

Media Tips for Tough Interviews

1. There's no such thing as *off the record*, *no comment*, *media are your friends*, and *media are your enemies*.
2. Return media calls promptly with the understanding that you are never required to do an interview on the spot. If you need thinking time, set the interview for a mutually agreeable time.
3. Ask ANY questions you wish before agreeing to an interview, such as: deadlines, angle, other sources. You have "a right to know" too.
4. In advance, have your facts and figures in order and mentally test yourself with difficult questions.
5. In advance, know the 2-3 three points you wish to make.
6. Use everyday words that the layperson will understand.
7. Especially in electronic media, they won't use it all. In fact, they'll use very little, so stick to the main points and keep it as simple as possible.
8. "Dead air" won't kill you, but rambling just to fill it could. Make your points then let the interviewer worry about the rest.
9. In responding to a negative question, don't repeat the negative question. Answer with a positive. "Why has your research failed to ...?" "My research has expanded the understanding of..."
10. It's not over till it's over (when the reporter has hung up or walked out the door). Until then, you're on the record.
11. Don't overreact to negative media coverage. Only sustained negative stories are likely to have impact. Most people didn't read, hear it or see it.