

COMMON CAUSES OF HOARSENESS & FATIGUE IN SPEAKERS

1. Speaking at too low a pitch level and 'on' your vocal folds. You should speak at basically the same pitch level as you sing, but do not use an affected speech tone.
2. Letting your breath drop at the end of a sentence. Maintain breath support throughout the end of an utterance. Articulate the last word.
3. Speaking with too many words or thoughts on one breath. Use an inaudible, replenishing breath when you need one, rather than running out of air.
4. Talking nonstop. If you are in a vocally demanding profession such as sales or teaching, schedule 10 minutes of vocal rest per hour.
5. Yelling and loud talking at parties, work, or on your cell phone. Focus your voice properly and use breath support if you must project. Wear one ear plug to monitor the loudness of your voice in noisy settings.
6. Constant throat clearing and coughing due to sinus problems, allergies, asthma or a dry environment. Sip water and use a dry swallow or silent cough ("huh") if you must cough. If you use an antihistamine or steroid inhaler; drink at least 80+ ounces of water and consider mucinex or guaifenesin; medications that increase and thin mucus. Low blood pressure and antidepressant medications also dry out your vocal folds. Do not gargle. Listerine and mouthwashes contain alcohol.
7. Aspirin products. Speakers should avoid use of aspirin products on a day in which they are to speak excessively. This includes Aleve, Motrin, Advil, Aspirin, etc. If coupled with excessive voice use, these agents thin your blood and can predispose you to a vocal fold hemorrhage. Tylenol is acceptable.
8. Frequent heartburn, a bitter taste in your mouth, lump in your throat, excessive mucus and throat clearing may indicate acid reflux, which may irritate your vocal folds. Avoid mints, fatty foods, nuts, chocolate, eating late at night and eliminate spicy or high-acid foods. Take Pepcid AC and elevate the head of your bed with a wedge or bricks under the bed legs. Eat 3 hours before sleeping; if you can't, eat light and no-fat.
9. Alcohol and caffeine. You must drink an extra glass of water for each caffeinated or alcoholic beverage you drink to prevent vocal fold dehydration. Drink water until your urine is clear.
10. Physical fatigue. Try to get 8 hours of sleep and eat balanced meals.
11. Do not smoke cigarettes. Smoke is detrimental to vocal fold tissues.