



## Voice “warm up” and “warm down”

**This leaflet is for people advised by a speech and language therapist to carry out a voice “warm up” and “warm down”.**

### Why “warm up”?

Just as you would warm up before doing a physical activity, such as running, it is important to warm up the muscles involved in voice production, particularly before prolonged or demanding voice use. Warming up using the below exercises will help to enhance vocal performance and reduce chance of injury.

### Why “warm down”?

The warm down helps restore muscles to their resting tone. This particularly applies to singers who have had to sustain high pitch during singing. These singers sometimes find their speaking voices remain in a high pitch after singing. A warm down helps to loosen muscles and return the voice box to its ‘resting position’.

### Before you start:

- Ensure you are in a comfortable position, either sitting or standing, and breathing comfortably.
- Relax your shoulders and imagine any areas of tension in your neck and shoulders softening and melting away.
- Relax your jaw: Ensure that you are not clenching your teeth.
- None of these exercises should feel painful or uncomfortable, so should this occur, stop the exercises until you have discussed this with your speech and language therapist.
- During the exercises, ensure you breathe normally throughout and take regular sips of water.

### Warm up exercises

- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, without sound. Imagine a wide open airway, where the air can flow freely. If you have discussed abdominal breathing in your voice therapy, focus on this now as you breathe in and out.
- Rapidly, but silently, do an ‘ooo-eee’ movement to move the lips. Repeat several times.
- Stick out your tongue as far as you can and hold for 5 seconds. Relax and repeat 3 times.
- Now stick out your tongue and move it to the left and then the right. Repeat 3 times.
- Push your tongue into each cheek... left and then right. Repeat 3 times.
- Take a deep breath in and release on a yawn-sigh, opening the mouth wide. Repeat 3 times.

### Lip trill:

- Breathe in and then let the breath out on a lip trill (‘brrrrr’). Repeat several times.

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- Try gliding the sound up and down in pitch. Repeat several times.

### Sustained sounds:

- Take a deep breath in and then produce the below sounds on the out breath, sustaining the sound. Repeating each 3-5 times.

‘ssssssssss’      ‘ffffffffffffffff’      ‘shshshshshsh’  
‘zzzzzzzzzz’      ‘vvvvvvvvvv’      ‘jjjjjjjjjjjjjjjjjj’

- Repeat the exercise, adding in some vowel sounds:

‘sah-sah-sah-seeee’      ‘fah-fah-fah-fee’      ‘shoo-shoo-shoo-shooo’  
‘zah-zah-zah-zeeeee’      ‘voo-voo-voo-veee’      ‘joo-joo-joo-jaw’

- Change the *volume* and *speed* of the above exercises. Try them a little louder and a little quicker.

### Glides and scales:

- Glide up and down in pitch, on ‘oooo’, ‘ahhhh’, ‘eeee’ and ‘ng’ as in ‘sing’ (sirens).
- If you can, try gliding on a rolled ‘rrrrrrrr’.
- Sing some scales (e.g. Do – Re – Mi – Fa – Sol – La – Ti – Do).

### Warm down exercises

- Breathe gently in through your nose and out via your mouth, without sound.
- Be aware of any tension in your neck and shoulders, and gently release this by imagining the muscles softening. You could also carry out neck and shoulder exercises provided by your Speech and Language Therapist, if applicable.
- Glide gently downwards on the following sounds:  
‘zzzzz’      ‘jjjjj’      ‘vvvvvv’      ‘whooo’
- Breathe in and then let the breath out on a lip trill (‘brrrrr’). Repeat several times.
- On a lip trill – glide up and down in pitch. Repeat several times.
- Hum gently and quietly “mmmmmm” whilst feeling the sound resonate on your lips. Repeat several times.
- Take sips of water and ensure you remain well hydrated across the day.

### Contact us

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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