

# Is Your Voice Telling On You?

## Voice Symptoms of Stress:

Listed below are the 20 most common symptoms of stress in the voice and what you can do to relieve them:

### SYMPTOM

### EXERCISE

BREATHY VOICE

Say fewer words per breath, raise your pitch one note, speak with greater focus, speak louder, speak with more precision

NO VOICE

Consult a speech-language pathologist or ear-nose-throat doctor

DOUBLE VOICE  
(DIPLOPHONIA)

Speak at a slightly higher pitch, use yawn-sigh to open up the vocal tract, sit or stand tall, with the head slightly down

NECK OR THROAT PAIN

See your doctor

DRY MOUTH OR THROAT

Humidify your home and office, move your tongue across your teeth and bite down gently on your tongue as the tongue moves around the mouth, drink 10 to 12 glasses of liquids daily, breath through your nose, not your mouth, ask your pharmacist about over-the-counter sprays

PITCH BREAKS

Change your pitch one note in the direction of the pitch break

HARSHNESS

Use the yawn-sigh, speaking on the sigh, keep the lips slightly apart with a relaxed jaw, drop your pitch level one note, keep your head looking slightly down, practice neck relaxation exercises

SHORTNESS OF BREATH	Cut in half the number of words you say in a breath, speak louder, speak at a slightly higher pitch
HIGH PITCH	Make a conscious effort to speak in a lower pitch, use the yawn-sigh, tilt your chin slightly down as you speak, open your mouth more as you speak
STRAINED VOICE	Use the yawn-sigh, tilt your chin down slightly, practice simultaneously chewing and talking, develop a more open mouth
HOARSENESS (DISPHONIA)	Consciously try to speak without hoarseness, elevate your pitch one note, say fewer words per breath, pause when you speak, develop greater focus, elevate your pitch at the end of a phrase
THROAT CLEARING	Make a conscious effort to avoid clearing your throat, when you do have to clear your throat, do it as silently as you can
LIFTING UP OF LARYNX	Use the yawn-sigh, tilt your head slightly down, open your mouth two fingers wide between your front teeth, take deep breaths with your head down and mouth open, speak one note lower
TIGHT VOICE	Use the yawn sigh, open mouth, chew while speaking
LOUD VOICE	If your voice is too soft: say fewer words per breath, make a conscious effort to speak louder, elevate your speaking pitch one note, use greater oral focus If your voice is too loud: make a conscious effort to speak softer, lower your voice pitch one note
TRAUMATIC LARYNGITIS	A temporary loss of voice we get after excessive voice use, the only treatment is complete voice rest, do not talk or whisper for 24 hours
LOW PITCH	Deliberately try to speak a few notes above your bottom note, develop good oral focus
VOICE BREAKS	Say fewer words per breath; use yawn-sigh, keep head tilted down, keep your mouth slightly open and your teeth apart; speak less loudly

## MONOTONE

Make a conscious effort to vary pitch, loudness, and rhythm; practice pitch inflection; listen to a tape recording of your speech and keep adding changes in inflection and volume until the monotone is no longer heard

## WEAK VOICE

Say fewer words per breath and say them louder, get your voice focus out of your throat and put it on the surface of your tongue, elevate your voice pitch one note and inflect downward at the end of sentences

Remember, for any of these symptoms of stress in your voice, first do what you can to eliminate or reduce stressors in your life. Once that is done, the exercises described in this chapter may help you find and maintain your natural voice in stressful situations.

### **Please note:**

The above article is an excerpt from Dr. Daniel Boone's book, "Is Your Voice Telling on You?" This excerpt was originally published in the Canadian Voice Care Foundation's newsletter "Voice Talk", Volume 1 Number 2 (Fall 1993), and has been provided to some parties for educational purposes only with the author's permission. If you require further information, please contact the Canadian Voice Care Foundation (CVCF)'s office at (403) 284-9590 or write to us at [cvcf@shaw.ca](mailto:cvcf@shaw.ca).