

# How to Reduce Your Filler Words in Four Weeks

## **Week 1: Find a Partner to Help Increase Awareness**

Find someone at work, and perhaps someone at home, whom you ask to point out every single time you use a filler word. Record yourself and listen to it, tallying up how frequently you use filler words. The goal isn't to embarrass you. It's to help you hear what you're not yet hearing on your own.

## **Week 2: Catch Yourself as You Say It**

The goal of week two is for you to hear yourself say "um" or "so" without anyone pointing it out to you. This learning stage is known as "conscious incompetence". This is the week where you say to yourself, "I just said 'uh!'" and "I just said it again!".

## **Week 3: Replace the Bad Habit with a Helpful One**

The moment you hear (or even feel) yourself start to use a filler word, stop. Don't say another word or sound. Pause. Just pause. This will sound very odd to your ears, and it will sound less odd to your listener's ears (I promise!). Every single time you start to articulate a filler word, just stop talking.

## **Week 4: Keep Practicing**

While week three will feel like a start-stop-start process, week four will begin to feel a little more natural - and you'll want proof that you've improved. If you haven't burnt out your Week one partner, ask them for some feedback, comparing your speaking fluency to how you sounded three weeks ago. Record yourself again and listen to it, comparing tallies from week one. Celebrate your improvement, but be mindful of how easy it is to revert back if you don't stay on top of it. If you need more improvement, go back to week one or two.