



SINGING IN THE MILE HIGH VOICE CARE TIPS

Here are some tips to keep you using your voice healthy in Denver's high, dry climate.

- **Stay hydrated!** High altitudes are drier places because there is less atmosphere. Do not wait until you are thirsty to start drinking because at that point you are already dehydrated. Athletes start drinking more water about 48 hours before an event, as do successful hikers of the Grand Canyon. At high altitudes, musicians need to do the same. Two days before you get to Denver, start drinking more water. If at all possible, arrive in Denver early so that your body has time to acclimate.
- **Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol.** They dehydrate the tissues in your body. You need to drink an equal size glass of water for every caffeinated or alcoholic beverage you drink to counteract the drying effects (in addition to your 8-10 glasses). Also, be aware that alcohol is more concentrated in the blood stream at high altitudes, so you will feel more effects with fewer drinks.
- **Breath control.** You may notice that the higher altitude makes breathing more difficult. This is common and will take a few days to resolve. Take more frequent breaths rather than trying to push through phrases. You also may feel a little light-headed or dizzy when using your voice heavily – such as speaking loudly or singing. Breathing more frequently will help this. Plan ahead for this eventuality-expect to need more breaths and practice your repertoire as such.
- **Some medications** can dry the vocal fold tissue. Speaking and singing on dehydrated vocal fold tissue can lead to increased effort and can put you at risk for a vocal fold injury. Antihistamines (taken for colds, sinus and allergy symptoms) are the best example of this. Use these only with a lot of water (80+ oz.) and sparingly.
- **Frequent throat clearing and coughing** are abusive to the vocal folds and can injure the vocal fold tissue. A sip of water or a silent cough (“huh” -forceful burst of air with no voicing) are good alternatives.
- **Sudden on-going hoarseness** can be an indicator of an acute vocal fold injury and should be taken very seriously. If you become hoarse suddenly, do not try to speak or sing through it. Stop talking and singing. You need to be seen immediately by a laryngologist to make sure you are safe to continue using your voice.

For more info on voice care, vocal health, voice research, or clinical voice services:



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