

Audition Tips



Auditioning should be a fun experience – even if you don’t get the part! Casting is a complex process and there are many reasons that a director may select one person over another. Of course one reason may be acting ability, but others include appearance, vocal quality, and fit with others in the cast. As an actor, you can’t control the outcome of the audition, but you can do a lot to ensure that the process of auditioning is a rewarding experience. Here are some tips that may be helpful as you prepare to audition. Many of these tips are drawn from websites on auditioning. Good luck!

Before the Audition

It is suggested that you read the script prior to auditions – it is typically available from the playhouse. Knowing something about the central themes and characters gives you a big advantage during auditions.

Different directors use different audition strategies. Some will ask you to deliver a 1-2 minute monologue that you have prepared in advance. Most directors will ask you to read “sides” (or sections) from the script at auditions; these are called “cold” readings since they require no advance preparation. The audition sides make more sense if you have some familiarity with the script. Directors may provide you with brief character descriptions, which can also be helpful. If provided, be sure to take seriously the descriptions offered by the director.

Prepare yourself before the audition by practicing reading portions of the script aloud with others. The more you prepare yourself, the more confidence you will feel.

Avoid sugar and caffeine in the hours before the audition if they tend to make you more nervous. Prior to the audition, be sure to warm-up your body and vocal chords. You want the director to see you relaxed and confident.

Dress comfortably and appropriately; show that you take auditions seriously. Make sure that your hairstyle will allow your face to be visible throughout the audition process. If you have piercings, remove jewelry that might impede speech and/or that is inconsistent with the part(s) you wish to obtain.

Bring your calendar to the audition since you will be expected to list known commitments that might conflict with the rehearsal or production schedule. Also bring an acting resume and a photograph/head shot if you have one.

Arriving at the Audition

Get there on time. Since punctuality is critical to the rehearsal process, you want to make a good impression in this regard. Plan on remaining at the theater for the entire audition period, which may last up to 3 hours. Let the director know right away if you will not be able to remain for the entire period or if you are unavailable the day of call-backs.

Remember that the audition begins the moment you step into the theater. Be pleasant and positive with everyone.

Make sure to check in when you arrive and fill out an audition form and any other required materials. Turn the form in and wait patiently in the designated area. Exhibit patience with the audition process – auditions take time!

If you are waiting to audition, read and reread the script or other audition materials that have been given to you. Practice quietly while waiting. This practice is essential for a good audition – it will help you feel comfortable and confident.

Tips for Cold Readings

Once you obtain the audition sides, rehearse them several times to become familiar with the lines and to make good acting *choices* about your character. Keep your script in hand at all times and hold it at a level that doesn't obscure your face. Follow down the lines with your thumb so you can look up without getting lost. If possible, try to memorize short bits so you can look up at times, but remember your goal is to read the lines smoothly and without losing your place.

When it is your turn, introduce yourself, be confident, take a nice, relaxed, comfortable stance on the stage and stand tall. Position yourself so that the director(s) can see your face. Look happy to be there!

Make sure you project your voice and that you speak clearly (including when introducing yourself).

Take your time. When you read your audition side, live moment to moment. BE the character. It is very common for people who are nervous to speed up their speech. Remember that varying the pace, volume, inflection, and tone of speech can be useful character choices, but make *sure* the director(s) can **hear** and **understand** you! Think about who you're talking to, and why you're talking to them. Focus on communicating the *meaning* of the lines.

Demonstrate that you can work effectively with others. Be friendly, particularly with others who are auditioning. The director will be watching to see how well you work with other actors. Keep in mind that most plays are about relationships. Good acting typically requires understanding your character's relationship to others in the scene. A good actor *listens* to other actors when they speak and supports their acting choices by *reacting* honestly to the other actors.

Be ready to follow directions given to you by the director. You may be asked to deliver lines in a different way.

Facial expression and gesturing are helpful tools for actors. However, during your audition, do not allow movement to come at the expense of clarity in the line reading. Your goal is to communicate the meaning of the script. If you decide to include movement, keep it simple. Movement should help us understand the character and what s/he is doing/feeling in this scene. (Avoid pacing and shuffling, however.) Keep in mind that silence, pauses, and stillness are also useful.

If you are auditioning for a comedy, try to understand the jokes that you are telling. A lot of the humor comes in beat changes, or changes in intention. Comedy is all about rhythm, timing, and pace.

Don't apologize if you make a mistake. Just keep going, and keep focused. Mistakes are common and expected in auditions; the director will be focused on whether you can maintain a confident and composed attitude throughout the audition process.

You may be asked to line up with other actors so that the director can study physical characteristics of those auditioning. This is particularly common when a play requires family relationships or important physical characteristics (e.g. height).

Key characteristics you will want to show the director are: confidence, flexibility, cooperation, effort, and enthusiasm.

After the Audition

If you get the part of your dreams -great! Enjoy it! But you may be offered a part you did not expect – please consider accepting it! Every part provides an opportunity to develop better acting skills and to develop new theater relationships.

If you don't get a part, don't give up on acting. It's not a rejection of you or your acting ability, only an affirmation of someone else. You simply weren't right for THAT part/play. Keep auditioning until you find a part that is right for you and also continue to work on your acting skills by taking acting workshops or improv classes that may be offered.

Volunteer to get involved in the show as a backstage crew member, on set construction, or in another volunteer capacity. Many qualities important to directors become evident when you get involved as a theater volunteer, including commitment, punctuality, reliability, and enthusiasm for theater. All volunteers are welcome at Theatrikos!