

TINA'S VOCAL STUDIO

Guide to Voice Care



Hello Singer,

Singing is a physical activity and there's more to just resting and drinking water that will help keep your voice in shape. If you ever feel like your throat is hurting, sounding scratchy, losing sound, or experiencing fatigue, here are some things that you can do to prevent that.

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WHEN IS YOUR VOICE UNHEALTHY?

- When your voice becomes hoarse and scratchy
- Unable to sing higher notes when you could before
- Throat feels strained and achy
- Sound is not coming out when you talk or sing
- Needing to clear the throat too often

WAYS TO VOCAL CARE

1. **Water:** Drinking plenty of water throughout the day will hydrate your muscles especially if you live in drier areas or if you have been using your voice all day. When you are using your voice, the mucus lining around your vocal cords will get dry because a lot of air has been passing through to make sound. In order for your muscles to stay moisturized, you need to drink water. Make a reminder so that you can visually see how much more water you need for the rest of the day. Put it on your calendar to remind yourself. Sometimes we are so busy that we just simply forget!

2. **Humidifier or Steam:** Making sure your environment has enough humidity is important to keep your throat from getting dry. When it gets too dry, that's when the rubbing of the vocal folds will cause damage. Another way to keep your vocal muscles hydrated is by steaming warm air directly to your mouth. The droplets will seep into the muscles faster. You can purchase a steam inhaler online if you want and it comes with purified water that you put into the inhaler. Or you can heat up some water, put it in a bowl, tilt your head over the bowl, and cover your head with a towel keeping in the steam/vapors.

3. **Massage Neck and Shoulders:** If you are feeling strain in your throat, chances are you are extremely tense in the neck and shoulder area. This ties into your stress level and workload from life responsibilities. Take the time to massage your muscles. It eases pain. It reduces anxiety. It boosts immunity. It increases blood flow circulation, which we know is good for muscle function. Book an appointment with a massage therapist or purchase one of those machines that you can do on your own at your convenience.

4. **Breathwork and Mindset:** Try out some breathing exercises to calm the mind and body. This will help you to develop better breath support when you use your voice. When you are in the right mind space, you will be more open and free when practicing or performing. We tend to exert our bodies when we get frustrated or get nervous. If we can get our mind to think clearly, it will enhance our performance without the need to "push." That is why breathing exercises help. It reduces anxiety, nerves, and negative thoughts. Pushing too much air out when you go to sing, will dry out your vocal cords. It will actually make you more tired due to the exertion you are putting on your body. By repeating breathing exercises daily, you can sing for a longer period of time and produce a cleaner sound when you sing.

Examples:

Inhale for 4 counts and then exhale on hiss for 4 counts

Inhale for 4 counts, hold your breath for 4 counts, exhale on hiss for 10 counts

Inhale for 10 counts, hold your breath for 10 counts, exhale on hiss for 10 counts

Inhale for 4 counts, hum a scale within 8 counts

5. **SOVT Exercises (Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract):** Use these exercises as a warmup and a cool down when you sing. What it does is bring your vocal cords to stasis and equilibrium by bouncing energy back to your vocal cords, meeting up with the air pressure coming from underneath your folds, which then allows your cords to vibrate with more ease without any effort from the throat or neck muscles. Great for when you are having a hard time making sound, lost your voice, or have been singing high-intensity songs all day.

Examples:

Lip Trills

Tongue Rolls

Straw Exercises

Voiced Fricatives

6. **Sleep and Rest:** This is so important for singers or for anyone who is participating in a physical activity that requires your muscles. When you go to sleep, you are allowing your body to recuperate and heal. Your muscles need time to recover. If you wake up the next day with not enough hours of sleep, your body will feel tired. When you feel tired, you will push for your body to put in more effort. When you push, you start tensing up. When you tense up you start to constrict your muscles and then it just makes everything worse. When you sing, you need to be relaxed and free. Sleeping will not only heal your muscles, but it will also rejuvenate your brain function which is needed for optimum performance. If your mind is not well, it will greatly affect how you sing. Make sure to rest your voice throughout the day. Basically, give it naps so that it won't dry out so quickly. Talking or singing requires air to go through the vocal cords and if too much air is passing through, that is when you feel like you need to clear your throat or cough.

Make sure you are taking care of your voice by practicing daily healthy habits, such as eating healthy foods, exercising regularly, staying hydrated, and practicing more often to build muscle strength. The way you live your life will show in your voice. Reduce your stress level and make time for yourself. Your entire well-being needs to be in check in order for your voice to work at peak level.

Practice with intention and have a strategy for better results:

Stretch

Breathe

Warm Up

Practice a song

Cool Down

Continue reading for more information on water, inhalers, and teas.

Steam Inhalers

Steam Inhalers

Steam Inhalers can help with nasal congestion, colds, sinus infections, allergies, throat irritation, breathing issues, postnasal drip, dry throat, and coughs. It cleans impurities from the lungs. It rehydrates the nasal passage. It can also help you sleep. Overall, it helps with respiratory function and provides hydration, great for singers who want to improve breathing and sing without dryness.

Inhalers come in various sizes and lightweight. You can also control the temperature of the steam if you need it to be warmer.

Make sure you read the instructions for each machine before using. Use with caution and seek medical attention if you get a burn injury.

Which brands should you buy?

MyPurMist



Vicks



MABIS



All devices are different so make sure you find the right one for you!

Steam Inhaler Use



Make steaming part of your vocal care routine. This is to prevent future injuries, fatigue, or sickness. Since the water provided is purified, the clean water is very beneficial to your muscles.

Steam for about 20 minutes before singing and after singing. Breathe in through the nose and through the mouth. Alternate every 5 minutes.



Rest your voice for about 10-15 minutes after steaming. Do not vocalize right away. After you rest, start with gentle vocal warmups like humming, slides, lip trills, and gradually go into scales and longer patterns.

Keep the inhaler clean and don't let water sit in the equipment for weeks or mold will grow. Not good.

20 minutes

Massage

Massage to Release Tension

Make sure to massage your neck and shoulders to release tension around the throat. If you find that you are stressed or anxious often, take the time to relax your muscles because it does affect your singing.

Use a handheld massager

This is great for when you want to do it on your own and do it whenever you want, instead of needing to schedule an appointment with a masseuse.



Massage around tight areas such as the back of your neck, top of shoulders, and upper back

5 minutes

10 minutes

Routine

Voice Care Routine Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Stretch 10-20 minutes	Stretch 10-20 minutes	Stretch 10-20 minutes	Stretch 10-20 minutes	Stretch 10-20 minutes
Steam 20 minutes	Steam 20 minutes	Steam 20 minutes	Steam 20 minutes	Steam 20 minutes
Wait 15 minutes after steaming Vocal Warm Ups	Massage 5-10 minutes	Wait 15 minutes after steaming Vocal Warm Ups	Massage 5-10 minutes	Wait 15 minutes after steaming Vocal Warm Ups
Practice Singing	Rest	Practice Singing	Rest	Practice Singing
Cool Down 10 minutes		Cool Down 10 minutes		Cool Down 10 minutes
Massage 5-10 minutes		Massage 5-10 minutes		Massage 5-10 minutes
Steam 20 minutes		Steam 20 minutes		Steam 20 minutes

Supplies:

- Steam Inhaler
- Humidifier
- Massager

Saturday	Sunday
Rest or Practice	Rest or Practice

Hydration

Drink Water

How much water should you drink?

For women: About 11.5 cups (2.7 liters) of fluids

For men: About 15.5 cups (3.7 liters) of fluids

To make it easier, drink at least 8 glasses of water to replenish your water supply, which gets lost through breathing, perspiration, urine, and other activities.

Remember that you might need to modify the amount of water when needed. If you exercise more or have a certain health situation that might require more water, then you will increase your intake.

Water is not the only option of getting hydrated. Try fruits and vegetables. Even juices and herbal teas are composed of water.

How to know if you had enough water?

- Your urine is colorless or less yellow
- You don't feel dry or scratchy in the throat
- No headaches



Daily Water Intake

# of Glass	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							

Feeling Sick

When You Are Sick

Best thing to do when you are sick is sleep and rest. Your body needs time to heal.

Stay in bed and do minimal physical activity to let your body recover. During this time your body is trying to fight off bacteria and viruses. The less work you do, the more your body can efficiently work to get rid of the sickness.

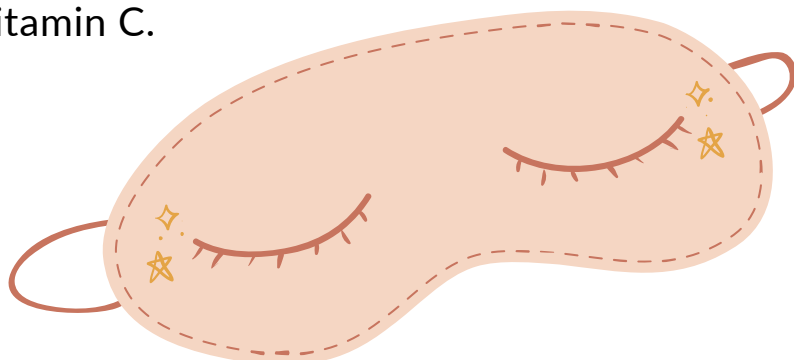
Drink lots of water when you are sick. It will thin out any excess mucus you have in your throat, and it will detox your body.

If you have nasal congestion due to sickness, rinse out your nose with a device that can pour water with pure saline salt concentrate through one nostril and out the other. Check out [Navage Nasal Care](#) or use a [Neti Pot](#).

If you are dealing with bronchitis or other breathing problems, use the steam inhaler. It helps with colds, sinus infections, respiratory issues, and allergies.

Best tea for sickness is Ginger Tea.

Eat healthy foods, and get some Vitamin C.





Navage Nasal Care

Neti Pot



Tea Options

Tea Options

Ginger Tea: This tea has a combination of ginger root and plain water. Helps to reduce nausea, inflammation, lowers stress levels by decreasing blood pressure, acts as a pain relief to sore muscles, and supports the immune system due to its antioxidant properties. You can add honey or lemon for some flavor if the ginger alone is too strong.

Side Effect: This tea doesn't usually cause problems, but too much consumption of it can lead to an upset stomach or heartburn.

Licorice Root Tea: Helps with sore throats, treat throat irritations, acid reflux, indigestion, detoxes the body, eases cramps, eliminate respiratory infections, reduce inflammation, and protects skin.

Side Effect: too much can lead to high blood pressure and stomach distress. Excessive amounts can be bad, so be careful. No more than 3 cups of this tea a day until you feel better.

Create Singer's Tea

Ingredients: Lemon, Ginger, Honey, Cinnamon

Throat Coat Tea: This brand of tea can be bought in stores. It reduces stress, boosts immune system, relieves soreness, pain, swelling, has anti-inflammatory properties, cleanses the respiratory system, increases brain function, and protects the heart. The wild licorice ingredient helps to coat the throat if you feel scratchy or itchy. The slippery elm relieves irritation.

Chamomile Tea: Sleep is important for the vocal cords and throat muscles to heal and recover. If you can't sleep, drink this tea before bedtime to help you.

*Make sure you can drink these tea options. If you have a certain health condition, and you are unsure if you should drink some of the teas, please consult your doctor first.

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Vocal Training

How Vocal Training Helps

- ▶ Vocal training builds muscle mass and endurance, allowing you to sing at peak level without getting fatigued too quickly.
- ▶ By exercising the voice regularly, you are making sure the throat muscles that control the vocal folds become strong and resilient to injury or fatigue.
- ▶ Understanding which vocal exercises to do can help you strengthen your skills and expand your range, hitting higher notes, belting for longer, perform songs back-to-back without straining your throat.
- ▶ Instead of hurting yourself in an attempt to sing challenging songs, develop better practice habits that will steadily improve your technique so that you can sing anything you want however you want it.

Disclaimer

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This guide is for educational and informational purposes only.

The information provided in the guide is for educational and informational purposes only as a self-help tool for your own use. Tina's Vocal Studio instructors and staff are not responsible for any injuries or damages that might occur. You are using the guide at your own risk and we encourage you to do it at a pace that is comfortable for you. If anything is hurting, please stop right away.

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No Guarantees

As a teacher and coach, I am here to support and assist you in reaching your goals, but your success depends primarily on your own effort, motivation, and commitment. I cannot predict the results of your goal and I cannot determine a time frame on when you will reach your goals. Each individual's results depend on their own unique traits, background, work ethic, and other factors that might be taken into account when using this guide. By taking this guide you agree that there are no guarantees on specific outcomes or results you can expect from using the information in this guide.

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As with many activities involving the body and muscles, there are individual risks involved that might arise when executing specific exercises, in which my studio and I cannot foresee. You agree that by using this guide, you are doing so at your own risk and understand the consequences that might happen if used improperly with no liability on my part, recognizing that there is a rare chance for injury, illness, or damage that could result and you agree to assume all risks.

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