

Voice exercises after thyroid surgery

These exercises are designed to strengthen vocal cord movements and to improve the quality of the voice. Whether their regular use after thyroid surgery prevents the occurrence of voice changes it is not known.

You can learn these exercises by following these instructions and by watching the DVD.

We hope you would undertake short sessions of 5-10 minutes for 3-4 times every day.

These exercises may initially make your throat feel tired, as any new exercise might. If your throat becomes sore, rest and take a drink, returning to the exercises when you are comfortable.

Relax the muscles around your neck and shoulders so that there is no additional straining to produce the voice.

- Raise your shoulders up towards your ears feeling them tighten.
- Release the tightness letting your shoulders drop easily and as smoothly down as you can. Check that you have let your shoulders drop down all the way, and that they are not still slightly raised.
- Circle shoulders gently around in both directions aiming for easy flexible movements
- Free the neck muscles by stretching gently left and right, looking around the room in both directions.
- Tilt your head gently sideways whilst looking straight ahead. Look upwards, and then downwards. Do not aggravate neck or joint discomfort by over stretching.
- Repeat each movement three times.

Be aware of using a full deep breath as you talk

- You may feel as if you are running out of breath more than usual. Aim to take fuller deep breaths to support your voice as you start to talk.
- Sit comfortably in a relaxed supported position, or lie down. Breathe in deeply either through your nose or mouth, feeling the lower area of your lungs where your diaphragm is, expand with the inward breath. You will feel the expansion just under the lower ribs, or over your belly button. Let the breath out with a soundless sigh. Do not take lots of deep breaths in and out in quick succession as this can make you feel dizzy and uncomfortable.
- Push the next breath out making a 'sh' sound, but do not strain at your throat as you do this.

Vocal cord exercises

- Keeping as relaxed as you can, and being aware of taking full supporting breaths, try these exercises which aim to bring the two vocal cords together precisely to make the voice sound as clear as possible.
- Make a strong ‘ah’ sound, listening particularly to the start of the sound which should be as crisp and clear as you can make it. Try a very forceful ‘ah’, and listen – this may not be as clear and sharp in sound quality as a slightly gentler ‘ah’. However, not enough force will leave the voice still sounding husky at the onset of the sound. The aim is for ‘quality control’ maintaining as clear and strong a voice as you can.
- Vowel sounds all require precise vocal cord closure, but replace ‘u’, which is a soft sound with the stronger ‘ooh’

a e i oh ooh

Repeat each vowel three times.

Say ‘Uh-oh!’ again listening for a strong clear sound

Build up into words:

Ale	ear	eye	oat	oose
Arm	every	eleven		
All	any	either		
Ear	are	own		
Eye	eel	arch		
Ale	onion	arrive		

And then phrases, remembering to keep relaxed, and to be aware of your breathing.

Arm in arm	everybody out
All in all	angry aunt
Up up and away	an awful afternoon
Earache	Ian asked Amy out

Repeat this set of sounds as often as you feel you can, aiming for three times a day, trying to keep the sound quality as precise and clear as you can.