


MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMERS, IN ADDITION TO SINGING, ALSO HAVE THE TAXING RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACTING AND DANCING.⁸



It is important for musical theatre performers to understand vocal hygiene to protect themselves.

Musical theatre performers are different from other professional voice users, and many precautions that should be taken due to those differences can be found in this brochure.


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VOCAL HYGIENE FOR MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMERS

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VOCAL HYGIENE FOR MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMERS

PREVENTING OVERUSE



- Limit the amount of time singing.⁵
- Over-scheduling may be overtaxing and may prevent adequate rest.^{11 & 12}
- Thinking "the show must go on"¹⁵ may lead to vocal overuse.
- Clearing your throat, yelling, screaming, talking extensively, and singing without breaks⁴ may damage the vocal folds.
- Talking loudly in noisy environments (known as the Lombard effect) can be dangerous to the vocal folds.^{1 & 11}

MEDICAL CARE



- Consult with a health professional before using excessive amounts of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.), as they can have drying effects.^{3 & 4}
- Know your allergies and take appropriate medication.¹¹
- Consult an ENT when there is sudden onset of hoarseness, huskiness, etc.¹
- Consult an ENT if you think you may have reflux laryngitis.¹¹

NUTRITION/HYDRATION



- Hydrate adequately. Start with 8, 8 oz glasses a day, but base water needs more on temperature, altitude, body build, metabolism, clothing, physical activity, and other environmental or physiological factors.⁶
- Consume more sodium, potassium, chloride, and magnesium than the average human in addition to an abundance of fluids if dancing under hot lights and wearing heavy costumes.¹²
- Consult with a health professional regarding taking medicines, herbs, or supplements.¹¹
- Do not use teas or cough drops that contain menthol, eucalyptus, or benzocaine prior to singing; these products numb the vocal tract to the point where one cannot feel soreness.²
- Consuming caffeine and alcohol in excess may produce drying effects.⁵
- Consuming dairy products and chocolate may alter mucus viscosity promoting cough in some individuals.⁴



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ENVIRONMENTAL



- Do not ignore the effects of pyrotechnics; pyrotechnics can cause respiratory/eye irritation, allergies, and long term lung problems.¹¹
- Breathing moist air (humidifiers) may be helpful to maintain healthy mucosa.⁴
- Know the contact information for medical professionals in arts medicine in the cities you are in. See americansforthearts.org for references by location.¹³

TECHNIQUE



- Practice good posture and alignment to optimize vocal health, expression, and function.¹⁰
- Be prepared to perform up to 8 shows a week.⁹
- Choose part time jobs wisely- these jobs could be too taxing on the voice.¹⁶
- Receive both voice and speech training to easily switch between speaking and singing. Both a voice teacher and vocal coach can help with these tasks.^{11 & 12 & 14}