here's the First Thing: You have to put your voice into the microphone. It won't come out and get it. Speak as loudly and clearly as you would without a mic.

The Second Thing: For about 50 years now, almost all microphones in almost all sound systems are directional. That means that your voice has to go straight into it. You can't just hold it in front of you and expect it to hear anything.

There's a reason for this: If the microphone hears the speakers, you will get the loud squeal of feedback. That is unprofessional. So, the microphone is made to be totally deaf to anything that is not going straight into it.

So if you're using a handheld mic, hold it up and point it towards your mouth. It looks a little pretentious but you just have to do it. That's the way it works.

And oh by the way, if the system's speakers are behind the performers, the microphones will be pointing toward the speakers the whole time. Bad bad bad. Move the speakers somewhere else.

And the Third Thing: How far should the microphone be from your mouth? Not closer than an inch, not farther than two inches. The stuff inside the microphone that makes it directional, also makes it sound real muddy and bassy when it's too close. You see rock stars doing that but their circumstances are different. It will sound bad if it's too close -- and it won't hear you at all if it's too far. Of course a lectern mic will be where it is and you just have to let it be.

That's it, that's all you need you know to be pretty good at it. Just three things. Easy!