

THE VOICE THAT WORKS

In day-to-day conversation, even when we speak at normal volume and pace, the voice can tire after approximately 6-8 hours. When we put our voices to work: presenting, acting, recording character voices for radio, and the film and gaming industries, we are required to project with energy, volume and heightened voicing techniques, perhaps for long hours. The voice can become overworked.

For those whose identity and livelihood depends on their voice, it is crucial to recognise and act on the signs of vocal strain. This is why we need to put in place strategies to strengthen the voice and minimise vocal injury.

This leaflet offers advice to broadcasters, voice actors, voice-over artists, and communicators of all kinds, on how to take care of their voice, build stamina, deliver optimum performance, and find suitable professional advice and support if needed. <https://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/voicecare.htm>

This information has been produced with thanks to Pippa Anderson, Tori Burnay and Louise Gibbs. It is also available online in the Voice Care section of our website, as above.



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 the british **voice** association

LIFT YOUR VOICE

without hurting it



World Voice Day 2022

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR BROADCASTERS,
ACTORS, VOICE-OVER ARTISTS
AND COMMUNICATORS OF ALL KINDS**

 the british **voice** association

This leaflet has been produced by The British Voice Association for World Voice Day (always 16th April) 2022. The theme this year is 'Lift Your Voice'.

The BVA aims to raise awareness of the care of the speaking voice and potential issues related to working in the broadcasting, acting and voice-over industries.

www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk

VOICE MAINTENANCE



Hydration!

Monitor your water intake. It can take up to 4 hours to reach your vocal folds (sometimes longer depending on your size and weight).



Vitamin Boost!

In addition to being a vitamin source, fruit and vegetables also provide our body with water. You can factor this into your daily water intake.



Sleep Matters!

The average person needs 6-9 hours of sleep. If you suffer with nasal congestion at night this can dry the membranes in your larynx. Visit your GP for help.



Fatigue!

If your body feels tired then your voice will be too. Take short vocal rests. Pitch glides or soft voiced fricatives on a sigh may help release tired and overworked muscles in and around the larynx.



Invest In You!

Mental wellness is important for vocal wellness. Do what you need to do to reset at the end of the day. This might be taking a walk, having a hot bath or reading a good book.

TIPS FOR RECORDING

Warm up your body and voice appropriately before recording.

Gently stretch the body (don't forget the face and the tongue!) Then **warm-up** the voice with gentle slides, glides and buzzing using fricatives (eg, z, sh, v, f). Find out about semi-occluded vocal tract exercises (SOVTEs). You may also want to work on articulation and explore some tongue twisters.

If you are using heightened speech, you may want to consider a more exertive physical warm-up. However, conserve your energy as much as possible for recording. Remember, this is a warm-up, not a wear out!

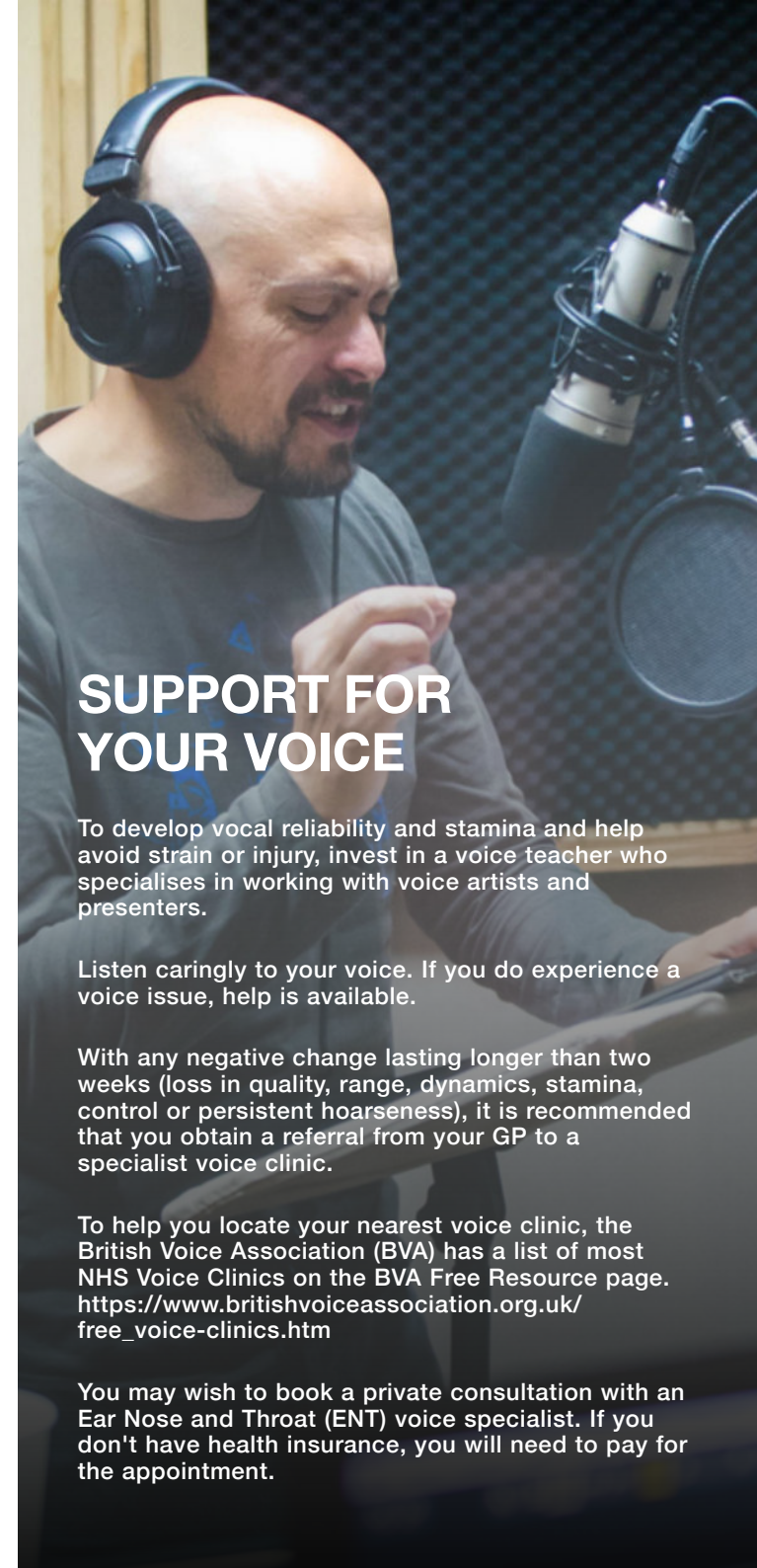
Take the time to **cool-down** your body and voice after recording. After care is vital. When you have finished a voice session, ensure you cool down with gentle descending glides and sighs. After heightened voicing we need to be able to return to our normal postural alignment with ease. Patting down the body and spending some time lying on the floor in a semi-supine position can help you release any unwanted tension in the body.

THE RECORDING ENVIRONMENT

When we speak or record voices for a living, our work environment becomes ever more important. The recording studio is the voice artist's second home. If you don't have access to a professional studio, then the home studio set-up needs to be appropriately planned to avoid voice issues.

Invest in a decent set of headphones; the ability to hear and monitor yourself will help you avoid vocal strain. Install quality soundproofing and adjust the acoustic environment to avoid echo (the reflection and delayed hearing of sound waves that bounce off nearby surfaces). This will enhance your recording experience, help you hear more accurately, and in turn, help you maintain your vocal health.

Ensure that your work environment has adequate, preferably filtered, ventilation. For a home studio this can be a challenge, potentially placing air quality in competition with soundproofing. Give yourself frequent breaks from the recording booth to get fresh air.



SUPPORT FOR YOUR VOICE

To develop vocal reliability and stamina and help avoid strain or injury, invest in a voice teacher who specialises in working with voice artists and presenters.

Listen caringly to your voice. If you do experience a voice issue, help is available.

With any negative change lasting longer than two weeks (loss in quality, range, dynamics, stamina, control or persistent hoarseness), it is recommended that you obtain a referral from your GP to a specialist voice clinic.

To help you locate your nearest voice clinic, the British Voice Association (BVA) has a list of most NHS Voice Clinics on the BVA Free Resource page. https://www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/free_voice-clinics.htm

You may wish to book a private consultation with an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) voice specialist. If you don't have health insurance, you will need to pay for the appointment.