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## ***Basic Strategies for Music Teachers, Singers & Professional Speakers***

### ***Reduce your vocal fold impact in speech and singing.***

- Consider use of an amplifier, or rearranging the space to improve acoustics.
- “Up” the non-verbals: wave, clap hands, smile, mouth “hi” and “bye”, use non-verbal strategies to call attention.
- Re-analyze your schedule & vocal demands.
- Limit how much you sing/ talk OVER your others. Let someone else lead, or use recordings.
- Whenever possible, reduce ambient noise. (Turn down the TV! Don’t talk in the car. Get someone to fix that loud radiator in your room.)
- Incorporate quiet (for you) activities into daily activities. Let students lead; let student teachers, assistants, or electronics to do some of your voice use for you.
- Reduce your daily talking.
- Limit sounds, comments, speech that are really not worth the effort or time
- Shorten conversations, especially on the phone.

### ***Reduce non-speech/singing vocal fold impact. (also see back side)***

- Reduce coughing, throat-clearing, grunting (while exercising?), screaming, noise-making

### ***Pay attention to your vocal training, conditioning, and technique.***

- Begin vocal exercises 2-3 weeks before school starts and continue doing them 1-2 times/day throughout the year.
- Warm up your voice before beginning the day. Even a few minutes of simple humming throughout your pitch range, and concentrating on your speaking pitch range, can set you up to use your voice more efficiently throughout the day.
- Use the “hum” variations to “cool down” after long conversation, or to “re-set” your voice between appointments, meetings, etc in your day.
- Use optimal airflow and pitch range. Try not to push or strain to speak; muscle won’t make your voice better.
- Videotape yourself to evaluate your speaking style and voice use.

## ***Strategies for reducing cough and throat clear***

- Try to eliminate any throat-clearing and coughing. Avoid coughing and throat-clearing that doesn't accomplish a purpose, and just "scratches the mosquito bite."
- Sip liquids all day long. Hot, cold, carbonated, or flavored may be more "stimulative," and help reduce the sensation of the need to throat clear.
- Insist on getting adequate bathroom breaks so that you can hydrate adequately.
- Suck on hard candies; chew gum. Be wary of medicated cough drops, or the menthol/eucalyptus combination that tends to be drying and irritating (and addictive).
- Request assistance with reducing environmental irritants.

## ***Know the warning signs.***

### **Warning Signs of Laryngeal Irritation**

\* Throat clearing \* Chronic cough \* Excessive phlegm \* Globus (sensation of presence in throat) \* Dry throat \* Burning or tickle sensation \* Pain

### **Warning Signs of Laryngeal Irritation: Singing Symptoms**

\* Secretion noise \* Impaired onset \* Increased effort \* Decreased stamina \* Changes in technique

### **Warning Signs of Vocal Fold Swelling**

\* Delayed onset \* Impaired high-soft singing \* Breathy sound (eventually rough and strained) \* "Veil over the voice" \* "Singing through cheesecloth or cobwebs" \* Increased effort \* Fatigue, decreased stamina \* Changes in technique

### **Warning Signs that Something is Wrong**

\* Pain (chronic vs. associated with voice use) \* Effort \* Fatigue \* Reduced Stamina

### **Warning Signs that Something is Wrong: Singing Symptoms**

\* Often none (problem is noted in speech) \* Pressed/effortful/strained \* Impaired high/low/passaggio \* Pitch breaks (cracking or fluttering) \* Buzzy/noisy/rough \* Instability of tone

***Call us at the Lions Voice Clinic if you need help!***