Vocal Health and Fatigue Explained:
Voice Care Tips for Tired Voices

RIT/NTID Communication Studies and Services
Speech-Language Pathology
Mute - Please check that your sound is muted.

Video - You may leave your video on! We love to see your faces. If your video freezes or is slow, turn off your video.

Chat - We encourage questions and comments. Please use the chat function to type in your questions or comments. We will read them to the group and answer.
NTID Communication Studies and Services Department

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CSS Department
Speech-Language Pathologists
Agenda

- What is an SLP?
- What is your voice & how does it work
- Vocal Fatigue - Why is my voice tired?
- Vocal Trauma
- DOs and DON’Ts
- How to take care of your voice
What is a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)?

Where can we work?:
- Schools, Hospitals, Agencies

What areas can we target?:
- Language
- Articulation
- Voice Quality
- Stuttering
- Social Language
- Cognitive Support
- Feeding Therapies
- Augmented & Alternative Comm
- And more...

What is our role on campus?:
- Provide individualized 1:1 instruction
- Work primarily with D/HH students
- Accessible - ASL & English
- Student-centered & Fun
- Course offerings from CSS Department

We are located in LBJ 3225
Functions of the VOICE

- **Power of breath** - involves the lungs, ribs, diaphragm, and abdominal muscles
- **Source of sound** - the onset of voice by movement of the vocal cords in the larynx
- **Filter** - resonance or changes in the sound as it moves through the vocal tract
The Larynx

Interactive Model of the Larynx

Videostroboscopy - vocal folds in action
Aren’t voice and speech the same?

**Voice** - resonance, prosody/intonation, pitch, and breath support

**Vs.**

**Speech Production** - articulation through movement of the jaw, lips, tongue, combined with voice
Why is my voice so tired?

The ‘New Normal’

**attenuation** = measure of the energy loss of sound or loss of signal strength measured in decibels (dB)

**Masks** = 5 to 21 dB attenuation

The most attenuation occurs with N95, cloth masks, & masks with **plastic transparent windows**.

**Mask + Shield** = 20 to 29 dB attenuation
## Speaking Clearly Using a Mask

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By: [https://thevoicescience.com/speak-clearly-in-a-mask/](https://thevoicescience.com/speak-clearly-in-a-mask/)
Using our voices more than ever before!
-- Virtual classrooms, meetings, social gatherings, doctor visits

Virtual platforms are counterintuitive to communication!
-- Communication flow is interrupted -- awkward pauses -- unclear turn-taking
-- talking louder, longer, and more frequently

Listener may say they can’t hear you!
-- Natural to try to increase volume when you really need to improve the articulation, clarity or connection.
What is phonotrauma?

- Loud or extensive talking
- Talking in noisy situations
- Prolonged whispering
- Yelling, screaming
- Excessive throat clearing
- Excessive coughing

Phonotrauma:
voice use patterns that cause damage to the vocal folds
Professions at higher risk for phonotrauma

- Teachers / Professors
- Voice Interpreters
- Machinists - talking while around loud machinery
- Presenters / Politicians / Public Speakers
- Salespeople
- Broadcasters
- Businesspeople
- Lawyers
- Health professionals
- Professional voice users (Actors & Singers)

*Increased risk if communicating using a mask or through virtual platform regularly*
General Vocal Hygiene Recommendations

1. Stay Hydrated! Track with an app like Plant Nanny

2. Compensate for Dehydrating Agents

3. Reduce high intensity voice use -- through a mask / barrier / use amplification / use headphones

4. Limit smoke inhalation

5. Manage allergen exposure

6. Manage reflux (see you doctor if you suspect you have reflux)
   a. Reflux sends stomach acids up the esophagus and into the larynx.
   b. This can cause irritation and swelling of the vocal folds.
7. Stay Rested

**DO's**

- Beat
- Drained
- Wiped out
- Fried

"Just gimme like...17 more hours."

BARK-BOX

Beauty rest takes time BOL

@ferntheredbone
Vocal Warm Ups & Exercises

- **Humm ‘mmmmm’**
  - sustained ‘m’
  - glides from low to high & high to low pitch

- **Lip trill**
  - blowing only
  - with voice glides from low to high and high to low pitch

- **Straw Phonation**

- **Cup bubbles with straw**
- Headphones with a built-in microphone
- Use a quiet space to avoid the Lombard Effect (getting louder in loud spaces)
- Device ergonomics - keep device at eye level, maintain good posture
- Slow your rate of speech to improve understanding
- Untreated, chronic vocal fatigue may cause polyps, nodules, cysts, hemorrhage, and chronic laryngitis!
Vocal Rest

- Take frequent “voice naps”
- Resting your voice helps heal phonotrauma
- Whispering is NOT vocal rest
- Avoid unnecessary talking if you are sick

On Vocal rest until further notice
**Throat Clearing Coughing**

**NO**

- Distract yourself - think of something else
- Take a sip of water
- Try a firm, dry swallow
- Pursed lip breathing

**YES**
The Dangers of Whispering

When you whisper, you squeeze your vocal cords more tightly to produce the whisper.

This squeezing leads to more phonotrauma.

Don’t do it!!

DONT’s
Thank you for joining us!

We hope you learned more about why your voice is tired and how to help it.

Questions?
Resources

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asDg7T-WT-0