

Watch Your Other Fluids

Tea, coffee, coke and other caffeinated beverages tend to dehydrate the body by increasing urine production, known as the 'diuretic effect'.

The singer needs to compensate for caffeine consumption. Marcus Coneys, MD, says: "One rule of thumb is that 10 fl oz of coffee needs 10 fl oz of water to replace this extra loss from diuresis".

Coneys warns that the extra water needed to compensate for caffeinated drinks is a problem with vocal performance: "A singer can't keep leaving the stage to urinate, can they? So best avoid caffeinated beverages before and during performances".

You'll know if you are drinking the right amount of water if you "pee pale" – though this is not a perfect measurement as multivitamins can color the urine and stress can cause urine to be excessively pale.

Don't worry about the exact amount of water to drink—worry itself is not good for one's health. Keep to six to eight glasses a day, but adjust up to take account of performance movement and caffeine intake.

Hot, Cold, or Room Temperature?

There is no magic number in terms of the amount, but is there a magic temperature?

The vocal folds do not need to have the water at a certain temperature to be lubricated. However, vocal folds are not the only part of your body responsible for your sound.

The muscles and mucus in one's nose, mouth and throat (the pharynx) have a great deal to do with determining the singer's sound quality.

Dr. Coneys explains: "Muscle function can be inhibited by very cold fluids while very hot fluids may cause the mucous membranes lining the pharynx to swell slightly and the muscles to relax too much".

These effects may be negligible for some vocalists but it's why the experts say that room temperature is best.

Your H₂O Checklist

- Drink six to eight cups a day (but this is not a "magic number")
- Adjust the amount of water you consume to take into account sweating and caffeine
- Have enough so that you 'pee pale'
- Room temperature is better than hot or cold
- Sip rather than glug
- Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink

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Melissa Cross is considered worldwide to be an expert on rock vocal technique. Her well-known clientele attest to the fact that the traditional basics of vocal technique can be applied to even the most unorthodox of musical genres. Her unique method of vocal training has culminated in the critically acclaimed release of two vocal instructional DVDs: *The Zen of Screaming* and *The Zen of Screaming 2*, available at www.MelissaCross.com.



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The more you use up water, the more you have to ingest to maintain a good balance.



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