



Vocal hygiene measures

The 10 golden tips for your voice:

1. **Avoid caffeinated drinks:** Try to limit or avoid the intake of coffee, cola, tea. It's recommended to drink plenty of water.
2. **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water! Inhalation of steam is recommended. Heat a pot of water on the stove until it boils. Do not add anything to the water. Put the water in a bowl and lean over the bowl to inhale the steam. Put a towel over your head in order to trap the steam and direct it to your face. Repeat this 3-4 times a day.
3. **Rest and (erroneous) sleeping patterns:** General fatigue due to lack of rest or due to insufficient sleep affects the voice. Sufficient sleep is therefore important. When tired, the voice sounds less powerful, slightly higher and more unstable. Sufficient (voice) rest is best here.
4. **Infections of the upper respiratory tract:** Avoid speaking with a hoarse voice during an infection. Try to apply as much voice rest as possible.
5. **Reflux:** If you suffer from reflux, it is important to limit fatty and spicy foods, carbonated beverages, alcohol, and smoking as much as possible.
6. **Smoking and alcohol:** Smoking causes inflammation and swelling of the mucous membrane of the larynx and respiratory tract. Smoking cessation is absolutely recommended. Also, pay attention to the use of alcohol, as alcohol can lead to dehydration of the mucous membranes of the vocal folds as well as to voice abuse.
7. **Vocal behavior:** Speaking at a calm voice volume is desirable. Try not to force yourself when speaking. You can use voice pauses and limit the speaking time on the phone. Loud shouting, screaming, but also whispering is not recommended. Draw attention with a whistle, a bell, ...
8. **Vocal behavior:** Throat clearing, coughing, ... should also be avoided. Instead of clearing the throat, try to swallow, take a sip of water, gently cough, hum or sigh.
9. **Avoid speaking in a noisy environment.**
10. **Avoid speaking in a very dry environment.** If the air is too dry, the mucous membranes of the larynx are irritated much faster.

De Bodt et al., Handboek stemstoornissen, 2015.

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