VOCAL ATHLETES: ELITE VOICE USERS

Optimal physiologic performance is essential for any athlete to perform at a professional level. Vocal athletes must also train towards optimal vocal output by training the vocal mechanism for:

- STRENGTH
- STAMINA
- FLEXIBILITY
- AGILITY
- ARTISTRY

THE BLAINE BLOCK INSTITUTE FOR VOICE ANALYSIS AND REHABILITATION

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PRACTICE GOOD VOCAL HEALTH HABITS

♦ Drink at least 64 ounces of water each day
♦ Using steam inhalation from a personal steam inhaler may help to alleviate excessive dryness or thick phlegm
♦ Cool mist vaporizers or warm-air humidifiers provide additional moisture in a dry environment
♦ Avoid cough drops with menthol, as they may be drying to the throat. Instead use a piece of sugar-free hard candy or an herbal drop
♦ Over the counter (OTC) products are available to thin secretions and increase saliva production. Check with your doctor
♦ Medications (prescription, OTC, and holistic) may have drying effects on the laryngeal mucosa. Check with your pharmacist
♦ Minimize exposure to chemicals and pyrotechnics
♦ Avoid dairy products within several hours of performing as it may increase the viscosity of mucus
♦ Eat a healthy, balanced diet
♦ Minimize stress
♦ Engage in daily physical exercise
♦ Train your instrument and practice daily

VOCAL WARM-UPS

♦ Physically stretch and exercise daily to promote a healthy body and to maximize the muscular support needed for optimal voicing
♦ Begin with easy, mid-range vocalizations. Gradually stretch the voice to the top and bottom of the range
♦ Once the voice has been gently stretched, begin more technically and vocally challenging vocalizes and/or stylistic exercises

VOCAL COOL-DOWNS

♦ Gradually stretch the voice from mid-range to the top and bottom
♦ Physically stretch

ADDITIONAL TIPS

♦ Don’t sing/speak through a cold or laryngitis
♦ Don’t sing/speak outside of your physiologic range
♦ Ensure that you do not hold your breath or make sound during weight lifting activities
♦ Don’t sing/speak if it hurts to swallow
♦ Ensure proper use of amplification

MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE WITH MINIMUM RISK

ELIMINATE PHONOTRAUMATIC BEHAVIORS

♦ Avoid yelling, shouting, loud talking, and talking over noise
♦ Avoid singing or unnecessary talking in a car, bus, plane or train
♦ Do not use a cell phone in noisy environments
♦ Eliminate throat clearing and coughing. Use a hard swallow instead
♦ Stop using all tobacco products and recreational drugs
♦ Avoid chemicals, dust, and other harmful inhalants
♦ Never whisper
♦ Don’t push your voice to its physiological limitations
♦ Don’t overuse your voice
♦ Take “vocal naps” throughout the day. If your voice starts to feel tired, don’t push it
♦ Avoid blood thinning medications as much as possible (aspirin, ibuprofen, coumadin)