

Top tips on caring for and projecting your voice

Our voices are a key part of our identity. We use them to communicate with our families, friends, work colleagues and wider society. They convey our thoughts and feelings, and enable us to make an impact, whether we are speaking, shouting, cheering or singing. It is important that we take care of our voices to avoid long-term problems, particularly if public speaking is part of our everyday life. Here are some top tips on how you can care for and project your voice.

General advice

- Aim for good hydration. Drinking 8-10 glasses of water a day is recommended as dehydration, caused by alcohol or caffeine in drinks, can lead to vocal cord irritation.
- If you are hoarse, don't whisper – speak in a soft voice to avoid strain.
- Try to 'warm up' your voice through gentle humming or speaking, before public speaking.
- Get enough sleep and exercise. Your voice reflects your general health and wellbeing.

Things to avoid

- Avoid overusing your voice for long periods, especially speaking over background noise.
- Heartburn/reflux can lead to vocal cord irritation, so avoid foods that cause indigestion and avoid eating late at night.
- Reduce/avoid smoking. Smoke irritates the vocal cords and causes them to swell.
- Avoid lots of dairy produce because this can cause thick secretions and throat clearing.



- Throat clearing leads to vocal cord irritation, so try to avoid this by coughing gently or sipping water.

Projecting your voice

- Aim for an open and relaxed stance with weight evenly distributed and balanced posture. Poor posture affects vocal delivery, so avoid locked knees, weight on one leg, raised shoulders and forward thrust of the head and neck.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes.
- Try to develop a relaxed form of delivery with controlled breathing.
- Articulate clearly and use a good range of intonation to improve your projection. Emphasis, energy and variety projects the voice better than a loud and strained voice.
- Don't try to speak too loudly as it can lead to a constricted and often harsh vocal pitch.

Pay attention to the environment

- Be aware of the acoustics of the space to determine the amount of reverberation (vibrations and/or echo from your voice).
- When speaking outdoors, if possible stand on a platform or near a wall.
- When possible, use amplification to avoid voice strain.

