

Name of the method	Use of Voice: Keeping Your Voice
Origin or ownership of the method	Konstantin Kuchev, based on materials by Pamela Burnard, Rod Patton, Jeffrey Agrell
Goals of the method	<p>For any teacher, it's really important to be able to keep their voice healthy and strong, as they will need it for many years.</p> <p>The method aims at improving the confidence of teachers to use their voice whilst preserving it. This will in turn enhance the understanding and retention of the material by the students.</p> <p>The tool also focuses on the conscious use of the voice for the creation of an atmosphere of inspiration and understanding within the classroom.</p>
How the method corresponds to the common guiding principles of GRT	The method can be used by any teacher. It can be seen as a base for the development and use of the methods within the GRT project, whilst preserving the vocal capabilities and capacity of the teacher. This is designed to help teachers use their voice in a healthy way for a long time with the help of breathing and voice techniques.
Preparation needed for implementation of the method	Some voice warm-up, as described in the Tool, might be helpful for leading the exercises more confidently. The method will also include instructional videos in which the exercises will be clearly and consistently demonstrated.
Materials needed	Space where you can move around comfortably and can do the vocal warm-up. Heavy book.
Additional staff support needed or combinations with other scientific topics (optional)	No
Method description	This method is directly related to the "Music in the air" tool, however it is designed as a general preparation for teachers, aiming at preserving their voice and easing their work process. The effective use of voice is also considered to be a powerful instrument when presenting new information. The goal is that the students will personally connect with every material they study and have sustained interest. And with the exercises and approaches within this tool, this process will be made easier both for the teacher and the student.

Detailed instructions

How to preserve your voice when talking and singing for a long time?

BREATHING is the KEY to using your voice healthily.

Use your diaphragm.

Teach your diaphragm when to WORK and when to REST.



Breathing and Using Your Registers - a video by Konstantin Kuchev

Exercises for diaphragm:

1. Put your right hand on your diaphragm - just below your ribcage. Breath-in through the nose. Your diaphragm expands. Breath-out. Your diaphragm flattens. Every time you talk or sing, you should feel that movement.
2. Still keeping your hand on your diaphragm, breathe in. Now breathe out, but try not to let your diaphragm go down while letting out your air. Of course, it will slowly decrease, but much slower. This is an important point: When you sing or talk, you should use up your air as slowly as possible, so you can rely on it. In this way, every possible tension goes to your diaphragm while your throat can take a rest. This is called diaphragmatic support. When you finish singing or speaking, you can give a well-deserved rest to your diaphragm. This is also very important: Teach your breath when to support your voice and when to rest.
3. Lie down on your back and take a heavy book. Put it on your diaphragm. Breathe in and raise the book with your diaphragm. Breathe out and try to keep the book high for as long as possible. Then rest and breathe normally. Repeat this exercise several times. After you do it with air, you can also try with voice. Use a deep, long and resonant Aaaaah, Ooooooh, Eeeeeeh.
4. Stand straight and lift both your hands above your head. Hold your air for five seconds. Then bend yourself down to touch the ground before you, while slowly letting your air out with an Sssssss. Repeat

the same exercise using voice - first a long, closed-mouth Mmmm and then Maaaaaaa, Moooooo, Meeeeeeh, Muuuuu. It's important to hold your air for several seconds before you start to sing. Feel how your diaphragm supports you while you sing. Rely on your breath.

5. Breathe in and out as if you are sipping some tea. Sip in for three times and sip out for three. Then sip in for four and out for four, then five. This will make your diaphragm more flexible.
6. Stand straight and bend a little bit at the knees, opening your legs in a comfortable position. Put your hands on the back of your head. Breath in and hold your breath. Start counting aloud - 1, 2, 3..., while rocking your body left for one count and right for the next. Count clearly and loudly. This will make your voice strong and connected to your breath support.



USE your RESONATORS to help you properly PLACE your VOICE.



Your body is a musical instrument. You just have to activate its resonators and you'll be able to sing and talk with much less effort.

Another video, which sums up a number of exercises preparing the voice for work: <https://youtu.be/ugJ5Mg4icaE>



Exercises for activating your resonators:

1. Put your hand on your chest. Say “Hmmmmm”, going from your normal speaking voice to the lower parts of your register. Feel the vibration in your chest. Do this several times and feel the sensation of calmness which it brings. Don’t forget to breathe in using your diaphragm and breathe out, letting it slowly go down.
2. With your hand on your chest, say an open “Haaaaammmmm”, leading your voice forward with your other hand. Feel how your voice is resonating and passing through space when you lead it, giving it direction.
3. Choose a point in space - a photo in the room, an object or some tree or stone if you are in the open. With your hand on your chest, say a long open “Hooooooooooooommmmm”, leading your voice to reach this point. Do this several times. Feel how your voice effortlessly crosses the space to reach this certain point. Try this with other vowels and sounds - “Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeyyyyy”, “Hoooooooooooooy”, “Hiiiiiiiiaaaaaaa”. You are now PROJECTING your voice. This is a key in keeping your vocal cords safe when you are talking or singing in an auditorium. Try this with some words: “Suuuuunnnnn”, “Skyyyyyy”, “Aiiiiiiiiirrrrr”, “Wateeeerrrrr”. Make the words long and sing-able so you are sure you use your diaphragmatic breath. Try the same with a part of your lesson that you’re going to teach tomorrow. Sing your lesson to a point in space. Then speak your lesson, still keeping the sensation of reaching through space with your voice. Your throat is relaxed. Rely only on your breath and the projection of your voice.

Make sure your throat is opened so you can effortlessly resonate with your body and voice. Here are some helpful exercises:

1. Yawn with an “Aaaaaaaah” and “Ooooooh” sound, going from low to high and from high to low in your voice register. Feel the relaxation it brings in your throat. Still keep using your diaphragm

and project your voice forward. This feeling of yawning gives you an indication of what it's like to talk and sing with an open throat. Of course, you will not yawn while you give a lecture. But you can maintain the same feeling of openness in your throat. If you do this and some other relaxation exercises for your voice on a regular basis, you won't have to think about this when you work - your throat will just naturally be relaxed.

2. Breathe in and out with a feeling of wonder. Imagine you see a magical creature before you, breath in with a surprise and say "Wooooooooooooow!", "Heeeeeeeeeey!", "Hooooooooow!", "Hooooo marvellous!" Feel how your throat and your whole face is opening when you do this.
3. Imagine you have a hot potato in your mouth. You want to eat this tasty potato, but it's hot and so you are holding it between your tongue and palate, trying not to burn yourself. This makes your tongue stay low, which takes out a lot of tension. Also your soft palate is rising, which relaxes your throat just like when you are yawning. And last but not least, your jaw is dropping freely. It's very important to be able to relax your jaw and not keep it stiff. Speak and sing with this hot potato in your mouth as an exercise and you'll feel how relaxed your whole vocal system will be afterwards.

THE JAW

It's of utmost importance to relax your jaw in order to keep your voice for a longer time while talking or singing. When the jaw is stiff, that changes the form of the oral cavity and breaks the beauty and precision of the sounds, which should be produced freely and openly. The stiff jaw also hinders the movement of the tongue, which should be fast and elastic to produce speech of quality.

Exercises for relaxing the jaw:

1. Relax your head forward until your chin is resting on your chest. Now lift your head without the lower jaw. If you relax it completely, it will stay loose because of its own weight, just like your hands stay relaxed around your body.
2. Stay open mouthed with a relaxed jaw, until you feel it hanging, as if separate from the head.
3. Put your fingers next to your ears where the jaw joints are located. Now open your mouth. Start chewing, as if you are chewing food. Feel the movement under your fingers. Now close your mouth, relax your lower jaw and let it fall freely. The feeling under your fingers



should be different now, far more relaxed than when you were chewing.

4. Imagine you hear something very surprising in a conversation. Get up, take a deep breath and your throat will unconsciously open. Now say: "Hey! Do you know what he just said?" You will feel how your voice flows freely and clearly now.

THE TONGUE

The tongue is the main instrument which we use to shape our sound. Exercise it to feel free in your speech.

1. Roll your tongue before your teeth, making circles. Make 15 circles going left and 15 going right. This will take a lot of tension from the tongue and also relax the throat.
2. Flap your tongue fast in your mouth, going up and down your vocal register at the same time. Be louder when you go lower and quieter when you go to the top, but try to feel that your voice really climbs to the top of your head in the high register and goes way down in your chest in the low register.
3. Hold your jaw with your hand and move it freely up and down, forwards and backwards. The jaw is completely relaxed and only the hand moves it. If your jaw wants to move on its own during this exercise, massage it a little bit, also your cheeks and neck and try again until you feel your jaw is relaxed. This will remove a huge part of your tension when you're speaking.

The SMILE is essential when you sing and talk. Open your mouth in a smile and don't hide your teeth - they are a unique resonator which gives the audience the full splendor of your voice. Just smile, showing your teeth, and sing your name. Keep on projecting your voice similarly to the exercises above, this time with a smile. Feel how your voice fills the whole space of the room, resonating back and forth, and in every direction. Then read a presentation or a lesson, deliberately using your smile. Your voice will sound bright and clear. Make sure that every word, and especially every vowel is clearly spoken and projected forwards. Vowels and consonants are both spoken forwards, using the perfect resonator for this task - your teeth. You can practice this in front of a mirror.



We naturally move to a higher or lower register of our voice, depending on the emotion we want to express. This is called PLACEMENT of the voice. You can train your voice.

“COLOURS” OF YOUR VOICE:

Use your voice with different colours and combinations between them as suggested by the Italian psychologist, voice actor, actor, announcer and writer *Ciro Imparato* to achieve better results in expression and holding students’ attention for a good long time. Instructional videos and explanation materials can be found on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syYwP4No5mw>. The colors are a way to think about your voice in different ways:

Yellow voice - Friendship, sympathy. Smile. Use your voice in a range of average to strong volume, high or low tone, depending on your feeling, quite fast tempo, short pauses.

Green voice - Tender and caring, atmosphere of trust. The green voice is sincere and calming and makes you worthy of trust. Use your voice in strong to quiet volume, low tone, slow tempo, hesitant pauses, delicate smile. This voice calms down and inspires empathy and sincerity.

Blue voice - Voice of authority or documentary voice. The blue voice is stable and sure and is used by charismatic personalities. Use it from middle to strong volume, low and undisputable tone, middle tempo, sharp pauses, slight smile. The blue voice is the voice of institutions and it inspires certainty and respect. It’s used in combination with the green voice in this order: 1. Green. 2. Blue, to create the impression of power and solidity.

Red voice - Passion and excitement. Do you want to create enthusiasm and attract? Use the red voice. The red voice adds emotion to the yellow, green and blue voice. It’s characterized by strong volume, middle to high tone, fast tempo, lively rhythm, and a wide smile. The red voice removes any barriers. It’s used to actively engage everyone present.

Smile, smile, smile while you talk! This will always bring out the best of your voice.

Always remember to project your voice forward! You can try throwing words into space. Take a word from today's lesson and ‘throw’ it against the wall to hear its reflection coming back to you. Every syllable and consonant should be clearly and openly pronounced forward and you should hear it coming back very clearly. If you can hear it all coming back

	and it resonates clearly across the room, you're using your voice in a healthy way.
Experiments, conducted in the different schools, involved in the project	Not applicable. This activity has the purpose of individual work with the voice.
Evaluation tools	<p><i>Is it hard to establish a routine of using the proposed methods?</i></p> <p><i>Which of the methods has had the most impact on your voice?</i></p> <p><i>Have you observed changes in your voice's stamina and the ability to use it effectively? If yes, what were they?</i></p> <p><i>Will you continue using the method in your future practice?</i></p>

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