

Be a life-long learner

Vocally self-monitor throughout your life, making sure that your voice is responding to your needs effectively. As you get older, the voice changes, so whatever vocal skill level you have, make time to warm-up, exercise, practise and use your voice regularly to slow down the ageing process.

Manage your stress levels

Stress and anxiety can also be detrimental to healthy voice production. Try to seek out ways of improving your mental health by meditation or mindfulness techniques and if appropriate, seek professional help.



Take action if you feel your voice does not sound or feel right!

If you are experiencing a negative voice change that does not resolve after two weeks, consult your doctor and ask to be referred to a specialist voice clinic. A list of NHS voice clinics is available from the British Voice Association (BVA) website.



the british **voice** association

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www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk

The information contained in this leaflet is also available online in the Voice Care section of our website.

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WORLD VOICE DAY

APRIL 16th EVERY YEAR

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR VOICE



the british **voice** association





Choose to...

Exercise the whole body

Aerobic exercise, such as regularly swimming or running, enhances vocal stamina by increasing the speed the muscles become oxygenated. Activities that develop body alignment, muscle strength, dexterity and balance, such as Tai Chi and Yoga, also promote better mind/body connection and encourage greater vocal flexibility.

Warm-up and cool-down the voice

Warming up the body and voice using simple stretches and semi-occluded exercises (such as lip trills) and sirens increase the blood flow and muscle temperature, reducing the chance of vocal injury. Cooling down after extensive vocalising can be done using sirens, semi-occluded sounds or slow sustained pitches moving gradually down into the speaking range.

Develop a sound vocal technique

Speaking and singing are complex processes requiring breath, phonation and resonance to be in continuous balance. Developing a robust vocal technique will reduce the risk of vocal injury and fatigue. Seeking professional advice and guidance from a speech therapist, speech or singing coach is advisable.

Become mindful of vocal over-use

The vocal folds (cords) collide thousands of times a day, so if your vocal workload is high and/or your environment is noisy (i.e. social or sporting events), these collisions can become too much and cause damage. Make sure to pace your vocal use by taking short vocal “naps” (rest periods) and try to avoid shouting or speaking on the telephone for extended periods. Consult a speech therapist, speech or singing coach to learn how to project your voice sustainably.

Drink water regularly

The vocal folds need to be well lubricated due to the heat and friction caused by vibration. Drink about 2 litres of fluids a day (for an average, healthy person) and inhale steam, using plain water, as it increases the surface lubrication of the vocal folds.

Have a healthy, balanced diet

Eat small meals regularly, do not eat too late and be mindful of your intake of fried and spicy foods, chocolate, alcohol and citrus juices to reduce the risk of acid reflux. This is where gastric contents travel back up the digestive tract, eventually causing irritation to the larynx.

Quit smoking

Smoking irritates the vocal tract and compromises lung function. The vocal folds may also swell and gradually become inflamed, thereby altering the pitch of the voice and affecting the overall quality of the sound.



...make the right choice for your voice!

