

Tips for Singing when Sick or Fatigued

3 THINGS YOU *SHOULD* DO

+ SLEEP: Sleep is a key ingredient to vocal health. It is necessary in order for the body to flush toxins, regenerate cells, digest food, maintain a strong metabolism and bolster the immune system.

+ STAY HYDRATED: Keep your vocal folds hydrated by consuming plenty of water and eating smart. Minimize fluids such as coffee, colas and alcohol. Avoid complex, sugary and greasy foods as well.

+ VOCALIZE: Quality vocal warm-ups that target the Flexibility of the vocal folds can help to reduce inflammation. If you're unsure of what to do, visit the Throga website and app for more information.

3 THINGS YOU *SHOULD NOT* DO

- WHISPER OR YELL: Talking alone can be irritating to the voice (especially while coughing or clearing your throat a lot). Whispering or yelling often causes even more swelling, due to the tremendous amount of force created underneath the vocal folds.

- OVER MEDICATE: Although cough drops, throat-sprays, sleep-aids and anti-histamines can relieve most of your symptoms, they do not address the irritated vocal folds directly. These quick-fixes often result in numbing the throat and dehydration, causing an unintentional handicap to the immune system. The end result is usually more aggravation to the voice - not less.

- PANIC! The more stressed you are the more sick you become. Your instrument responds directly to your emotional state. Panicking about your inability to sing triggers defensive tension throughout the body, reduces quality sleep and hampers digestion. All this causes more vocal problems and prolongs the illness or fatigue.

Herbal Supplements for Singers

Herbal supplements are proven to have mild medicinal properties and generally less negative side effects than pharmaceutical drugs. As with anything you ingest, it's best to test for negative reactions with a small dose at first. Here are a few common herbal remedies that may help you and your voice: *Please note that nothing you swallow touches your vocal folds and therefore can only assist your voice via improving your general health.*

BEE PROPOLIS: Helps fight against bacteria, viruses, and fungi, in addition to having anti-inflammatory properties.

ECHINACEA: Accelerates immune system and helps fight infections.

GARLIC: Promotes detoxification, lowers blood pressure, and shown to reduce general fatigue and stress.

GINGER: Known to reduce nausea and upset stomachs, ginger may also help fight upper respiratory tract infections and bronchitis.

GOLDEN SEAL: Used for fighting against bacteria, higher respiratory infections, and can act as an anti-inflammatory by thinning the blood.

HONEY: Rich in nutrients and can kill certain bacteria and fungi.

LEMON: High in Vitamin C, reduces inflammation, and improves the function of blood vessels.

LICORICE: Decreases swelling in the pharynx, thins mucus secretions, and helps minimize coughing.

SLIPPERY ELM BARK: Helps soothe and cleanse the throat. Also known to reduce heartburn / reflux.

ZINC: Assists immune system and fights lower respiratory infections.

Nutrition Guide for Singers

The general focus of a singer's diet is to stay healthy, hydrated, and energized, while avoiding excess mucus build up. This is a basic guide designed to help answer the most common questions about what, when and how much to eat in order to optimize a singer's performance. The better you take care of your vocal-instrument, the more consistent and responsive your voice will become.

WATER: Water is the highest priority throughout the day. Room temperature water is best before and during all warm-ups, band rehearsals, recording sessions and performances. *Reason: The vocal folds need to be lubricated so they don't build up friction and swell.*

CAFFINE: Minimize caffeine and acid based fluids such as soda, non-herbal tea, coffee, and energy drinks leading up to a performance. *Reason: Caffeinated and acidic beverages dehydrate the body.*

ALCOHOL: Consuming alcohol should be minimized prior to and during a performance. *Reason: Alcohol is a natural drying agent and too much can also cause a loss of fine motor-skills.*

JUICES: Fruit juices are great provided they are 100% natural and in small amounts. *Reason: Natural sugars will provide an energy boost, but concentrated amounts can create excess mucus.*

DAIRY: Avoid dairy products including milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream for several hours before and during a performance. *Reason: Dairy products take a long time to digest and cause the mucus to thicken, which can irritate the vocal folds.*

SUGAR: Complex sugars should be consumed in moderation and not too close to performance time. *Reason: Sugar also takes a long time to break down and too much will cause the body to 'crash'.*

FRUITS & VEGGIES: Raw fruits and vegetables should be included in every meal and can be snacked on throughout the day leading right up to a performance. *Reason: Raw fruits and vegetables are a natural source of vitamins and hydration which makes it easy for the body to digest and stay energized.*

SEAFOOD: Seafood can be a main dish within a couple of hours before a performance. *Reason: Most seafood is rich in nutrients and a great source of protein without slowing the body down too much.*

GRAINS: Small amounts of grains (such as bread or oatmeal) within a couple hours of a performance is fine as long as it's not combined with a lot of other complex foods. *Reason: It takes a long time to digest.*

MEAT: Avoid large amounts of meat (especially red) within a few hours of a performance. *Reason: It takes 4 to 6 hours to fully digest, which slows your metabolism and can leave you feeling lethargic.*

GREASY OR FRIED FOODS: Avoid several hours before a performance. *Reason: Greasy foods generate mucus, slows metabolism, and can cause complications to the digestive system.*

VITAMINS: Vitamin supplements are recommended if a singer isn't consuming enough naturally on a regular basis. *Reason: Vitamins are needed to maintain a strong immune system and help prevent fatigue.*

TEMPERATURE: Avoid extreme temperatures (such as hot herbal tea or iced drinks) an hour before and during a performance. *Reason: Heat expands and cold contracts the muscles in the throat.*

HOW OFTEN TO EAT: Several small meals spread throughout the day is better than 2 or 3 large meals. *Reason: This keeps the body from 'crashing' after a big meal and helps to maintain a strong immune system, steady metabolism, and reduces the 'need' for caffeine.*