



## Functional & Holistic Speech

Vocal Hygiene is a daily program of good habits that helps you maintain healthy vocal folds and vocal function. The following are some tips for keeping a healthy voice!

1. Hydration: Stay hydrated! The minimum recommendation is six 8-oz glasses of water daily.
2. Limit caffeine: This includes coffee, energy drinks and sodas.
3. Improve breath support by increasing your diaphragmatic breathing. Engage the diaphragm vs strain on the throat, neck, and voice.
4. Vocal rest: for every 2-3 hours of talking, allow yourself 10 minutes of complete vocal rest (no talking, singing, humming, etc.).
5. Warm up your voice before prolonged use.
6. Amplification: Use amplification or alternative methods for gaining attention.

Avoid:

1. Avoid exposure to toxins and irritants.
  - a. Cigarettes, second-hand smoke, some medications
2. Avoid clearing your throat too often. This can cause more trauma to the vocal folds.
3. Avoid vocal overuse: yelling, screaming, and prolonged vocal amplification (speaking loudly).
4. Avoid consistent use of high pitch or whispering which could lead to increased strain.

Signs of a Voice Problem: You should make an appointment to see an ENT/otolaryngologist if you experience any of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks (not accompanying a cold):

- Sore throat or pain during or after voice use
- Hoarse, scratchy, rough voice
- Increased effort when producing voice.
- Decreased loudness or pitch range.
- Breathiness, weakness, or vocal fatigue
- Shakey, strained voice or voice cutting off unexpectedly.
- A feeling of a “lump” in one’s throat
- Shortness of breath
- Excessive phlegm and/or the need to throat clear or cough.
- Difficulty swallowing
- Feeling a frequent urge to cough or throat clear.

Instead of...	Try this...
Competing with background noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Move to a quieter area.</li><li>- Turn down the volume when possible.</li><li>- Use an earplug to self-monitor loudness</li></ul>
Increasing loudness to project voice or get attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use amplification.</li><li>- Clap your hands, use a whistle, bell, or sign to gain attention.</li><li>- Assign someone to help you gain the group’s attention.</li><li>- Bring the group into a smaller area to avoid yelling over competing noise</li></ul>
Yelling, cheering, screaming, at sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Stomp feet.</li><li>- Clap hands.</li><li>- Use a noise maker.</li></ul>
Grunting when lifting weights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exhale slowly.</li><li>- Hiss while exhaling</li></ul>

