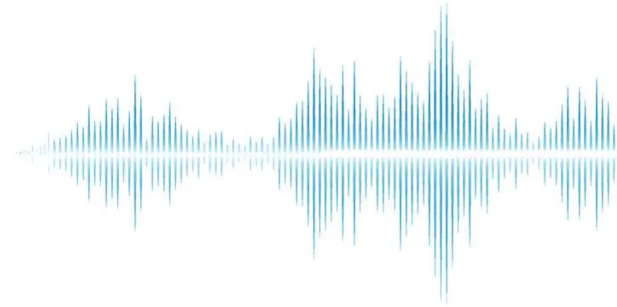


The Young Ones 2023

Voice care



How to keep your main instrument healthy

LUÍS PATROCÍNIO

What is voice?

The sound produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth, as speech or song.

Cambridge Dictionary



What is voice/vocal care?

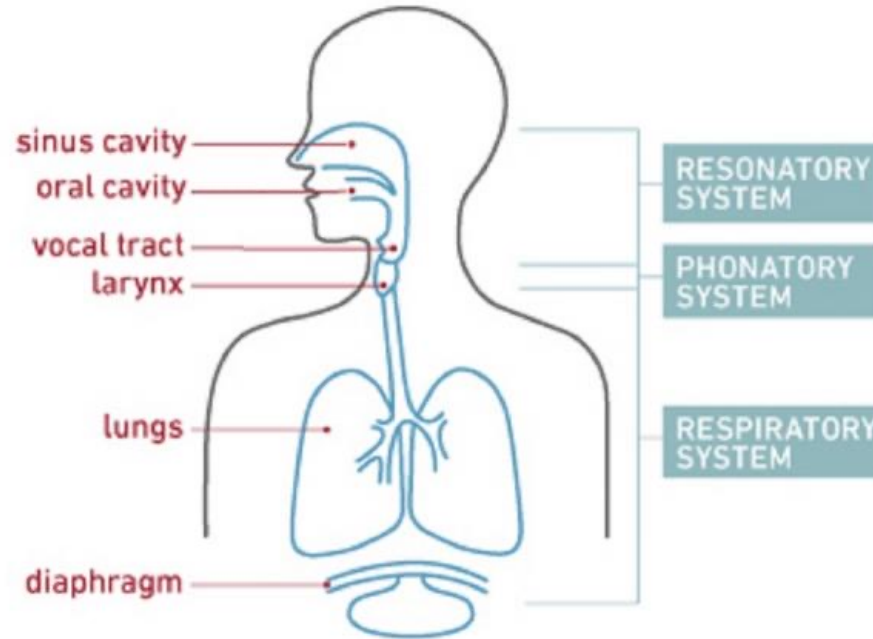
The things we do to keep the voice healthy.

What do you use in your body to produce voice?

Talk to the person sitting next to you

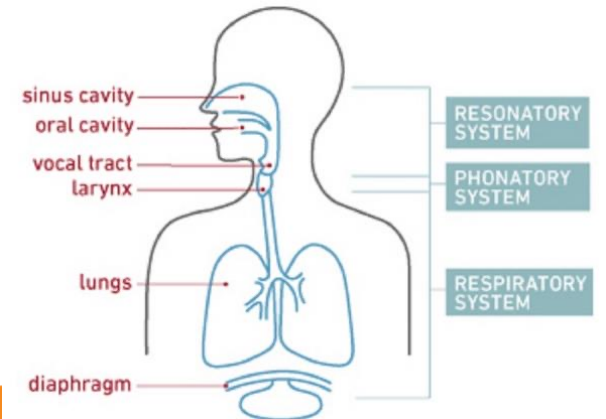
There are 3 systems, which work together when we produce voice

The 3 systems that produce voice



1. **Respiratory System**, also known as “breath support”, includes: lungs, ribcage, chest muscles, diaphragm, and windpipe.
2. **Phonatory System**, also known as the larynx or “voice box”, where sound is produced includes: larynx and, specifically, the vocal folds (also called “vocal cords”).
3. **Resonatory System**, also known as the “vocal tract”, includes: throat, nasal passages, sinuses, and mouth (lips, tongue, teeth, soft and hard palate)

www.templehealth.org



What is voice?

Your voice is basically a mix of many different muscles being used together to produce sounds. To take care of your voice better there are 3 important steps that you can take, besides the daily vocal care. These are similar to the ones when you work out. What are these 3 important steps?

- #1 Stretching
- #2 Warming up
- #3 Cooling down

These 3 steps are followed around the time you will use your voice professionally.

Let's stretch!

Exercises for system 1:

Relax, don't tense up, stretch your body, breath in and out using your stomach (diaphragm) – The diaphragm is the major muscle responsible for your breathing. It's dome shaped and it is located under your lungs. When we breath in, the muscle contracts allowing air to fill your lungs, and when you breath out, the muscle relaxes and allows the air in your lungs to leave them. Try to stretch this muscle as well. Take deep breaths; put your hands up stretching your ribcage, lungs, and diaphragm. Do some shoulder circles, massage your shoulders and release tension.

Now move upwards. Relax your neck muscles – head circles, bring your ear to your shoulder, lift your shoulders towards your ears, hold for three seconds and let go. Do the Yes, No, Maybe exercises – Nod your head yes slowly going all the way up and down and feeling the stretch. Shake your head no slowly as well from side to side, but don't force too much. Tilt your head maybe from one side to another stretching the sides of your neck.

Let's stretch!

Exercises for system 2:

Relax your phonatory system – massage your larynx with the tip of your fingers, jiggling it back and forth (throat from side to side), and circular movements from top to bottom with your thumb and index fingers (light pitching).

Exercises for system 3:

Relax your resonatory system – start with the soft palate – let's yawn. Then, stick your tongue out, from side to side, up and down. Put the tip of the tongue behind the bottom teeth and push the middle of your tongue out of your mouth. Massage your tongue with your fingers. Massage your lips with the tip of your tongue – with your lips closed, push your tongue around your lips in circular movements. You can also use your fingers stretching up your lips. Do the Fish face. Drop your jaw naturally using gravity. Yawn horizontally and then vertically. Use the heel of your hand and relax your jaw. Press the hinge between your jaw and your ear. Do the wild chewing – like a cow eating. People with TMD – be careful, you don't want to hurt yourself.

Let's warm up!

Now let's go back to system #1 and do some exercises to locate, warm up and work out your diaphragm. It is important to use your diaphragm when you need to project your voice.

Ex 1 – SSSS sound as though you had hiccups

Ex 2 – SHH sound as though you had hiccups

Feel your stomach going forward and hard. You're activating your diaphragm muscle. When you need to project your voice, use your diaphragm like this. It's not easy in the beginning, but as with any other physical activity you do, you get used to it.

Let's warm up!

Warming up system #2 and #3 is done together.

Ex 1 – Work on the lips with sound Brrr from low to high pitch. 5 times in a regular breath. Don't force.

Ex 2 – Work on the tongue with the sound Trrr from low to high pitch – 5 times in a regular breath. Don't force.

Ex 3 – Tongue sounds TEE – TAH, DEE – DAH, TEE – KAH (slowly and then fast)

Ex 4 – Work on the lips with the sound OO-EE (circular OO – smiley EE)

Ex 5 – Work on the lips with the sound OO-AH (circular OO – open mouth AH)

Ex 6 – OO-EE-OO-AH

Ex 7 – Lips and tongue – BEE-DAH (repeat these sounds for a minute. Start slow and go as fast as you can.

Ex 8 – MMM sound from low to high pitch (nasal cavity for projection)

Ex 9 – MA-MA-MA, MEH-MEH-MEH- MEE-MEE-MEE, MOH-MOH-MOH, MOO-MOO-MOO, MAH-MEH-MEE-MOH-MOO

Ex 10 – Voiced Z from low to high pitch. According to some specialists, it helps when your voice is raspy or hoarse.

Let's warm up!

Warming up system #2 and #3 is done together.

There's one shortcut that can be done and used in case of "emergencies". With your mouth open, make a light neutral pitched sound. You can make the schwa sound as if you're thinking. Now, place the palm of your hand over your mouth and while you make the schwa sound, feel the pressure of the air trying to escape from your mouth through your hand in your throat. Do that for about 1 minute.

Let's cool down!

Cooling down is the easiest part. For system #1, just stretch your body a little, the same way we do after working out. Systems #2 and #3 are done together.

Ex 1 – Work on the lips with sound Brrr from low to high pitch. 5 times in a regular breath. Don't force.

Ex 2 – Work on the tongue with the sound Trrr from low to high pitch – 5 times in a regular breath. Don't force.

Ex 3 – MMM sound from low to high pitch (nasal cavity for projection)

Ex 4 – MA-MA-MA, MEH-MEH-MEH- MEE-MEE-MEE, MOH-MOH-MOH, MOO-MOO-MOO, MAH-MEH-MEE-MOH-MOO

Ex 5 – Voiced Z from low to high pitch. According to some specialists, it helps when your voice is raspy or hoarse.

Healthy habits to take care of your voice



Stay hydrated:

- Drink plenty of water.
- If you drink caffeinated beverages or alcohol, balance your intake with plenty of water.
- Take vocal naps—rest your voice throughout the day.
- Use a humidifier in your home. This is especially important in winter or in dry climates. Thirty percent humidity is recommended.
- Avoid or limit use of medications that may dry out the vocal folds, including some common cold and allergy medications. If you have voice problems, ask your doctor which medications would be safest for you to use.

Healthy habits to take care of your voice

Maintain a healthy lifestyle and diet:

- Don't smoke, and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Avoid eating spicy foods. Spicy foods can cause stomach acid to move into the throat, causing heartburn or GERD.
- Include plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables in your diet. These foods contain vitamins A, E, and C. They also help keep the mucus membranes that line the throat healthy.
- Get enough rest. Physical fatigue has a negative effect on voice.
- Exercise regularly. This increases muscle tone and helps provide good posture and breathing, which are necessary for proper speaking.
- If you have persistent heartburn or GERD, talk to your doctor about diet changes or medications that can help reduce flare-ups.
- Avoid mouthwash or gargles that contain alcohol or irritating chemicals.

Healthy habits to take care of your voice



Use your voice wisely:

- Try not to overuse your voice. Avoid speaking when your voice is hoarse or tired.
- Rest your voice when you are sick.
- Avoid lozenges and sprays for the throat. They numb your throat, which can lead to its overuse and cause damage.
- Avoid screaming or whispering. This can stress your voice.
- Practice good breathing techniques. Support your voice with your diaphragm. Talking from the throat, without supporting breath, puts a great strain on the voice.
- Consider using a microphone when appropriate.
- Avoid talking in noisy places. Trying to talk above noise causes strain on the voice.
- Apples are good for your voice – they thin your saliva, which allows better articulation, contrary to chocolate, for instance.

For more information, visit the websites below:



<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice>

<https://www.uofmhealth.org/conditions-treatments/ear-nose-throat/maintaining-vocal-health>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/hl/living/voicecare/>

This is Rachel's English YouTube page

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw9lLsz5GZg&list=PLrqHrGoMJdTT3d6hNj7GkHFpHSArrhIR>

She has lots of tips on how to improve American pronunciation and the link above is a series of 6 videos on the path of the voice with many hints and tips on how to improve the quality of your speech in English, which is for many of us our second language.

Hope you found this workshop useful!