

# Learning how to speak and sound like a woman! (7441 R)

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So, how does speech therapy work for someone who's transitioning? What does it involve?

You come once a week, sometimes twice a week if you're really eager to speed things up, and you do different vocal exercises. Pitch is one of the most important markers. Men on average speak at 110-120 [Hertz], gender neutral is 145-165, and women are 210-220. In most cases the goal is to try to get to gender neutral, which basically means that if you called somebody on the phone, and they speak in what's known as the gender neutral pitch, you probably wouldn't be able to tell if they were a man or a woman.

So that's the first piece, but along with that, they have to learn other things, like posture and speech intonation. Speech intonation is how much your voice goes up and down in a sentence. Men tend to speak in a very monotone, even tone. Women speak in many, many different pitches; as they speak they go up and down, they go high, they go low. So that's really important—a person who's transitioning needs to learn how to use that range in their voice.

They also practice moving the resonance of their voice up higher. Men speak in their chests. If you're a man and you say a word, if you put your hand on your chest you'll feel a vibration. If you're a woman, you speak in your face. So that's another thing they try to work on—they move that resonance from deep in their bodies higher up.

Another thing is women speak more precisely. They enunciate their words. Men don't do that as well, so men actually have to learn to articulate their words more precisely to sound like a believable woman. Volume will also be something to look at as a man will just speak with greater volume—so he'll speak louder—and a woman will tend to speak higher, tend to raise her pitch higher.



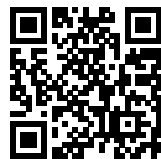
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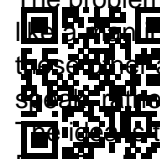
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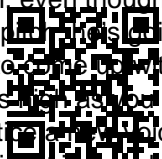
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The problem with just going with pitch, even though it's a very important marker, is that if a man speaks in a high pitch every day, it's not for him. It's going to sound like a man that has a high pitch. So, there are other aspects to it, like trying to come up with a voice that's real and that other people can hear. So, it's not just about pitch, it's about how you talk. You can't just talk as high as you can. So, it's about that you also have to practice your voice until it becomes a habit. EG: The key is that you have to practice it in your lives. You get homework in each session about what to practice in the real world, and go out and practice it.

Many of you start your speech therapy before they have fully transitioned in their lives, so they might be a person who is fully committed to transitioning but hasn't told their workplace. In that case, learning can be slower because you have to be able to practice your voice all day long. If you are going back and forth, it's a slower process. So you practice your new voice in conversation, and over time, it just becomes your learned voice. It does seem to sink in to the point where you find it difficult to access the

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voice you used to have.