

Ideas for how to attend a conference

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The one big rule

Don't be a jerk

Why?

- **Attend talks**
- **Talk to people**
- **Learn new ideas**
- **Improve your presentation skills**
- **Build your network**
- **Market yourself**



Actions

Goals

Why?

Learn new ideas
Improve your presentation
Build your network
Market yourself
Your research is cool!

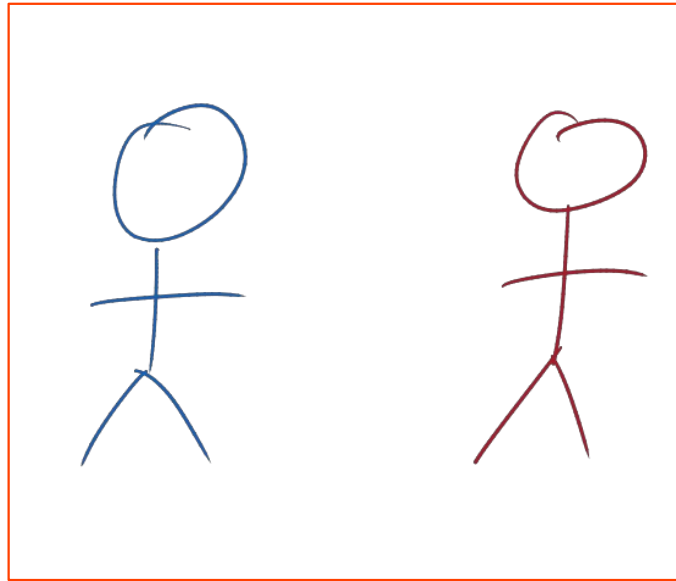
Attend Talks

Talk to People

Why?



Why?



BEFORE

Before: Setting Goals

What can you do in close physical proximity to other people who get excited about the same things as you?

Before: Setting Goals

- **Learn new ideas**
 - What talks are of interest?
 - Who might be worth talking to?
 - What do you want to talk to them about?
- **Improve your presentation skills**
 - What ideas are you having difficulty pitching to others?
 - Who might have insights on those ideas?
- **Build your network**
 - Who do you want an introduction to?
 - What is your discussion starter?
- **Market yourself & your work**
 - Are you looking for a job? ... to market to potential reviewers?
 - Who do you want to market to?
 - What projects will you pitch?

Before: Resources

- **The Conference Program**
 - Paper titles, abstracts, and author lists
- **Your Advisor**
 - Reviewing your goals & suggesting new ones
 - Providing a political / social perspective
 - Pre-conference contacts
- **Your Peers (& Advisor)**
 - Practicing elevator pitches
 - Practicing your talk (if applicable)

DURING

During

Learn new ideas
Improve your presentation
Build your network
Market yourself
Your research is cool!

Attend Talks

Talk to People

During: What to Expect

- Sessions
- Stand-up Snacks (Breakfast, Coffee Breaks)
- Sit-down Meals
- The “Hallway Track”
- Extracurriculars

During: Sessions

- **Learn new ideas**
 - Come up with at least one question for each talk
 - Chance to speak up & ask the speaker
 - Stay engaged with the talk
 - Conversation starter
- **Market yourself & your work**
 - Asking questions
 - Lead with your name & institution
 - Don't be shy, but also ok to approach the speaker afterwards

During: Stand-up Snacks

- **Learn new ideas**
 - Talk to lots of people you haven't talked to yet
 - Find out what types of ideas get them excited
- **Improve your presentation skills**
 - Try to pitch your idea to people you haven't pitched to yet
 - Find out what other people are interested in
- **Build your network**
 - Meet lots of people you haven't met yet
 - Find out what skills other people have
- **Market yourself and your work**
 - Get other people excited about your work
 - Find out how your work relates to other people's work

During: Sit-down meals

- **Learn new ideas**
 - Talk to the other people at your table
- **Improve your presentation skills**
 - Try to pitch your idea to the others at your table
- **Build your network**
 - Get to know the other people at your table
- **Market yourself and your work**
 - Get the other people at your table excited about your work

General Social Guidelines

- **Be Proactive**

- Don't sit around by yourself (or just with folks from your lab)
- Walk up to loners, or small groups & intro yourself!
- Sit at tables with at least a few people you don't know

- **Use your network to build your network**

- Ask your advisor for introductions
- If someone you know is talking to someone you don't, try to get an intro

- **Start the discussion**

- Easy in: "So, what do you work on?"
- Force yourself to come up with questions. If you don't understand, ask!

Help others

- Invite others & be free with introductions

During: The “Hallway Track”

- **If you're deep in discussion and a session starts...**
 - ... that can be ok (See “During: Stand-up snacks”)
 - ... but pay attention to what session you're missing
 - Was attending it / asking questions one of your conference goals?

During: Extracurriculars

- **Get out, explore. You're someplace new!**
 - Bonus: find others who might be interested in doing the same!
 - Take advantage of conference events (if any)

AFTER

After

- **Learn new ideas**
 - Pass along what you've learned
- **Build your network**
 - Follow up with any email discussions
 - Requests for papers / etc...
 - Further discussion
- **Market yourself and your work**
 - Socials
 - LinkedIn, Fediverse, etc...

Passing along knowledge

- **Keep a conference journal**
 - Cool ideas you learned about
 - Papers that are relevant to your (or your labmates') research
 - People working in adjacent spaces
 - Potential new research directions that came to mind
- **Share info**
 - Write a blog post!
 - Do a post-conference talk
 - Post-conference round-table