

Vocal Tips

Courtesy of Susan Miller and Associates, Ph.D., CCC

- Warm up your voice by singing or humming in the shower.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day to keep your vocal cords lubricated. Add an extra glass for each serving of coffee, soda, or alcohol.
- Speak as you sing; maintain support from your lower rib cage.
- Speak more slowly and breathe when you need to. Do not speak with too many words in one breath.
- Try not to hold your breath when lifting weights, doing sit-ups or aerobics, opening doors, listening to someone or concentrating on something.
- Use good posture when speaking. When talking on the phone, do not cradle the phone on your shoulder. This will tighten your neck muscles and vocal cords.
- Wear clothing that is loose around your waist so that your stomach and rib cage can remain extended as you speak.
- Do not take aspirin before a lecture or performance because it increases blood flow and can cause a broken blood vessel.
- If you have allergies or asthma and take antihistamines or inhalers, combine it with a mucolytic such as Humibid or Guaifernesin to lubricate your vocal cords.
- Try to avoid dairy products, chocolate, or mayonnaise if they thicken mucus and cause you to clear your throat.
- If you have gastro esophageal reflux, elevate the head of your bed and eat at least 3 hours before sleeping. Your doctor can prescribe medications to help you.
- Stop smoking and avoid concentrated alcohol use.
- If hoarseness persists for more than a couple of weeks, see an otolaryngologist who specializes in the treatment of vocal disorders.