Studies show that people size you up within two seconds.

Consciously or unconsciously, they'll take in how you establish eye contact, the strength of your handshake and the way you hold yourself. Even when you're talking to someone you know, your message consists of more than just the words you say: It also includes the visual and vocal cues you send. These body language tips will help you appear more confident and professional. Read the suggestions below to start making a better impression ... instantly.

People will take you more seriously if you stand tall, which conveys confidence and status. You don't need to be physically long and lean, but take care to stand erect and keep your shoulders back. It will make you seem taller and more sure of yourself.
Eyes
When talking to someone, make eye contact in order to establish your trustworthiness, sincerity and confidence—but only hold their gaze directly for a few seconds at a time, which is as long as is comfortable for most people. The only exception? When you enter a room and want to make an impression. In that case, hold each onlooker’s gaze for a beat longer than is comfortable, then look away. This move conveys that you’re confident and interested in meeting others. When you perhaps because many people believe that having shifty eyes shows that you’re lying, you may be tempted to stare fixedly at the other person to show that you’re honest and sincere. But, unless you’re gazing to indicate attraction, staring too long will actually unsettle your conversation partner, because prolonged eye contact can be read as a sign of aggression. What’s most natural is to look away briefly and then back again throughout the conversation.

Arms
When in a casual conversation, crossing your arms may seem natural, but it actually indicates that you’re feeling defensive or guarded. Instead, slightly lean into someone to convey interest. Try to keep your arms open and relaxed at your sides—or in your lap or on an armrest if at a job interview. Feel free to occasionally illustrate your points using gestures. Resist the urge to fuss with your hair, fiddle with your jewelry or crack your knuckles, all of which are distracting and can make you seem nervous.

Hand
Being the first to reach out for a handshake shows that you are confident and unafraid to take the initiative. You shouldn’t let your fingers go limp, but the goal is not to break the other person’s bones, either. A firm grasp conveys your strength without coming off as overbearing. Limit yourself to one or two up-and-down shakes, then let go.

Front
Don’t invade anyone’s personal space, which makes people feel uneasy and unwilling to stay and listen to you. Face the person directly, keeping about an arm’s length apart, and bridge the connection with eye contact.

Legs
When standing, you should avoid crossing your legs, an awkward position that suggests that you feel uncertain and guarded (or that you need a bathroom break). However, sitting with crossed legs is one of the most common positions in many cultures, and if you’re wearing a skirt, it’s recommended. Just don’t cross the arms at the same time: Sitting with both crossed arms and legs signifies that you have withdrawn from the conversation.

Feet
If you’re standing still, keep your feet planted slightly apart to convey a sense of confidence. (But keep them narrower than hip-width to avoid shifting your weight from foot to foot frequently, which indicates discomfort or disinterest.) When you’re walking, slow down your pace to seem calmer and more collected.