

Enabling our voices:

- is your posture open and are you holding unwanted tension?
- warm up the voice - do a siren or two, going up and down the range. Don't push too much air. This gives the folds a little 'work out' under no pressure and sets you up for the day
- don't hold back the voice, because you are holding more tension in the throat, muscles tighten and vocal folds can't function properly due a 'lack of fuel', ie air
- NEVER whisper - a 'tornado' of air is rushing past the vocal folds, so the throat will only dehydrate and also strain
- don't get into the habit of clearing the throat because you are 'bashing' the folds together. If it's a phlegm issue, check whether allergies or alcohol is aggravating/creating this(see tips below)

'Taylor Made' tips to promote vocal health:

- hydration; most of us don't drink enough water. Just over two litres over the course of a day is recommended. A hydrated voice = a happy voice! It takes up to four hours for the water you have drunk to reach the voice, so last minute sips won't help!
- effects of smoking, alcohol and coffee; if you want to know more, just get in touch.

Some treatments/tips to ease a sore throat:

- drink hot water, honey and ginger(both natural ant-septics and tasty!) Stay off lemon juice as it is acidic and will just make your sore throat worse. Pineapple is also great for the throat(as long as you don't suffer from reflux)as it contains anti-inflammatory properties, called Bromelin
- steam(not the alcoholic variety!). This helps the throat stay moist, unblocks the nose if you have a cold and can be very soothing to irritated vocal folds
- throat sweets; avoid ANY celebrity throat sweets(they are doing it for the money!) especially Vocal Zones because they are a vocal irritant
- avoid strong throat sprays, because these can mask the pain and you could end up doing more damage than good

Allergies

- find out what you can tolerate. There is no right or wrong(dairy may/may not affect you)
- sticky mucus from allergies makes you want to clear your throat...that's more violent and that in turn stimulates more mucus. Try swallowing instead. (See 'steam' above)
- hayfever wreaks havoc with the vocal folds. Anti histamine can help, however it dries out everything, including the throat, so a tip would be to take it the night before(Loratadine is non drowsy). Boots changes the recipe every year, supposedly to deal with different hay fevers.

For some more helpful advice on vocal health, check out:

www.voicescienceworks.org

Personal observations:

1 Tension - which tension is good and which should we let go?

2 Effort and power - the 'fuel' for the voice

3 Volume - how the voice can travel effortlessly