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orld Voice Day is an international celebration of the voice, our primary means of communication. The goal of World Voice Day is to raise awareness about the importance of voice and voice disorders, plus methods of voice preservation and enhancement. The message, "Don't Tax Your Voice," prompts us to consider ways to preserve and protect our voices.

## Understand how your voice works and why it is important

### Know your Vocal Tax Code

We generate a voice from the vibration of two vocal cords in the larynx. The airstream powered by our lungs passes between the vocal cords and sets them vibrating. The rate of vibration can range from 100 to 1,000 times per second during speech and singing. Even for the average person, that can add up to more than one million times a day that the vocal cords collide. Now consider how much we depend on our voice at home, at work, and out and about. Even though we may take it for granted, keeping our voice healthy and fit is crucial. The Vocal Tax Tips below and information at [www.entnet.org/voiceday](http://www.entnet.org/voiceday) can help you maintain a clear and trouble-free voice.

## Things to do to protect and improve your voice

### Maximize your Gross Vocal Income

- Drink plenty of water—8 to 10 glasses per day. Water is the best way to stay hydrated and keep your vocal cords lubricated. Hydrated vocal cords allow an easier, more sustained, and more effortless voice.

- Warm up your voice before heavy voice use; check out a useful set of vocal warm-ups on [www.entnet.org/voiceday](http://www.entnet.org/voiceday). You wouldn't start a long run or workout without a brief stretch. The same applies to the voice. Warming up your voice will improve your vocal quality, projection, and endurance.
- Use plenty of breath support when you speak; airflow from your lungs powers your voice. Good breath support during both speaking and singing will give you more vocal strength, improved quality, and less fatigue.
- Use a microphone. When giving a speech or presentation, consider using a microphone to lessen the strain on your voice.
- Schedule periods of the day with no talking to allow your voice to rest. Brief "voice naps" throughout the day lessen vocal fatigue and overuse and can help keep you in good voice.
- Listen to your voice. When it's complaining, know that you need to modify and decrease your voice use to allow your vocal cords to recover. Pushing your voice when it's already hoarse can lead to significant problems. If you experience frequent or long periods of hoarseness, you should be evaluated by an otolaryngologist.

## Avoid doing things that can injure your voice

### Unauthorized deductions will come from your Voice Quality, not your taxes!

- Don't smoke. In addition to being a potent risk factor for laryngeal cancer, smoking causes inflammatory changes in the larynx that have a negative effect upon voice quality, pitch, and endurance.
- Don't be a screamer or shouter. These

kinds of vocal behavior put excessive wear and tear on the vocal folds and can lead to injury. Think about non-verbal ways to communicate across a distance or to a crowd, such as using a whistle, waving or clapping, or flipping a light switch. Wave the flag of your favorite team rather than shouting at a ball game.

- Avoid eating habits that can promote acid reflux, such as going to bed with a full stomach or consuming caffeinated beverages. Elevating the head of your bed and not wearing tight-fitting clothes can also help prevent reflux, which can damage the vocal cords.

## Be aware of everyday opportunities for vocal strain

### Be careful not to nickel and dime yourself into the vocal red

- Don't talk over background noise without considering how it affects your voice. In these situations it is important to note how your throat feels, not only how it sounds. You may not hear how loudly you are talking, but you will feel the strain and irritation in your throat as a warning that you should reduce your vocal intensity or risk injury.
- Think about how much you use your cell phone. Remember when riding in a car or train was a time for vocal rest? Remember when lunch was spent with a book or magazine rather than on the phone? Use of cellular phones is convenient, but they represent major opportunities for voice overuse or abuse. Think about whether you really need to make that extra call, particularly on a bad connection or in a place with background noise. If you avoid those calls, you will be banking some vocal currency, not just saving on your cellular bill.