

HOW TO SNEAK OUT OF A MEETING

SNEAK OUT IN PLAIN SIGHT

- 1 Establish your presence.**
Lay the groundwork for your departure by first making a brief speech, giving a short presentation, or otherwise making your presence known. In this way people will remember that you were there.
- 2 Call attention to yourself.**
Make a show of going out and then coming back into the meeting several times. Say, “Boy, this coffee really goes right through me!” and then go to the restroom twice. Make sure people notice when you return.
- 3 Make your escape.**
The third time you leave, don’t return.

SNEAK OUT USING A DISTRACTION

- 1 Express interest in attending the meeting.**
Before the meeting, say to your boss or a colleague, “I can’t wait to see what Phil has to say” or, “Which conference room is the meeting in?” Make it clear that you really want this meeting and, thus, would be the last one to miss it.

- 2 Sit away from the focus of attention.**
Sit on the opposite end of the room from the person running the meeting or from the screen where the presentation will be displayed.
- 3 Sneak out.**
When the lights dim and the presentation begins, quietly get up from your seat. If there are empty chairs around the table, just walk away from your chair. If all the seats are taken, move your chair away from the table against a wall so the vacant chair will not be noticed. Leave the room and don’t come back. Have a plausible cover story ready, such as an unexpected visit from a client/customer or a personal emergency regarding your spouse/child/pet.

CRAWL UNDER THE TABLE

- 1 Assess the size and shape of the table.**
The ideal conference table to escape is rectangular and seats at least 12 people, preferably more, with some of the seats left empty. People cluster at the center or at one end of the table if it is not full, usually leaving one or both ends available for an exit route. Do not attempt to sneak away under a round table since you may be surrounded by legs.
- 2 Slide under the table.**
When no one is looking, slide quietly down your chair to the floor. Push your chair against the wall or leave it in its place, depending on how full the table is (see step 3 above). Do not call attention to yourself.



Do not attempt to escape under a round table.



Crawl along the center of the table, avoiding your co-workers' feet.

3

Crawl.

Proceed on your hands and knees under the center of the table. Avoid bumping shins, feet, or loose shoes. If you are discovered, say you are looking for your pen.

4

Monitor conversation.

The end of the table will probably be closest to the door. Wait until someone at a long side of the table is speaking: People will look in that direction.

5

Continue on all fours.

Crawl out from under the table and to the door. Reach up and open the door quietly. Check for people outside.

6

Exit the room.

When the coast is clear, crawl into the hallway.

7

Stand up and walk away.

Be Aware

- If you plan to escape by crawling, wear loose-fitting clothes.
- Most people have limited peripheral vision; when looking straight ahead, they cannot see an object at an angle of more than 45 degrees behind and to the side. Use this as a guide when determining if your escape will be noticed.
- If other escape plans will not work, spill a cup of lukewarm coffee on your pants. This strategy wins sympathy and also offers a perfect excuse for

leaving the meeting. If someone later asks why you never returned, say you got a slight burn. They probably will not seek to verify.

HOW TO STAY AWAKE DURING A MEETING



Use correct meeting posture.

Keep your head up, shoulders back, and spine straight. Keep your legs bent at a 90-degree angle, not fully extended. Feet should be flat on the floor.



Be on guard for mind-numbing repetition.

Repetitive noise patterns and repetitive images can cause a trance-like state that deadens the senses. If phrases like “need better communication” and “building a team” are repeated, or if tables, graphs, and pie charts are projected endlessly, exit the room for a few minutes.



Wear sunglasses.

The harsh glare of fluorescent lights can cause eye strain and lead to fatigue. Wear dark glasses.



Exercise.

Exercise combats fatigue and keeps the mind alert. Take frequent walks around the room or do calisthenics. If possible, jog in place.



Stay hydrated.

Drink water or sports drinks that provide energy and contain potassium, salt, and carbohydrates. Coffee

contains caffeine, a stimulant that also acts as a diuretic, which will cause dehydration, so drink at least one glass of water for every cup of coffee you consume. This will also promote trips to the bathroom, and consequently, movement and stimulation. Do not drink alcohol: It depresses the nervous system and leads to fatigue.



Use interrogation techniques.

Pinch yourself, sit in an uncomfortable position, poke your leg with a pen or paper clip, or stare wide-eyed at a bright light—the pain will heighten your awareness.

Be Aware

Warning signs of meeting fatigue include inattentiveness, back tension, shallow breathing, frequent blinking, heavy eyelids, and snoring.