

Curveballs aren't always big, career-defining moments. They can be the small and frequent issues that leave you feeling unproductive or like you're not spending time on what matters most.

Whether it's a last minute request or a problem you didn't expect, you're often not in control of when a curve ball comes your way, but you can build your capability to cope better when they do.

Ideas for action



1. Pre-think your 'What to do whens'

You can't always predict curveballs, but you can be ready for them.

Scenario planning helps you to respond with confidence instead of panic. Try:

- 🔗 *Asking AI to explore a situation that throws you off track. For example: "What do I do when I get put on the spot by someone senior and don't know the answer?"*

This gives you ideas for workarounds you can use in the moment.

2. Buy yourself some time & create clarity

Pause before you respond to a curveball to be more intentional about how you respond.

Having a ready-to-go statement when a curveball comes your way can make this easier e.g.

- 🔗 *With a last-minute request: "Give me 30 minutes to finish what I'm doing and then I can talk it through"*
- 🔗 *If tech lets you down: "I'm going to go off camera for a moment while I sort this out."*
- 🔗 *Being put on the spot: "I hadn't considered that, what are your thoughts?"*

3. Don't let curveballs turn into snowballs

Curveballs happen - but don't let them gain momentum and take over your headspace. What you do next matters most. Try:

- 🔗 *Kicking a curveball away as quickly as you can instead of letting it spiral. Ask yourself: "What can I control right now? How do I want to respond?"*
- 🔗 *Reframing your mindset: "I'm proud of how I handled that. I took a moment and chose my response."*
- 🔗 *If the same curveball keeps coming back, think bigger: what can we do differently to prevent it?*

Coach yourself questions

Where do most of my curveballs come from?



How do curve balls get in my way?



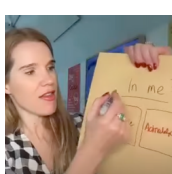
Who can I talk to next time I catch a curveball?



Recommended resources



Watch our 7 minute Skills **Sprint on adaptability** for ideas on how to match your skills and strengths to a situation, whilst staying true to who you are.



Watch Helen's short **How To video** on staying calm in stressful situations.



Sarah and Helen explore practical actions you can take to stay in control & keep moving forward during change in episode **#482** of the Squiggly Career podcast.