

VOCAL HEALTH Do's and Don'ts

DO



...Keep hydrated. I'm talking about *water* here, not sodas or sugary fruit drinks

...Use a humidifier, facial steamer (pot of hot water works too – *carefully* tent your head with a towel.), or do a shower steam. Great for the voice. I use an inexpensive facial steamer and insert a cotton ball soaked with vaporizer liquid.

...Use your nasal irrigator if you do that. (I'll spare you the details if you don't.)

...Warm up slowly and gently during the day. You wouldn't run a marathon without stretching, would you? In your car to and from work, in the shower, wherever you can. Hoummmmmm yinnnnnnng anything ... Hum or sing TS numbers under your breath (but not breathy) or Lip trills, humming on glides, scales or arpeggios. Easy does it. Especially important before rehearsal and in the days leading up to the concert.

...Drink soothing herbal teas like "cold season" preparations, teas with ginger, eucalyptus, etc., but nothing astringent like lemon. Honey is fine.

...Get enough sleep. Physical fatigue definitely affects the vocal chords!

...Address any GERD (acid reflux) issues, which may cause inflammation of the larynx. Take your meds or chew those antacids. Avoid any food or drink which aggravates the situation.

....Breathe deeply and slowly, keeping shoulders down, and neck & shoulders relaxed.

DON'T



...SHOUT or strain. Howl (on a pure "ah" and "oo", of course) at the moon instead!

...Drink too much caffeine or alcohol. They *dehydrate* mucus membranes, and can cause constriction and inflammation of the chords. If you can't resist (you don't want to be near me if I haven't had my coffee), replenish by drinking extra water.

...Don't use numbing throat sprays like Chloraseptic. You can injure your voice if you sing with a numbed throat.

...Whisper if you're hoarse. Gargle with warm salt water (with a pinch of baking soda) and drink hot herbal tea instead. Keep quiet.

...Smoke or allow others to smoke around you.

...Take just any remedy. Many OTC cold & sinus meds cause dry mouth, especially decongestants (Sudafed, etc.). Some antihistamines do as well. Try to avoid any unnecessary med which causes drying. Of course, continue to take any prescribed meds.

...Eat a huge meal just before singing.