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## Power Posing



**The two high-power poses used in the study. Participants in the high-power-pose condition were posed in expansive positions with open limbs.**

A simple posture change transforms hormone levels in a matter of minutes – and literally makes people more powerful. Previous research has shown that humans and other animals express power through open, expansive postures, and powerlessness through closed, constrictive postures. A new study in [Psychological Science](#) reveals how open postures can actually cause one to grow in confidence and power. Co-authors Dana Carney, at Columbia Business School; Amy Cuddy, a professor at Harvard Business School; and Andy Yap, a PhD student at Columbia Business School found that merely adopting the poses used by powerful people, such as putting hands behind one's head and feet up on the desk like the stereotype of the nonchalant CEO, changes an individual's neuroendocrine makeup and behaviour.

Posing in high-power (vs. low-power) nonverbal displays caused neuroendocrine and behavioural changes for both male and female participants. High-power posers experienced elevations in testosterone, decreases in cortisol, and increased feelings of power and tolerance for risk; low-power posers exhibited the opposite pattern. In short, adopting powerful postures allowed subjects to prepare for stressful situations and confidently take risks due to

psychological, physiological, and behavioural changes — and not due to a placebo effect or a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The proof that a person can, via a simple two-minute pose, embody power and instantly become more powerful has real-world implications in a variety of fields and situations — such as athletic performance, courtroom arguments, networking and job interviews, efforts to instil more women executives in Fortune 500 corporations, and the universal challenge of public speaking. Now there is evidence that power positioning is not effective because it heightens others' awareness of an individual. Instead, power positioning allows an individual to prepare for a challenge on a neuroendocrine level and gives him, or her, the ability to excel in decision-making and naturally gain power.



**Research  
Blogging**

Carney, D.R., Cuddy, A.J., & Yap, A.J. (2010). Power Posing: Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance. *Psychological Science*, 21. doi: 10.1177/0956797610383437.