

VOCAL TUNE UP: SELF-CARE FOR YOUNG SINGERS

with Dr. Tanya Kruse

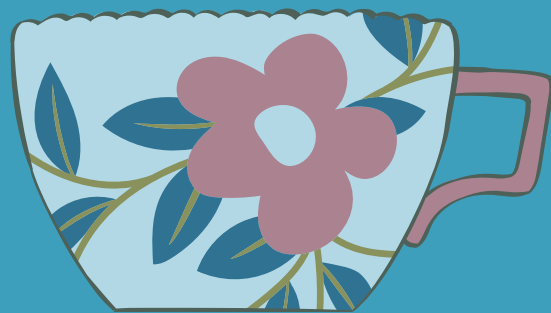
Voice Self - Care

- Hydrate – half of your body weight in ounces is recommended (if you weigh 100 pounds, drink 50 ounces of water a day), use a humidifier for external hydration
- Avoid vocal fold irritation – smoking and secondhand smoke, reflux, speaking through laryngitis, inhaling chemicals
- Avoid vocal fold dryness – caffeine, alcohol, antihistamines, and decongestants will be dehydrating
- Speaking for long periods in the car with the heat or AC on can be dehydrating and fatiguing

- Avoid voice overuse – shouting (yelling at sporting events, cheerleading), talking over ambient noise (cafeteria, car), speaking too loudly, speaking or singing in an inappropriate pitch range, singing and speaking too much (on the phone included), laughing harshly/loudly
- Build in rest periods for your voice
- Avoid coughing, throat clearing, bearing down (heavy weight lifting)
- Support your singing and speaking with good breath flow and avoid vocal fry
- Warm up and cool down every day (straw work can be helpful), remembering to pace yourself

Singer Physical Self - Care

- Get enough sleep
- Eat well
- Get regular exercise
- Avoid excess stress
- Take care of your mental health
- Find time for fun
- Remember that general health contributes significantly to vocal health



Mental and Physical Warm-ups



Just as you would not run a marathon without stretching, you should not begin singing without warming up. You can cause swelling and damage to the vocal folds if you do not warm up consistently.

Prepare to practice with 3 reminders:

- Let go of any extra-musical thoughts. Leave tensions and distractions behind. You can pick them up again when you're done practicing. Put your phone away and silence notifications.
- Focus on your body as an instrument. Breathe deeply. Release your forehead, neck, shoulders, arms, ribs, abdomen, hip joints, and knees. Become aware of places where you are harboring tension. Try to identify the source and then let it go. Use the "lion and mouse" to wake up the facial muscles.
- Do some straw work (or other semi-occluded exercise) to get the voice working without pressure or singing.

Voice Warm-ups

- Start in the middle of your range with short, easy exercises, paying attention on breath flow and release of tensions that might creep in as you start to sing. Do not expect to sound your best, remember that you are simply warming up.
- Ask yourself frequently whether you are perpetuating good habits.
- Tailor your vocal warm-ups to the pieces that you plan to work on in your practice or rehearsal. Are they sustained and slow or do they require fast-moving scales? Are there special range considerations? Difficult vowel sounds?
- Include onsets, slides, scales, legato, staccato, and different vowels and consonants in the warming up.

Voice Cool Down

- Lightly sing scales from the mid-high range down through your speaking range
- Use your straw
- Lip trills from high to low



Please contact me with questions