

Voice tips

Always **warm up** before singing. And warm down afterwards, especially if you have been using your voice for a long time (speaking or singing).

Drink Water. Drink enough water every day, about 8 medium glasses. (see ‘Keeping the voice fit & healthy’ to find out why – www.martinandshan.net) N.B. there are some specific medical conditions where this advice should not be followed. Consult your doctor if you are concerned.

Drink water. If you can, keep a full glass of room temperature water in a place you go to fairly frequently. When you drink it, fill it up again immediately & then walk away. Get into the habit of drinking a full glass first thing every morning. Use a bit hot water from the kettle to warm it up.

Drink water. You need to drink water 3-4 hours before a performance for it to reach your voice box.

Drink water. When you drink during a performance, just use a sip to wet the outside of your lips & around the inside of your mouth, under your tongue, around your teeth.

Don’t catch colds. Cold viruses are transported in airborne droplets, but the most common way to get infected is to pick them up on your hands, and then later on put your hand in your mouth or rub your eyes. So, you need to wash your hands effectively & fairly frequently, and do not put them near your face.

Wear a scarf round your neck when it is cold.

Avoid making your voice work hard on the day of a performance.

Learn how to make your voice carry without forcing it.

Identify areas of weakness in your voice (we all have them, but they are different for each of us). Work on that area to improve, e.g. breath control, crossing the bridge from chest to head voice.

Avoid breathing in chemicals/pollutants. If you use perfume or sprays for your hair/body, put the spray on while you are breathing out in one room, then move to a different room before you breathe in. If you use sprays for cleaning, put the liquid on a cloth held close to the nozzle & then use that to wipe. Or use microfibre cloths – they are cheaper & better for the environment.

Put a copy of ‘**Keeping your voice fit & healthy**’ in your song folder, and read it every now & then.

Never sing if it hurts to swallow.

Go & see your doctor if you have a problem with your voice that lasts longer than **2 weeks**.

These notes were developed for participants at the annual Baring Gould Song School, which takes place in Devon, U.K. each October half term, but I would be delighted if other singers found them helpful. For more details about the Song School, please contact www.wrenmusic.co.uk

For this information, and other freely downloadable handouts on aspects of voice & singing, go to www.martinandshan.net