

The telephone interview.

Even though you're not face-to-face with a potential employer you still need to stick to the fundamentals.

A good telephone interview might sound like the perfect opportunity to kick back, but in actuality you have to work even harder to make sure you come across as personable, capable, and like a candidate who should move to the next step in the screening process.

Take it seriously.

This is an interview. It is just as important as a face-to-face interview. That means be ready! Make sure you're well rested and fully prepared. The last thing an interviewer wants is to feel as though they're interrupting something else you're doing or that you are unprepared.

Focus.

Make sure you're not distracted. Turn off the TV and shut off your computer. Find a good spot to sit down and have all your prep materials nearby for easy access. Make sure pets or children are elsewhere and you will not be disturbed.

Do your research before the interview.

Research the company; know what they are doing and see how they are doing. Read the job description thoroughly. The best part about doing the research is it allows you to tailor your answers to your anticipated questions. Tailoring your answers is the best way to ensure you are satisfying what the interviewer is asking and positioning yourself as a strong candidate for the job.

Listen- and don't try to dominate the conversation.

Let the interviewer guide the conversation. Answer the questions, but don't be long winded. Don't turn the conversation into a one-sided monologue. This is as much about you getting to know them as it is about them getting to know you.

Prepare a cheat sheet.

It's not just about answering the questions, but asking the right ones as well. Asking a few good questions helps you get information you might need to make an informed decision regarding the job, and it shows you have done some research and preparation. Ask questions about the job that weren't posted in the job description. This helps express your genuine interest and excitement in the opportunity. Make sure your questions are thoughtful and have a purpose.

Speak slowly.

Breathe. Take a breath between the interviewer asking you a question and when you start answering it. Some interviewers ask questions, but then continue to talk rather than waiting for you to answer. Give the interviewer a second or two after each question before answering.

Pause. It gives you a chance to really think about what you're going to say. This helps make your answers thoughtful, thorough, and concise. Speak slowly enough to be understood, take your time, and pronounce your words clearly.

Remember to smile! Put a sign on the wall in front of you as a reminder. The interviewer cannot see your smile but they will be able to "hear it," and that can go a long way in making you stand out. Consider standing up, which opens up the diaphragm and can put energy in your voice.

Anticipate the common questions.

While the interviewer may not ask you all of these questions, it's better to be prepared so you're not caught off guard. Practice answering them before your interview; it will help with the nerves and make your responses more targeted.

- What are your strengths?
- What interests you about this job?
- What salary are you expecting?
- Why are you the ideal candidate for this job?
- How soon can you start?

Follow up.

The phone interview stage is about making a good first impression and getting to the next step. The fact that you're doing this via phone makes the follow up even more critical. Make sure you end your phone call on a positive note and clearly re-express your interest in the position.

Then, follow up in a timely manner with a thoughtful "thank you" email. Let the interviewer know you appreciated them taking the time to talk to you, you enjoyed the conversation, and you are invested in the process. This will help you stand out and reinforce that you are truly interested in the position.