

Mock Interviews:

Do's –

1. Emulate the “real” experience as closely as you can.
 - Use different judges, especially people you don't know,
 - Don't use the same panel every time
 - Use at least 3-4 judges, and go through the exact same timing and actions that would happen in a real interview

2. As you start, don't worry about your answers.
 - Start by answering whatever is on the top of your head,
 - Even better tell the judges to please ask you questions that you might not possibly know, and questions that you will NOT get in your real interview.
 - This will help you learn to be ready for anything, and be comfortable formulating an answer that you really have no clue about.
 - This is practicing your brain, and your body on how to react to surprises, and not feeling in control.
 - When you become comfortable not knowing all the answers, you will then be comfortable in your real interview, when you are not “perfect”, and you won't get rattled.

3. Eventually move up to questions that you might be asked.
 - But remember that you DON'T want to have answers memorized,
 - These mock judges aren't your real judges, so their questions will most likely be different anyway.
 - The key is the repetition of hearing a question, and then answering it without really thinking about it; and not worrying if they like the answer. It's YOUR answer, and that is what is important.
 - Practice giving examples and glimpses of WHO YOU ARE, rather than just giving quick answers.

Don'ts -

1. Don't allow your judges to give you feedback.
 - This will make you crazy and you will tend to overthink things.
 - One judge might think saying “mmmm” is wrong, or not answering quickly enough is a problem – when actually when people speak naturally there are natural pauses and even some “mmmms” which can actually be very natural sounding and REAL.

2. As you get closer to the competition and you really want some feedback have someone who knows what they are doing be the stand-in.
 - They can sit in the interview and when you finish you will leave the room and the judges will share with your representative their opinion. You will then come in the room and your rep would have instructed your judges to share with you about what they liked

(they would have discussed this together). AFTER the interview when the judges are gone your rep can go over the things that you need to hear.

- So often the things you get feedback on is the wrong feedback. For instance, if you express an opinion that they don't agree with, they might not understand our system and not realize that their score isn't reflective if they "agreed" with you. It should be reflective on your honesty and ability to explain and defend their opinion.
- While it's important to learn how to express yourself and not offend someone with your answer, but if you are not truthful about an opinion and you try to fumble around with an answer you think the judges want to hear – the judges will see it. Then they will question if you have a mind of your own, or even have an opinion at all. Don't race after what you think the judges want you to say!

Wrap up:

The key is to emulate the experience that you will have at the competition. Experience the jitters NOW, rather than later. Experiencing jitters now will ease your jitters when it's real, because your brain and body will be used to it. You will simply be doing what you've been doing, and it's not new to you.

Remember, the judges are told that they do not score according to if they agree with your answer. They judge you based on if you really believe your answer and can give a reason why you believe it. While most interview questions are about your life, your platform, your interests, etc. if you get a question that you are afraid might differ with a judge or two – you cannot worry about it. It won't matter or affect your score.