

Verbal Tics

*I mean, I'm like, like, look,
man, so, um, you know, etc.*

Think of a verbal tic as a word or phrase used constantly and unconsciously but which is often independent of the meaning someone wants to convey. Because they can distract the listener and hinder communication, avoid them.

It's not easy though. Tics afflict even the most skilled and articulate communicators. For example, notice how often you hear professional journalists and political commentators on television say "I mean..." They also appear to alter a train of thought by interjecting a new train beginning with "look." When responding to a question, others tend to begin with "so."

It's possible that they're common because of social acceptance from peers, not unlike the verbal equivalent of a clothing fashion.