

The consecutive interpreter has to speak in public. 17 Scanned with CamScanner Standing Standing is a relatively straightforward posture, which we do naturally – not too much can go wrong. It will certainly dent the audience's faith in you, so we want to avoid it. If on the other hand you separate your feet from one another, both sideways and front-to-back, you will be more firmly rooted in the ground and 13 Presentation 13 Scanned with CamScanner certainly dent the audience's faith in you, so we want to avoid it. If on the other hand you separate your feet from one another, both sideways and front-to-back, you will be more firmly rooted in the ground and 13 Presentation 15 you will feel more stable. This will stop you slouching forwards and help you sit upright while leaning forwards a little, which in turn will make it easier to breathe properly (reducing your nerves) and to look at your audience. Let's start with a look at posture. If you are not set upright, then everything that follows will be much more difficult. The aim is to speak well, engage with your audience and minimize extraneous and involuntary movements (tics). If you're sitting without a table, then be aware that you'll be very hunched when taking notes using your legs as a table, so you should make a particular effort to sit up and forward before you start interpreting –

Arms As a beginner, you will most likely be making too many involuntary hand gestures. If you're not using a notepad, put your hands together, e.g. by folding them over one another flat on the table, or holding a notepad anyway – it will be good practice for later. Body In the listening phase it is acceptable, even inevitable, that you'll lean on the table in front of you, or hunch over your notepad while taking notes. 18 Presentation 19 recommend grounding your arms in the same way as we ground our feet – not on the floor, obviously, but on the edge of the table. In terms of body language, this slight leaning forward suggests you are interested and in control (Duden 2007: 158) – useful signals to send out. (Thiery 1981: 102) In this chapter you will learn how to: sit or stand correctly for public speaking assess public speakers and other students assess your own speaking performance. This position will also stop you swaying from side to side or switching your weight from one foot to the other repeatedly, both of which should be avoided when standing. Holding one wrist with the other hand, either with both hands in front of you or behind your back, is a good way to do this. Occasional hand gestures which reinforce what you are saying are welcome but beware of waving your hands around all the time. Alternatively you might be sending out the wrong signals to your audience (for example, crossing your arms might be seen as a sign of diffidence). This is culturally unacceptable in some countries and will also cause you to slide forwards, which we don't want. It will be a good idea to occasionally make an appropriate hand gesture to underline a point made in the speech. Any posture you take up should be chosen to make you appear professional; facilitate your interpreting; and promote the audience's confidence in your interpreting. That means being able to: read your notes; look up at your audience while speaking; hide your nerves by limiting any unintended body language; and eliminate physical tics. This stability will give you more confidence to attack the interpreting task. As we've said, we need to look professional and we need to be able to read our notes, breathe and look up at the audience, so how we sit should promote this. (How much of your back, starting from the lower back upwards, is touching the backrest will depend on what is comfortable to you and your size relative to the chair.) You are far enough forward to have some of your weight on your feet. They may be tics, like touching your hair or nose, or waving your hands around like you are directing traffic, not interpreting. This suggestion for what to do with your hands does not mean

that your hands absolutely have to remain stuck to the notepad or the table throughout the speech. Indeed, if you learn nothing else during the time you study interpreting you will still have learnt a very useful life-skill. However, public speaking is more difficult for the consecutive interpreter because at the same time as the consecutive interpreter is speaking, they have to do a number of other things – reading their notes and recalling information, for example. That in turn is why many interpreting courses, and this book, begin with public speaking skills. You won't need it once you start speaking and it can only get you into mischief – like being twiddled or dropped.