

## Vocal hygiene - The Do's and Don'ts for a Healthy Voice

- DON'T
  - Don't out-talk or out-sing environmental noise. Don't try to be heard in noisy places like restaurants, large family gatherings, airplanes, buses, sports arenas
  - Don't yell, cheer or scream in the presence of background noise. Note: "Lombard effect": a tendency to speak more loudly in the presence of background noise..
  - Don't try to lecture or speak to a large audience without the aid of a microphone.
  - Don't clear your throat continually.
  - Don't cough or clear your throat if you don't have to - this can become a bad habit.
  - Don't do prolonged, loud and vocally aggressive excessive talking - laughing or crying in person or on the phone.
  - Don't initiate voice with a harsh or sudden glottal attack.
  - Don't yell or scream whisper or speak at a higher or lower pitch than is comfortable
  - Don't speak in a low monotone or allow pitch vocal energy to drop so low that the sound becomes gravelly (glottal fry).
  - Don't force your voice in a register beyond comfortable pitch.□□
  - Don't ever whisperDon't speak beyond a natural breath cycle or squeeze out the last few words of a thought without sufficient breath.
  - Don't hold your breath or squeeze or push the voice out
  - Don't raise the chest or shoulders when inhaling.
  - Don't raise shoulders or tighten neck and throat while breathing.
  - Don't clench your teeth hold your jaw tense.- this causes tension in the jaw muscles.
  - Don't eat just prior to performing (3 hours).
  - Don't drink or eat caffeine products, chocolate, milk products, nuts or popcorn before performing, don't smoke or drink alcohol excessively.
  - Don't speak, sing or lecture without warming up and don't just stop at the end of a performance without cool down exercises
  - Don't "over sing" - if you are hoarse after singing, something may be wrong
  - Don't yell or speak extensively during strenuous exercise.
  - Don't sing or try to talk over a cold or laryngitis or if it hurts to swallow.
  - Don't use your voice extensively when you have a cold.
  - Don't ignore prolonged symptoms of vocal strain, hoarseness, pain, fullness, heartburn or allergies.
  - Don't expose your voice to extensive pollution, cigarette smoke or chemical fumes.
  - Don't use aspirin or similar medication. It has a tendency to cause bleeding and predisposes the voice user to vocal fold hemorrhage, especially when used for menstrual cramping
  - Don't use your voice when it feel strained.
  
- DO

- Do drink plenty of water ,at least 6-8 glasses of water a day.
- Do maintain proper humidity, both inside and outside your body.
- Do eat a healthy diet.
- Do take a sip of water, swallow, or silent cough rather than continually clearing your throat.
- Do allow for several periods of voice rest during the day, especially when ill or tired and rest your voice in times of illness
- Do whistle, clap, blow a horn or ring a bell to attract attention in a noisy environment
- Do maintain proper posture.
- Do keep your upper and lower teeth separated allowing the jaw to remain passive and flowing as you speak.
- Do release neck tension by gently tipping the head forward and to each side while keeping the shoulders down
- Do allow the breath to replace itself naturally.
- Do use abdominal breathing , be aware and allow natural expansion/release in lower torso abdomen, back and sides during the breathing cycle.
- Do speak softly in a natural pitch keep the voice at a comfortable pitch.
- Do speak slowly, pausing often at natural boundaries to allow the breath to be replaced before continuing.
- Do allow registers to change as pitch rises and drops, consult a singing teacher to assist with smooth register changes.
- Do vocal warm-ups prior to speaking, lecturing or singing
- Do use vocal exercises afterward to bring voice back to a relaxed state.
- Do learn to project your voice through proper conduction of breath. Posture. Always face the person you are speaking with. Use a microphone for public speaking to keep your voice relaxed and at a comfortable level
- Do be aware of the effects of emotions have on you, especially if it causes muscle tension in your neck, throat, jaw or chest.
- Do learn to recognize the first signs of vocal fatigue (hoarseness, dry throat, tension, and poor vocal projection)
- Do consult with your doctor when you experience throat discomfort or hoarseness for more than 3-4 days.
- Do treat allergies and infections promptly.
- Do avoid self-medication