Larynx Strengthening Exercises

What is the larynx?
The larynx is also called the voice box. It is the part of the throat where the vocal cords are and it is used when you breathe, swallow and talk. The larynx helps protect your windpipe, called the trachea, when you swallow. The larynx sits just below where the throat splits into the trachea and the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube that food goes down to get to your stomach.

Why do I need to strengthen the larynx?
Larynx exercises help:
• Strengthen and increase the movement of the vocal cords
• Increase muscle movement in the larynx
• Improve closure of the larynx when swallowing

These exercises can help people with swallowing problems or those with poor voice quality.

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If you have **high blood pressure**, check with your doctor or therapist before doing these exercises, as they may cause an increase in blood pressure.

**Exercises**

These exercises will help to strengthen your larynx.

Do these exercises _____ times each day as directed by your speech therapist.

- **Sustained Vowels**
  - Sit on a firm chair for these exercises.
  - a. Hold the vowels “e” and “a” for as long and loud as you can. Try to hold for 14 to 17 seconds. Be sure to stop voicing before your voice fades out. Repeat 5 times.
  - b. Repeat the sounds, this time pushing down with your arms on the seat of your chair. Bear your weight on your arms as you push. Make your voice as loud and smooth as you can. Repeat 5 times.
  - c. Repeat the sounds, this time pulling up hard on the seat of your chair with your arms. Make your voice as loud and smooth as you can. Repeat 5 times.

- **Glides**
  - a. Hold the vowels “e” and “a” and glide smoothly up in pitch. Repeat 3 times.
  - b. Hold the vowels “e” and “a” and glide smoothly down in pitch. Repeat 3 times.
  - c. Glide up from the lowest to highest note using the word knoll, whoop or boom. Repeat 3 times.
  - d. Glide down from the highest to the lowest note using the word knoll, whoop or boom. Repeat 3 times.
Syllable Repetition

a. Say “ah ah ah” as loudly and clearly as you can. Repeat 10 times.

b. Tighten the muscles in your neck and say “ah ah ah” forcefully, as loudly and clearly as you can. Repeat 10 times.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Use your diaphragm to breathe more deeply and easily. Sit in a chair or stand up straight. Place both hands on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose and push out your stomach so you feel your hands move. Let the air out slowly through your mouth and pull your stomach back in. Repeat 5 times.

Practice these breaths while you read out loud. Often your voice fades because you are running out of air. When you start to feel like you are running out of air or you hear your voice getting softer, take another breath in with your stomach. Reading out loud helps you learn to use this breathing when you are talking to people.

Posture

Good posture is needed for the best breath support for speech. It is harder to maintain breath support when lying in bed, or reclining in a chair.

- Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.