

MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS

Throughout life you will encounter situations where you are required to make or receive a telephone call. If you are not used to using the phone on a regular basis, this can be daunting. The best way to overcome your worries about using the phone is to practise.

Help us to work out what training you need by completing our short questionnaire:

Do you own a telephone / mobile phone?		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
No <input type="checkbox"/>		
How often do you use the telephone to make calls?	Personally	At Work
• Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do answer telephone calls?	Personally	At Work
• Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How do you feel when you have to make or answer telephone calls?		
Why do you think this is?		
What do you think the consequences of not making calls or answering the telephone?		

Personal Social Calls

Personal social calls can be easier to make or receive as they are informal and you are not likely to be asked for information that you don't know, or to be challenged by the person you are speaking to. Personal social calls include:

- Making arrangements to meet or do an activity with someone
- To give, receive or check information
- Have a conversation
- To ask for help or support from a friend or family member

If you avoid making or receiving social calls then you could miss out on invitations to meet up with people or participate in an activity with them, keeping in touch with others, being able to give or receive help and support from people.

Personal Call Role Plays

Practise making some social calls using the role play scenarios below:

You have arranged to go to the cinema with two friends on Saturday evening. The movie starts at 7:30pm and you plan to eat some food together first. You need to call one of your friends to agree where you are going to get food from, where you are going to meet and what time.

You have just been offered a new job and want to share your good news with a friend.

You are putting up some new shelves at home but are struggling with the instructions. You would like some help from a friend to put them up, so need to call to ask for this.

It's your birthday next week and you would like to invite a few friends to your house for dinner. You need to call and invite them but also to check whether they have any specific dietary requirements.

Your friend has been involved in an accident; you want to call and check how they are and ask if they need anything.

You haven't been feeling very well for the last few days and want to chat to a friend or family member about how you feel and get their advice on what you could do about this.

Business calls

These tend to be more formal and you may not always know, or have spoken to the person you are contacting before. As well as calls that you may make related to your job, business call can be related to personal areas of your life. There are a number of reasons you may want to make a business call, some of these could include:

Personal Business Calls

- Making a doctor's or dentist appointment
- Phoning your bank
- Speaking to Customer & Local Services or the Tax Office
- Contacting your landlord
- Making a complaint or returning something you have purchased
- Booking someone to carry out a repair for you

Workplace business calls

- Calling work to advise you are unwell
- Contacting a customer, client or colleague
- Placing an order
- Gathering or sharing information
- Dealing with a complaint or query

Business Call Role plays

You have been to see the doctor as you are not well, the doctor has signed you off work for 2 weeks. You need to call and advise your company that you will be off work.

Your shower has broken & you haven't had any hot water for 3 days. You need to contact your landlord to ask them to investigate this and make repairs.

You have received a letter from Customer & Local Services saying you need to complete a Change in Circumstances form, you need some help with this as you haven't done one before.

You are interested in attending a course advertised at work, your manager agrees and tells you to call and book your place on the course.

You work in an accounts department for a large company. You have received an invoice but it doesn't specify what it is for, you need to call the company who have sent it to find out more details.

Don't forget... most people who work in business are understanding and will want to help you. If you feel nervous or anxious about using the phone in a business situation, the following tips may help:

Planning

- Write down the phone number and name of the person or department you want to speak to
- Make a note of why you are calling and what you want to say

Making the call

- Dial the number
- Ask for the person you want to speak to
- Explain why you are calling
- Listen carefully to the person you are speaking to & answer any questions they have
- Speak slowly, clearly and keep your information to the point – avoid waffling
- Check your notes to make sure you have covered everything you want to speak about
- Take notes of the important details that you are given
- If you don't understand or have missed any information, ask the person on the phone to repeat it for you

Ending the call

- Thank the person for their help & say goodbye
- Note down any important information & record it in a safe place (such as a calendar / diary) so you don't lose it

Answering the phone

It can be daunting answering the phone as you can't always prepare for the questions a caller may ask you. Here are some tips to help with this:

- Take your time, the caller will wait
- You are in control, so adjust the pace of the call to suit you
- Learn some of the phrases below & use these so you can use to help give you time to think or deal with a question
- Remember to be friendly, polite and helpful
- If you don't know the answer, or need help then put the caller on hold and ask for help

Here are some useful phrases you could use in different situations:

If someone is not available to take a call, or they are not in the office:

I'm sorry, they are not in the office at the moment. Can I take your name and telephone number and I will ask them to call you back as soon as possible?

If the caller is not happy with that or the reason for their call is urgent:

One moment please, I will pass you on to my colleague who will be able to help you.

(If you do this, you should explain the situation to your colleague before forwarding the call to them.)

If you need a little bit of time to think or to ask a colleague for help:

One moment please, I am a new member of staff and I haven't dealt with this before. Please give me a moment while I check the answer for you.

If you can't answer the caller's question & need to pass the call to a colleague:

I'm sorry, I am not able to answer your question, but I will pass you to my colleague who will be able to help. One moment please and I will transfer you.

(If you do this, you should explain the situation to your colleague before forwarding the call to them.)

Can you think of any phrases that may be useful in your place of work or job role?