

Voice Delivery

- ⇒ *Breathing*
- ⇒ *Enunciation / Diction*
- ⇒ *Projection / Command / Confidence*
- ⇒ *Caring for your voice*
- ⇒ *Warming Up*

Voice - By Jeff Priest

Voice Delivery

- Your voice is the main source of communication to your dancers!
- The dancers will form their opinion before the dance even starts. If they like the sound they hear over the microphone at the front of the room as they are being told to square up, they will enjoy the evening. If they are having difficulties hearing or understanding or adjusting to the pitch, they have already made up their mind they will have problems at the dance.
- Also know that your voice can have an effect on the mood of the entire audience and the dance in general. Think of Eeyore - Now think of Mickey Mouse - YOU have this same control!
- Many “performers” have what is known as a “stage personality”. This “stage personality” activates the minute you walk in the room. You become the main event. People don’t care if you are having a bad day. They paid money to have a good time and you are the one expected to provide it. Your voice MUST say you are happy to be there and you are even happier that they are there – no matter if they are one square or twenty squares.

Mechanics of Sound

- Sound is simply vibrating air pressure. To ensure you get sound from your voice you need to have air pass through your vocal folds. This will cause sound – good or bad depending on pressure
- All the muscles in the face and neck must be relaxed to produce good quality sound, hence the benefit of warm-up exercises in order to relax

Breathing

- The foundation of all vocal sound is air pressure
- Adequate air flow past the vocal folds must be maintained to prevent damage
- When one takes in a deep breath they tend to extend the chest. Although the lungs are the cavity that actually fills with air when breathing, callers need to expand their diaphragm, the stomach area, to be able to manage the dispersion of the air in a controlled manner. As you call, you use your stomach muscles to press out the air that is in your lungs in a controlled manner to ensure you don’t run short of air when you need it most. This offers the correct pressure to satisfy the need of the vocal folds to actually produce sound without causing any damage.
- Correct posture is essential to cultivate good breathing techniques
- Correct breathing can also help reduce calling fatigue and “stage fright”

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Enunciation / Diction

- This is paramount if you expect your dancers to move to your commands
- Be very clear on pronunciation of all words and ensure you complete all words – don't drop the consonants off the end
- Be deliberate in your speech and delivery of words
- Remember, microphone windscreens (fuzz balls) are designed for the windy out-of-doors. Indoors, your voice will probably sound much clearer to the dancers without it.

Projection / Command / Confidence

- Be sure to give commands, not questions
- Be the boss, you are in charge
- Remember you want the dancers to dance with you again so don't be arrogant or cocky
- Be deliberate in your speech and delivery of words
- Hold the microphone correctly for the best voice projection
- When performing the singing call in a tip for example, the caller may wish to project at a certain point in the song. This will require moving the microphone away and using proper air pressure to raise the voice and possibly the pitch to give the desired effect.
- Correct breathing will allow projection when required

Caring for your voice & warm up

- Your vocal folds are like any other muscle in the body. If you go out to exercise, you will warm up first. Runners never just start running – they do leg stretches and body stretches first. As a performer, you are no different. You need to stretch your vocal muscles in order for them to relax before you make them work.
- Fatigue is the greatest cause of vocal wear. Ensure you are giving your voice enough rest. Callers who have a full program of several nights per week plus a full time job often suffer vocal problems. If not caught and remedied early, they may be irreversible.
- When practicing your program at home, do warm up exercises first and practice as though you are doing the full performance. Use correct breathing techniques and proper projection and control.
- Drink plenty of water before and during your practice and your performance – room temperature is best. By hydrating your body, the vocal folds will remain lubricated – an essential condition as this prevents the voice becoming dry and raspy.

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Gentle exercises that work

- To develop good breathing habits take a deep breath, ensure the diaphragm is used, and let the air out slowly making an “S” sound. Repeat this several times.
- Then make a gentle “sigh” sound. Repeat this several times

Exercises that remove tension from the face

- Do lip buzzes. Parting your lips just slightly, using lots of air hum Mary Had a Little Lamb.
- Also, do some neck stretches and head rolls

Exercises that will prepare your vocal folds to perform

- Start with a low “growl” like a hum but with your mouth open.
- Then starting at that point raise the pitch to the highest that you can go “comfortably” If it hurts it is too far.
- Once you are comfortable doing this a few times, sing the musical scale
- DO-RE-MI-FA-SO-LA-TI-DO

YOU HAVE HAD A GOOD WARM UP. ENJOY YOUR DANCE!