Faster & Funnier Quick-Start Guide

To Stand-Up Comedy Success

CreativeStandUp.com
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ........................................ Pg. 3
COMEDY OVERVIEW ................................ Pg. 6
WRITING ............................................... Pg. 11
PRE-SHOW ............................................ Pg. 19
PERFORMING ....................................... Pg. 25
CONCLUSION ......................................... Pg. 31
INTRODUCTION

This eBook will give you a great jump-start on beginning your career as a comedian. But remember, stand-up comedy is an art form. As with any art form, there is no end to what you can learn. My studying of stand-up comedy has taken me from stand-up comedy “how-to” books, to comedian biographies, to studying psychology, creativity, and much more.

One of the greatest problems facing new comedians is that they want to treat stand-up comedy as separate from everyday life. But stand-up comedy isn’t a job; it’s a lifestyle (and a great one). Meet any veteran comedian and he’ll agree 100%. The best ideas rarely come in front of a computer. You’re much more likely to have great ideas while you are going through everyday life.

We’ve always been proponents of being your natural self on stage. The more natural you are on stage the more the audience is able to identify with you. Creating a bond with the audience is one of your first goals when you hit the stage. Imagine going to your friend’s house and thinking “If I tell a joke today, it can only be an observational joke.” That’s severely limiting. You would never do this because you’d want the flexibility to make any type of joke that happens to come up in the moment. It’s the same way on stage. You’ll have plenty of topics you CAN talk about, but that doesn’t mean that’s all you’re going to say on stage.
Whenever we limit ourselves to using one (or even a few tactics) we will always come off unnaturally. Imagine how difficult it would be to come up with a funny joke in the hypothetical scenario above. Even if you do find an opening for an observational joke, do you really believe you could come up with just as funny of a joke while you’re limiting yourself? Even if you got an opening for an observational joke, the mere fact that you first have to check it against what type of joke you “think” you should be doing is going to make it suffer.

However, if you were just being your natural self you’d be far more likely to come up with a great joke. Not only would it come out more natural, but you’d be able to come up with it much easier as well.

Take another hypothetical. Imagine your sitting across the table from a friend and one of two things happen. Either...

1) You are having a natural conversation.

Or...

2) He abruptly says “Tell me a joke. You have 3 seconds.”

In which circumstance are you the most likely to make your friend laugh? When it’s a natural part of your conversation or when it’s an awkward moment where you’re on the spot? I’m betting it’d be very easy for you to insert a funny line into a natural conversation with a friend and get a laugh than it would be for you to come up with a joke out of thin air unnaturally.
I’ve never met a comedian, new or otherwise, who got into stand-up comedy because they were NOT funny. If you’re reading this, I’m willing to bet that you have a good sense of humor that’s served you well in the past. So why not trust that sense of humor by allowing it to naturally come out?

So with that said… let’s jump-start your career.
COMEDY OVERVIEW

COMEDIAN STYLES

There are many different styles of comedy out there...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMEDIAN</th>
<th>STYLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Seinfeld</td>
<td>Observational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Romano</td>
<td>Experiential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stewart</td>
<td>Political, Current Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Martin</td>
<td>Anti-Comedian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallagher</td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Williams</td>
<td>Improvisational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch Hedberg</td>
<td>One-Liner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Jeni</td>
<td>Storyteller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...and there are endless more sub-styles to choose from that are not on this list.

So how do you know which style YOU should use? The answer is experimentation. Early in your career don’t be afraid to try these different styles out. You don't have to decide on one and stick with it your entire career. You will find that you are naturally drawn to one (most likely a few).
Why a few? Take a closer look at all the comedians listed above and you’ll see that, while they were KNOWN for being masters of one style, they really incorporate many different styles throughout their set. For example, Ray Romano talks a lot about his family on stage. But he doesn’t limit himself to just talking about his experiences, he makes witty observations as well. Robin Williams is known for his improvisational style. But inside of that style he uses observations, experiences, and physical humor.

Each of these comedians was naturally drawn to where they are today. In Jerry Seinfeld’s biography one of his friends looked back on his pre-stand-up comedy friend and mentioned how he was always good at making tiny observations. His natural abilities followed his comedy style, not the other way around.

So **feel free to experiment.** The more styles you try the more defined your sense of humor will become. You might find that you’re not a good one-liner but you can tell very interesting stories. Great! If your friends love hearing your stories there a good chance an audience will as well.

Your style will change throughout your career, either drastically (like George Carlin) or through tiny changes (as every comedian does). You might not be good at using political humor in the beginning of your career but find that you have an uncanny ability to write and perform political jokes a few years into your career.
WHAT IS COMEDIC VOICE?

Do even the broadest search on how to do stand-up comedy and you’ll probably hear about finding your “comedic voice” (or just “voice”). But what does this mean? While a comedian’s “voice” is a very complex subject, it gets far easier to understand when you think of it in terms of how companies brand themselves. A comedian’s voice is, at a basic level, their “brand.” Just like brands, a comedian's voice is not built by only one or two components, there are many of them that, all totaled, are called the comedians “voice.”

Stroll down a grocery store cereal aisle and you’ll see hundreds of brands doing their best to separate themselves from the rest. Even cereals in the same category (sugar cereals or health cereals) differ from each other. Just like there isn’t one “best” cereal, there is no one voice that all audiences prefer. They want variety.

Let’s take a look at one-liners. If it’s hard to develop uniqueness in any single style, it’s got to be one-liners. How can someone show how unique they are in such short jokes? Here is a list of one-liners. YouTube them and ask yourself how they’re unique from the others…

1) Steven Wright
2) Mitch Hedberg
3) Jimmy Carr
4) Bob Hope

Each of these comedians use short jokes with little or no segues in them. Yet all four are completely unique as performers. This is what it means to have a comedic voice. This is
their “brand.” There might be a thousand one-liners working, but not one of them is like these four because they’re comedic voice was so different.

**FINDING YOUR COMEDIC VOICE**

Finding your voice can be done in a million different ways, but here are some easy steps that will get you started on the right path to finding your unique voice.

First, watch videos of your favorite comedians. Choose your top 3 and watch all of the material you can from them.

Secondly, pay close attention to their unique style that you find so appealing. Ask yourself questions like...

- Why am I so drawn to this comedian?
- What characteristics of that comedian would you like YOUR comedy to have?
- What characteristics of that comedian would you NOT like your comedy to have?

Drill down deep. Don’t be satisfied with an answer like “I like him because he’s observational” or "He’s funny.” The more in-depth you are the better. Look for characteristics like...

- His persona (how would you describe this comedian?)
- His material (does he talk about serious topics? Silly topics? Does he act like he knows what he’s saying? Or does he act unsure?)
• His delivery (is he calm? Smooth? Awkward? All over the place?)

Third, **gather all of the characteristics you collected from each of the comedians you just studied and put them together.** Your purpose here is not to “steal” their persona, but to understand your own sense of humor. The reason you like these comedians in the first place isn't because of THEM, it’s because they already sync up with your own natural humor. So by studying those comedians and why you like them you’ll in fact be studying yourself and your own humor.
WRITING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WRITING FOR STAND-UP

The most important thing you need to know about writing stand-up comedy is that you are writing for a speech, an informal one at that. The audience will never get to see your writing... in fact, they don’t even care if you DID any writing at all. All they care about is how funny you are. Since you’re writing for the spoken word make sure your sentences feel natural and you can say them out loud without getting tongue-twisted. Don’t confuse a tool with its purpose. In stand-up, writing matters only because it helps the PERFORMANCE. This is actually really good news. Forget everything you learned in high school English class. Toss spelling and grammar out the window. You won’t need them in stand-up.

With that said, know that writing for a spoken performance will likely be difficult for you at first if you’ve never done it. It takes a few performances to really get use to writing for a speech. When we write, we tend to flesh all of our thoughts out point-by-point. We’ve been taught to write in complete sentences all our lives.

However, we don’t TALK in complete sentences. Notice how you talk with your friends. There are far less segues and introductory comments than in writing. When we speak naturally with friends it is very informal and choppy. We use quick sentences that get the point across in as little time as possible. We don’t introduce topics before we
say them; we just start talking about it. This should be your goal writing for stand-up as well. The closer your writing matches your natural speech the better.

Not only do we use less segues, but we also use informal words (lexicon) as well....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITING</th>
<th>SPEAKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you say you want to do?</td>
<td>You wanna WHAT?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d rather have McDonalds</td>
<td>Nah, McDees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wouldn’t have thought about that</td>
<td>I wouldn’t’ve thought it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t think about that</td>
<td>I was WAY off...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t do it because I have something else planned</td>
<td>Can’t. Got other stuff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how the sentences on the right are the types of sentences you would actually say while the sentences on the left are what you would be more likely to write.

Your natural inclination will be to revert back to formal writing. The best way to overcome this is to...

- Listen closely to how you and your friends ACTUALLY speak
- Listen to how veteran comedians deliver lines by watching for half-sentences and use of lexicon/informal words (which is actually harder than it seems because it SOUNDS NATURAL, so no red-flags will go up unless you’re listening for it).
- Go through your own material and replace words that come off too formal with lexicon.
STEPS TO WRITING

For the purpose of this quick-start guide, writing stand-up comedy can be broken down into 4 broad steps...

First, determine your topic. This will be your entry point into writing. Best ways to find topics you want to write about is to ask yourself questions like...

- What am I REALLY passionate about?
- What are my pet peeves?
- What’s a story that I love telling friends and has gotten them to laugh in the past?

Second, determine your POV (Point Of View). Your POV is your unique perspective on the situation, usually with an emotion attached to it. Take the subject of parenting as an example. Many great comedians have talked about their own kinds, their nephews, what they think there kids would be like if they had any, why nobody should have kids, why everyone should have kids... the list goes on. It’s all the same subject, but it’s tackled from different POV’s. Both Louie CK and Ray Romano do long bits about their children, but it comes from completely different perspectives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMEDIAN</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>TOPIC WITH GOOD POV</th>
<th>TOPIC WITH BAD POV</th>
<th>EMOTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louie CK</td>
<td>Children’s Questions</td>
<td>Children don’t stop asking questions!</td>
<td>Children ask a lot of questions</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Seinfeld</td>
<td>Airport food</td>
<td>Airport food is expensive! (as a reaction)</td>
<td>Airport food is expensive. (as a statement)</td>
<td>Disbelief/Frustration Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Romano</td>
<td>Bugs</td>
<td>My wife thinks I’m the bug killer in the household!</td>
<td>I’m suppose to kill bugs for my wife</td>
<td>Disbelief or Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Kinison</td>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>Why do we keep sending them money?!</td>
<td>We send refugees a lot of money</td>
<td>Outrage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that there isn’t much different between a good and bad POV. Bad POV’s state what you want to talk about, they lack emotion. **A good POV attaches a strong emotion to**
the topic, making it far easier to write. Which would you rather write about? “Children ask a lot of questions?” or “Children don’t stop asking questions!” The POV without a strong emotion attached to it doesn’t really give you a good start place, even though it’s almost identical to the good POV. If you find that your material is too factual or just plain boring, it’s most likely because you haven’t found your POV.

**NOTE:** Many times you’ll find step 1 and 2 happen at the same time. When you have both at the same time your material is going to come out sounding far more natural. We’ve broken them down into two separate steps to help new comedians see that there are two important factors you need to have before you start writing. After a few months writing you will naturally blend these two steps together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step One: Determine Topic</th>
<th>“Driving”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step Two: Determine POV</td>
<td>“I hate traffic”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| “Why do I always get stuck in traffic?!” |

You can see from this table that “Why do I always get stuck in traffic?!” isn’t a hard POV to come by on its own. In fact, it’d be far simpler to jump straight to this rather than to think “Ok, I want to talk about traffic” and then thinking “I’d like to take a negative stance on traffic.” While both lead to the same result, combining both steps is far easier and more natural. Plus, the quicker you can jump into writing as soon as you have the inspiration the easier it will be to pound out TONS of material.

After we’ve determined what we want to talk about and our POV, it’s time to jump into what I call **Directional writing.** Directional writing is all about separating writing
for quantity and writing for quality. By separating quantity from quality we allow ourselves to get around one of the primary causes of writer’s block (judging before you write). If you try to judge what you’re writing before you write it down you’ll end up second guessing yourself. Eventually this will lead to gridlock in writing.

The third step (the first step of directional writing) is called “Vertical writing.” Here we are simply writing for quantity. Don’t worry about quality right now. It’s far more important to have a large number of ideas.

Jot down everything you think of during this step, even if you’re not sure where it might lead. You don’t have to know why you’re writing something to write it. The less you judge on this step the more (quantity) you’ll be able to write.

The last step of the initial writing process is horizontal writing. Here you ARE concerned with quality and you’re not at all concerned with quantity. Since you will already have all of your ideas written down there’s no chance for you to lose an idea (you’ll have PLENTY of times in your career where you’ll think of something funny and the idea will already be forgotten by the time you find a pen and paper).

In this step you’re concerned with quality... but how exactly do you do it?

First, take a look at all your setup lines. Check and see if there is too much information in them. When there’s too much information in a setup line it confuses audience members (especially the ones who have been drinking).
In order for an audience member to get a joke they must link the information in the setup to the information in the punch line. The more information they have to sort through the less likely they will be to link the appropriate information together. This means a great joke can bomb on stage if the audience doesn’t know what information is important. So cut out all unnecessary words (there is an exception to this rule, but for new comedians it isn’t as important as learning to be clear on stage).

Next, **take a look at your punch lines**. Make sure, like your setups, there aren’t any unnecessary words that will confuse audience members.

Next, **determine where the laugh will be**. Look at your punch line and ask yourself “At what point will the audience understand this joke?” That point is called a **keyword**. Before the keyword the audience still doesn’t have enough information to get the joke. After the keyword they should be laughing (if the joke is funny). What you want to do here is make sure that your keyword is at the very end of the punch line. If it’s not, that means you’ll be talking while their laughing (called “Stepping on the laughs”). Why keep saying the same joke when they’re already laughing? Move on to the next one.

Next, **make sure you punch line is natural**. Awkward punch lines sound forced and unauthentic. The more natural you sound the more the audience will lose themselves in your performance.

Lastly, **your setup and punch line needs a certain degree of honesty**. Go too far overboard (called “tearing the joke”) and the audience’s red flag will go up. Instead of laughing they’ll think “Wait? That NEVER happens!” or “Who do you think you’re fooling?”
That doesn't mean you have to be 100% truthful. You have creative license to alter the story, but not so much where the audience loses trust in you. The best jokes always balance truth with creative license.
PRE-SHOW

Ok, so you’ve written some material and you’re ready to try it out on stage. Now we need to prepare for your upcoming show.

First things first, **make sure you rehearse**. Say all of your lines out loud (you should do this while you’re writing as well to make sure your sentences sound natural when you say them, not just look good on paper).

Here is what’s important in rehearsing...

First, **DO NOT TRY TO MEMORIZE EVERY SINGLE WORD!** This almost guarantees that you will be on stage and not know what you’re going to say. Why? If you simply memorize the words they’ll be little more than a string of words to you with no real meaning. What’s easier to remember? A string of 500 individual words told in the correct order with voice inflection, pauses, and expressions or the story about your vacation? Instead, work on memorizing the IDEAS that you want to talk about. Not individual words. If you know the idea of what you want to say, the words will come to you.

How do you think comedians can perform for 45 straight minutes? It’s certainly NOT by memorizing 20,000 words and the correct sequence to put them in (in addition to all their gestures, voice inflections, etc.)

Second, **time yourself while you’re rehearsing**. You should know how much time you’re going to be doing before hand, so use your rehearsing to make sure that you won’t blow right past your time allotment (called “running the light”).

CreativeStandUp.com
Third, **create a set list.** A set list is a small piece of paper you place in your pocket so that you can pull it out at any time and remember what you wanted to talk about next. This takes a lot of the “what if I forget” stress out of your performance and makes it much less likely that you’ll ever forget in the first place. Often times, just having a set list allows you to relax enough to where you can remember what you wanted to talk about without checking it.

Lastly, **rehearse OUT LOUD.** This is not optional, memorizing silently to yourself uses a completely different part of the brain than you will be using to say the words during your performance. You want to practice those words in a scenario that is as close as possible to the actual performance.

**STEPS TO REHEARSING**

Right when you finish writing your first step will be to **select what material you want to do.** If you're booked for 5 minutes and you only have 5 minutes... there's not much to think about. But as you progress, this will become more and more important. Pick the best stuff you've written that fit your time.

Second, **write out a finalized version of your set.** But remember, this can change. The more you think about your material the more you will find better setups, punch lines, and additional jokes that you didn’t think of earlier. Your set is never written in stone. If you think of something better than what you currently have, switch it out and re-time yourself.
Third, **break everything down into pauses.** If you have a paragraph written, determine where the pauses are in when you speak and hit “enter” so that you wind up with something like this...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S- Setup Line (slight pause)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S- Setup Line (slight pause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S- Setup Line (slight pause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P- Punch Line</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is both far easier to memorize (as it’s broken down into chunks that your brain will be able to recall much easier) and help you practice your pauses until they are natural. Again, look at how you speak in everyday life. You don’t rattle off an entire paragraph in one long breath. You take subtle pauses throughout. Some pauses are ½ second, others a full second... some much longer. Break your sentences down so that you can practice your set (including pauses) by reading your material.

Your fourth step will be to **develop your set list.** Now that you know exactly what you want to say you can write “primers” down for yourself. A primer is a word or small group of words that will remind you of the entire idea. So instead of writing an entire joke on your set list that will be difficult (not to mention awkward) to read one stage you can
just glance down, see “Target” on your set list, and instantly remember “oh yeah, I wanted to talk about shopping at Target.”

The last step is to **begin using your set list instead of reading your notes to practice out loud.** Knowing how to start a joke using your set list is much more important than memorizing your full set for two reasons...

First, you won’t have your laptop on stage, but you WILL have your set list. The more comfortable you are using your set list to start a joke the more comfortable you will be on stage because you’ll know that, no matter what happens, you can pull out your set list and be back on track.

Second, it removes a crutch. As we said earlier, the closer your rehearsing gets to the actual experience of being on stage the better. By stripping your entire set down to a handful of words you’re taking an important step in being able to remember your set on stage. You want to go from “I can rehearse my set by reading it out loud” to “I can rehearse my set by reading a few words on a set list” to “I can rehearse my set without any help.” Once you can remember what you want to say without relying too heavily on reading your notes, you’re reading for your performance.
FINDING PLACES TO PERFORM

Next, you’ll need to find a place to perform. This can be easily done in one of several ways.

1) Go to Badslava.com and you’ll find a large list of open mics in your area.

2) Run a Google search for “Open Mics (your city).”

3) Go to your nearest comedy club. Comedy clubs are generally easy to find and are always populated with comedians that know the local scene. They’ll be able to tell you where the best shows are in your area, who books the room, what day/time the show starts, what they audience is like there, and much more.

4) Use the power of social networking sites to find comedians around town (or in another town). Your nearest comedy club likely has some type of presence on Facebook. Go to their Facebook page and find the comedians who are fans or friends and befriend them. Then simply ask what shows are around town.

   NOTE: Always call ahead to make sure the info you got is still correct. Shows come and go. So double check everything before you head out the door.

These open mics are open to all and you don’t need to have ANY experience to get on them. If you have the time, swing by one of these shows before you perform just to see what the room is like. This will give you a good idea of what to expect when you actually are coming out to perform. But this is definitely not necessary. Don’t delay starting your comedy career because you want to test the waters. Eventually, you’re going to have to
jump up on that stage and go for it. So while the information you can get from it can be valuable, it would be far worse to delay getting on stage then to collect information.
PERFORMING

BEFORE HITTING THE STAGE

So now it’s time to head out for your first performance. But there’s still much you need to know before you do.

RECORDING YOUR SET

The most important preparation you can do after prepping your material is to grab your video camera (or audio recorder). This is one of the comedian’s greatest tools. It acts as an objective eye in the audience. When you perform you aren’t going to remember nearly as much as you think you will. You’re attention will be on giving a solid performance and that is plenty for you to think about.

Right before you hit the stage hit record on your video camera and set it down on a table. Preferably, you will place the camera in the middle of the audience so that it will be picking up audience response. This will give you INVALUABLE information after the show on both your performance and the audience’s reaction. We’ll talk more about this in the post-show section of this quick-start guide.
DRESSING FOR COMEDY

So before you ever head out to the show you might be wondering “what do I wear?” (Ok, it’s possible that wasn’t your first thought... but it’s still an important question).

Whenever you are performing it is always a good rule of thumb to dress one-step above the audience. Ideally, you want to be dressed just a little better than the audience is dressed. This tells the audience that you’re serious about the performance. But don’t overdo it. The only thing more distracting then someone wearing a wrinkly shirt and shorts that looked like he just crawled out of bed is a guy dressed to the nine’s in a dive bar.

The goal here is two-fold...

First, as mentioned, you want the audience to know that you are taking the performance seriously by dressing up just a ‘bit’.

Secondly, you don’t want your clothing to be distracting. Unlike music concerts, comedy requires the audience’s attention. Any time the audience is thinking about anything else you’re going to lose out. Their mind might wonder off for only a few seconds, but if you say a piece of important information in your setup line then they won’t get the punch line, whether the joke was funny or not. So if your shirt has a silly phrase on it that audience members will be trying to figure out what it says and missing your jokes in the process, leave it at home. YOU should be funny, not your shirt.

Another unwritten rule of dressing for stand-up is “Don’t wear shorts to a comedy venue.” Comedy clubs want to put on a professional show and they tend to look down on
even brand new comedians who walk on stage wearing shorts. If you’re walking on stage at a comedy club always wear pants... (I mean long pants).

Secondly, be ready to go on when it’s your turn. Don’t walk into the parking lot for a cigarette. Make the emcees job as easy as possible.

NEW COMEDIAN PERFORMANCE MISTAKES

Let’s go over just a few “new comedian mistakes” that you should watch out for in your performances. The less of these mistakes you make on stage the better. But don’t think you have to have a flawless performance your very first time. Just know that these mistakes exist and you’ll be much less likely to have them (and much MUCH more likely to find them in your set and fix them after your first couple performances).

DON’T TRY TO MEMORIZE EVERY WORD

This is the most common mistake new public speakers make. This is the easiest way to lose your place in a set. The first distraction you get you’ll completely lose your train of thought. Instead, remember your main points and have them on your set list to remind you. On it should be 1-3 words per line that will spark the next idea in your head. At that point you should be able to start your next bit. If you lose yourself again, take another look at the next line and continue. Audiences will forgive you for taking a look at your set list (especially if you’re new). What’s important is that you show confidence the entire time.
When you look at your set list, do so casually. If you look comfortable the audience will be comfortable. Don't make a leaping grab for your set list because it tips the audience off that you are out of control. Don't worry about if you're going to remember the next joke or not. This worrying is what WILL make you forget it. Stay in the moment.

DON'T PLAY WITH THE MIC CORD

You might to be nervous. But you don't have to show it by twiddling the mic cord in your hand. The audience's attention will be on the mic cord, not you... If you have access to a mic and mic cord (or a banana and string), practice your set while you’re holding it. Hold it until it starts feeling natural in your hands.

JUMPING DIRECTLY INTO MATERIAL

It's beneficial to have your first line be something other than your first joke. Give the audience a second to finish doing whatever they were doing between comedians. Maybe they want to comment on the last comedian or figure out what they want to order. If you jump straight into material, part of the audience is going to miss your setup. If they miss the setup they'll probably miss the entire joke. The last thing you want is to come out with your best joke and have only 60% of the audience hear it. But don't fill this time with silence because you'll find the audience will keep talking to each other. That's why so many comedians start off with "How you guys doing?" or a line like that. It doesn't really MEAN
anything. It just grabs their attention in the beginning.

HOLD THE MIC TO YOUR FACE

Seems obvious, doesn’t it? But you wouldn’t believe how many new comedians completely forget about this. They’ll hold the mic chest level like it’s a beer. Oftentimes the comedian won’t even make an adjustment until an audience member screams “We can’t hear you!” The audience is VERY FORGIVING of this. All they want to do is hear. After the first 2 lines with the mic down they knew you were new at this anyway. They are ready to be supportive.

NOT SPEAKING TO THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE

Many new comedians stare straight forward while doing their set. It’s very easy to forget about the audience members who are sitting to the side of the stage instead of directly in front of you. Don’t leave them out of the show. Make sure you turn your head to address both the audience members on the far-left and far-right side of the room. This will help keep them involved in the show instead of feeling like they’re on the outside looking in.

If you find yourself making any of these mistakes, don’t worry. The audience absolutely LOVES new comedians. You instantly have their respect. Don’t be afraid to let them know this is your first time on stage. The audience will quickly dismiss these trivial
errors. These common mistakes will not make or break a set. They are all cumulative. If you do one it’s no big deal. Two, the audience might think you’re new. The more of these mistakes you make the worse off you’ll be. So remember them, but don’t put too much pressure on yourself to get it right every time. One day this will all seem completely natural.
CONCLUSION

If you've found the information in this quick-start guide useful, consider taking our...

**Online Stand-Up Comedy Video Course**

... only on CreativeStandUp.com. Faster & Funnier is designed to get you HUGE laughs in from the very beginning of your comedy career. We've sifted through thousands of pages of research and worked with over 70 comedians to find the best tools and strategies to get new comedians BIG results on stage the quickest way possible.

To your success in comedy,

CreativeStandUp.com.com
Faster & Funnier Quick-Start Guide

To Stand-Up Comedy Success

CreativeStandUp.com

Copyright 2011. CreativeStandUp.com