



Audio Recording & Editing

Caring For Your Voice

Have you ever had the awful experience of losing your voice? It's called **Laryngitis** – which is basically a vocal chord cramp.

Here's what happens: your vocal chords create sound when they come together and vibrate; when they can't come together in a healthy way, you have less sound. If the vocal chords (aka vocal folds) are irritated and strained, they can get inflamed and tense to the point that the muscles overcompensate, cramp up and stop the vocal chords from coming together.

The more you strain your throat muscles to create sound, the higher you increase your chances of getting laryngitis, vocal nodes or polyps.

You need to consistently keep your voice healthy, clear and strong – especially when you need your voice to make great radio!

5 DOs to Prevent Losing Your Voice

1. Learn physical and vocal warm-ups to keep your throat and vocal chords relaxed at every level when you speak.
2. Take care of your back and neck so that they are aligned (this helps keep your throat open and relaxed, and your breathing easy)
3. Drink lots of water (8 or more glasses a day is recommended) and sip warm healthy liquids like teas and soups (try hot water and honey and lemon, with 4 slices of fresh ginger)
4. Protect your immune system and emotional health with healthy foods and vitamins, lozenges or vitamin C drops to moisturise and clear your throat
5. Take care of health issues such as viruses, bacterial infections, allergies, acid reflux, etc.

5 DON'TS to Prevent Losing Your Voice

1. Avoid strained yelling, screaming, singing, speaking or whispering (there are healthy ways of using your voice)
2. Avoid ALL smoking and second-hand smoke
3. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, ice, chocolate, dairy and nuts 4 hours before speaking
4. Avoid antiseptic menthol throat sprays & lozenges that numb and dehydrate
5. Avoid clearing your throat (try a swallow, small cough, or warm liquids)

BREATHE!

Breathing control and relaxation are as important to the radio announcer as they are to singers and actors. Good breath control will enable you to cut out breathy noises being picked up by the microphone. The first thing to happen when you are nervous is that you will run out of breath, so you need to take steps to relax.

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Good breath control will help you to relax and to take a breath at the right places. Taking breaths in the middle of sentences muddles the message. You should also learn to write scripts that allow for pauses in the right places.

- Settle yourself in the studio chair.
- Roll your head from left to right so that your chin forms an arc. This will help relax the throat and neck and therefore the voice.
- Your posture is a vitally important. Put your feet flat on the floor. Draw an imaginary straight line from the top of your head through to the base of your spine. You have created an unobstructed path for your breath and voice and opened up spaces in which the voice can resonate. It is the resonance that gives your voice its warmth.
- Try standing up! Many ABC and commercial broadcasters adopt this technique.
- Ensure reading material is in natural line of sight, without compromising posture
- Take long, slow, deep breaths. Place your hands either side of your stomach, breath in slowly through your nose allowing the stomach to expand, then the diaphragm and chest. Breathing with only the chest causes shortness of breath. Try 4 deep breaths, where you count slowly to 4 as you breath in, hold for the count of 4, breathe out for the count of 4, wait for the count of 4. Do this 4 times.
- Humming will help you feel where the resonant spaces are inside your head. Try to imagine the sound resonating in those spaces one at a time – in your forehead, cheeks, nose and ears. Try to fill the holes with sound.

Remember to smile as you speak. Listen to the effect

Handy Hints

Saliva

Excess or lack of saliva are two problems that sometimes worry broadcast readers.

A common cause of excess saliva is sugar. Some readers leave sugar out of hot drinks for a few hours prior to broadcast to help overcome saliva excess.

If you have an acute excess saliva problem it is wise to eat a cooking apple just before going on-air. The high acidity has the effect of partially restricting saliva glands.

A dry mouth is best compensated by sipping warm water just before and during your on-air shift. This will help avoid coughing fits better than coffee or tea.

Warm water is a general recommendation for all readers – take a glass of warm water into the studio with you.

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Phlegm

Milk may create phlegm, causing the voice to sound thick. If you find this to be a problem it's best to avoid hot drinks with milk prior to going on-air. Chocolate can also be a hazard. Again, if it causes you a problem don't indulge before recording audio.

Vocal Warm Ups

Feeling a bit croaky? Here are a few tips and tricks for warming up your voice for broadcasting...
The 5 Minute Vocal Warm Up

YAWN AND STRETCH

Use your whole body; loosening your arms neck and shoulders

NECK AND SHOULDERS

- Gently drop head on chest, link fingers together and place on the back of the head
- Release elbows. Alternate elbows getting heavier, then back to centre.
- Roll down through spine, release arms, roll spine back up. Remember: to breathe, released knees, belly soft; be gentle
- Shrug shoulders, hold then release with an ahhh, several times

JAW

- Clench and release five times
- Massage jaw hinge with heel of palm, then with hands drag lower jaw down and back
- OR massage whole jaw area
- Do 'the crow' ahhhhhh

MOUTH

- 'Opening night': Kiss kiss ah ah! Kiss kiss ah ah!
- Siren: Noo Naa! Noo Naa! Noo Naa!
- Horse lips or say, "Billy Buttons Bought a Bunch of Beautiful Bananas"

YAWN AND SHAKE - RESONANCE, VOCAL CHORDS

- Hum a tune
- Hum all over the place working up to higher and lower notes
- Lightly hum on 'm', keeping the feeling of a yawn in your throat
- Focus on the vibration of the hum; hum into lips, nose, forehead, top of head, cheeks, jaw and anywhere else you can think of.

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Perfection with Diction

Diction practice will help you speak clearly AND help you exercise the voice muscles.

Put all the consonants from B to Z including ones like br, pl, st, etc before the vowel sounds (ah, ay, ee, aw, oo) For example: bah, bay, bee, baw, boo.

Begin with a hum to place the voice - MMMMMah, may, mee, maw, moo

Try getting faster and faster.

Try going up and down the scale to extend vocal range

Repeat: beda-geda-beda-geda, guda-duga-guda-duga, pitta-tippa-pitta-tippa

Tongue twisters are fabulous for getting the mouth, tongue and brain moving.

This old favourite gets **the lips** moving and helps with plosive sounds:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Try these – they'll help you with **sibilant s's**:

She sells sea shells, by the sea shore.

Six thick thistle sticks

The shrewd shrew sold Sarah seven silver fish slices

Theo Thistler, the thistle sifter, in sifting a sieve of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.

These will help with **consonants**:

Betty bought a bit of butter but she found the butter bitter, so Betty bought a bit of better butter to make the bitter butter better.

Five flippant Frenchmen flew from France for fashions.

Quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly.

These will strengthen **the tongue**. Say them over and over faster and faster:

Red leather, yellow leather. Red lorry, yellow lorry.

Unique New York

** acknowledge



CMTO as the source of much of this information

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Finding your best voice

“You don’t have to put up with a thin, shaky voice”, says speech-language pathologist Jackie Gartner-Schmidt.

Ever given a presentation and felt like your throat was closing up or that there was a big lump in it? Or made an important request of your boss but thought your voice sounded as shaky as Jello on a trampoline?

Turns out, you don’t suffer from some unexplained physical malady. There’s an anatomical explanation for what happens to our voices when we’re under pressure, says speech-language pathologist and University of Pittsburgh professor [Jackie Gartner-Schmidt](#).

All humans have vocal cords — also called vocal folds since they’re folds of tissue — which sit on top of our windpipes, right behind the Adam’s apple. “The real reason we have vocal folds is to protect ourselves,” says Gartner-Schmidt. In fact, they do the very important work of preventing us from inhaling water into our lungs whenever we drink something.

But researchers have found “in experimentally induced stressful situations — be it public speaking, hearing a loud startle sound or having cold water put on your body — that the muscles around the voice box and the muscles actually inside the voice box [a.k.a. the vocal folds] react,” says Gartner-Schmidt. “They activate, and in some cases, they close altogether.”

Of course, no one wants to sound shaky, squeaky or choked up when they speak. As Gartner-Schmidt puts it, “We want our voice to reflect our strengths, not our weaknesses.” She says, “in study after study a high- pitched voice has been correlated with the perception of anxiety, not being competent, not being strong, and not being trustworthy.”

And this matters more and more now, as many of our meetings and interviews take place over conference calls or low-res video chats. As a result, says Gartner-Schmidt, “the voice is substantially taking over more and more of how we are perceived.”

To avoid this, she suggests doing this easy exercise (which she calls one of her favorites).

Hold up your index finger a few inches in front of your mouth. As you exhale steadily, make a “Wooooooo” noise (think: little kid pretending to be a ghost) for 5 to 10 seconds. Do this 5 to 10 times. (Watch her [demonstrate it here](#).)

“This ... essentially relaxes the vocal folds,” says Gartner-Schmidt. “It establishes breath and air flow and voice stability, which is the cornerstone of any strong, clear voice.”

Right before the next important occasion in which you have to speak — for work, for the toast you’re giving at a wedding, for a speech to a community board — take Gartner-Schmidt’s advice and “spend some time finding your best voice.”

<https://ideas.ted.com/a-simple-trick-to-help-you-speak-in-public-without-showing-your-nerves/>

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Using a Microphone

Using Microphones – basic instructions

If you have a microphone, connect it to your computer. In another session we will cover the different types of microphones. This session is aimed to be very practical and to use the equipment you already have access to. If there is a gain adjustment on your microphone – be aware that you are adjusting microphone sensitivity to noise, not volume

How close should I be to the microphone?

Microphones, like voices, are all different. About 10cm is a good starting point (one fist distance from the mic), however, you will need to adjust for your situation and your voice. Use the following points to find the right distance for you.

If you're too close to the microphone:

Your P, T, S and Q sounds might cause popping or hissing noises

Your breathing will sound unnaturally loud

Your voice might sound "boomy" and distorted

Your volume levels will be difficult for the panel operator to control.

The slightest movement away from the mic will result in a noticeable change in your voice.

If you're too far away from the microphone:

You will sound as if you're on the other side of the room.

Your voice will be difficult to understand.

The mic will pick up other unwanted noise in the studio

Your voice will have a thin, echoing sound.

Setting up the microphone for an interview:

Get yourself comfortable in the chair.

It's good to use the corner of a table because it allows you to rest your arm and get the recorder close to your interviewee.

You and your interviewee should sit close to the corner.

Recording a Speech or Talk:

If you are recording a speech or talk at a meeting you have a couple of options but the most important thing is that you turn up early to set it up. You can ask the organizer and the speaker if you could use a recording device placed near them to record. If you have a compatible connecting cord you could record directly from the sound system to your recording device. If there is no PA system you could set up a mic stand in front of the speaker.

There are many many options for microphones – go with the best that your budget can afford. <https://rachelcorbett.com.au/podcast-microphone/> this is a link to an article that I have found to be helpful. It has some extra information as well as the best microphones review and recommendations.

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