



DO

- **DO use your voice quietly** but NOT a whisper – whispering can be damaging to because it puts the vocal cords under stress.
- **DO drink plenty of water** to keep your throat/mouth moist: water is the best option but pure fruit juices are also useful – it's best to avoid fizzy drinks that contain caffeine and/or too much sugar.
- **DO eat plenty of fruit** – fleshy, watery fruits such as peaches, pears and grapes are ideal.
- **DO watch your dietary habits.** Avoid an excess of milk and starchy foods, as these can thicken the mucous in the mouth and throat.
- **DO keep the air in rooms humid.** In centrally heated rooms, use a humidifier or keep a bowl of water on a table or on the windowsill above the radiator, or throw a wet towel on the radiator. Open a window to allow air to circulate. [CAUTION: DO NOT BLOCK AIR VENTS ON HEATING EQUIPMENT.]
- **DO be aware of your voice** as often as you can. Try to understand what makes it good for you and what makes it bad.
- **DO be aware of changes in your surrounding atmosphere** and how these affect your voice, e.g. hot, cold, smoky. Try to keep your larynx and neck at an even temperature by wrapping up against the cold.
- **DO inhale steam** – this will help relax and lubricate your vocal cords. You can do this over a bowl of hot water [BE CAREFUL NOT TO SCALD YOURSELF] or by lying for 20 minutes in a hot bath, so that the room fills with steam. Breathe regularly and evenly. An electrically powered steam facial sauna, of the type used to clean facial pores, can be useful too. Do this twice a day for 5 minutes each time – once in the morning and once before going to bed. [NOTE: JUST USE PURE STEAM. DON'T PUT ANY MENTHOL CRYSTALS OR OTHER OILS INTO THE WATER.]
- **DO cut down on talking** but do not stop speaking all together. Unless you have been advised by a health care professional to totally rest your voice for a period, it's necessary to keep the muscles involved in speaking fit and healthy by speaking regularly but quietly.
- **DO regular physical exercise** – this will especially help your breathing. IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT YOUR FITNESS LEVELS, ALWAYS CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN BEFORE BEGINNING A NEW EXERCISE SCHEDULE.
- **DO relax** and try not to worry about your voice. Put aside some time each day for relaxation – this will require a minimum of 20 minutes.
- **DO voice exercises** when you have plenty of time, not when you are rushed. Concentrate when you are doing them. There are no short cuts to improving your voice – it's one step at a time!





DON'T

- **DON'T shout** or try to raise your voice or force it in any way. No singing while the voice is poor.
- **DON'T continue speaking for long periods if you have laryngitis or a sore throat.** You'll need to rest your voice and give it time to recover.
- **DON'T drink too much coffee, strong tea or soft drinks with high caffeine content** – the caffeine has a drying effect.
- **DON'T drink too much alcohol**, especially spirits – the alcohol has a similar drying effect to caffeine and causes irritation.
- **DON'T keep coughing or clearing your throat.** If throat clearing has become a habit you need to (1) become aware of when you are tempted to clear your throat, then (2) try taking a sip of water, (3) if this doesn't work then try a 'firm swallow', (4) if this still hasn't worked then carry out a 'dry' cough.
- **DON'T smoke.** Smoking is bad for your health and it can severely impair your voice.
- **DON'T suck 'acid drops' or harsh sweets** – if you are thirsty, drink instead.
- **DON'T drink liquids when they are too hot** – let them cool a little. If you can manage it, drinking the occasional ice-cold drink can be helpful...but not too many.
- **DON'T try to talk above background noise.** Avoid noisy places as far as possible. If your lifestyle is such that you cannot avoid noisy places, then you need to develop strategies for dealing with this. For example, instead of shouting across a room to attract someone's attention, go over to them before you speak; at home, don't shout upstairs for people, go upstairs and talk to them there.
- **DON'T regularly suck lozenges containing menthol or eucalyptus oil** if you have a sore throat – these have a drying effect. If you are able, take a spoonful of runny honey instead. If your sore throat is painful and you do need to suck a medicated lozenge or use a proprietary spray, remember that they typically have an anesthetic effect to reduce the pain. You will, therefore need to rest your voice for about an hour after use so that you do not unduly irritate your vocal cords. IF THE SYMPTOMS OF A SORE THROAT DO NOT GO AWAY AFTER A TWO-WEEK PERIOD YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN.
- **DON'T gargle** (unless it's to 'wash' the throat after using an inhaler, or to remove chlorine after swimming, or similar). If you are prone to throat infections, then ensure that you clean your teeth regularly and use a proprietary mouth wash.
- **DON'T** let tensions build up. Follow a proper relaxation and exercise program. Share your concerns by talking to others.

