



5 Ways to Keep Your Vocal Cords Hydrated

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As a singing and speaking voice trainer for 38 years, I can't think of a more important piece of advice for my clients than "HYDRATE"! Wet vocal cords work more easily and with less strain than dry vocal cords. So, let's just drink more and we'll all be in fine voice, right? Seems simple, but apparently, it isn't. Many of my thousands of clients over the years have told me how difficult it is to hydrate consistently. After all, I like to see people drink a minimum of half their body weight in ounces of water every day, unless there's a medical reason why they shouldn't. Seems daunting? It doesn't have to be. Let's figure out some ways to make it easier for you to hydrate your vocal cords.

- 1. Count your water bottles.** Let's say that, using the half-your-body-weight rule, you calculate that you need to drink 75 oz. of water (appropriate for a 150 lb. person). So, using your typical 16-oz. bottle of water as the measurement, you would need to finish nearly 5 bottles each day. Start each day by counting out the 5 bottles. By bedtime, those 5 bottles should be empty. Note: if you're active or working in extremely hot conditions or outdoors in hot weather, you may need more than half your body weight, so plan accordingly. Same thing if you drink alcohol or caffeine, which tend to dry your cords even more.
- 2. Fill a pitcher with the amount of water you need and finish it.** If you're not a bottle person, start with a pitcher filled with the amount of water that you've determined you need each day (e.g., the 75 oz. we mentioned above). Fill your drinking glasses or reusable bottles only from that pitcher. By bedtime, the pitcher should be empty.
- 3. Associate water-drinking with daily activities you already do.** If you have a large glass of water upon awakening, and with breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and tooth-brushing, you'll be amazed at how quickly the ounces add up. Also keep a full glass or bottle next to your bed, near where you do paperwork, while cooking, or in the car when you run errands or commute. You'll be at your goal before you know it.
- 4. Use a water-tracking app.** You can get fun water-tracking apps on your smart phone, to help keep track of how well your hydration program is going. With so many to choose from, including Plant Nanny, Daily Water, Hydro Coach, My Water Balance, Hydrate Daily, and Water Time pro, you're sure to find one that motivates you to drink more.
- 5. Use fruit-infused water.** If you really don't like plain water, get yourself a fruit-infusion bottle or pitcher. Add healthy fruits and vegetables like cucumber, watermelon, or citrus fruits (the latter if you don't have reflux). Also remember that eating watermelon, cucumber, cantaloupe, strawberries, zucchini, and celery provides hydration, as well as nutrients and/or fiber. Note: forget sugary drinks, sodas, and energy drinks. Water is the healthiest choice for hydration.

Start on your goal of improving your water-drinking today. Happy hydrating!

Karen Sussman, MA, CCC-SLP, voice therapist and singing voice expert, is the founder and director of the Professional Voice Care Center in Hicksville, NY, the premier center for total care of the professional voice. The Center's mission is to create or restore excellent voices. Ms. Sussman has worked with thousands of singers, actors, teachers, attorneys, and others who make their living with their voices. She has presented extensively for medical and performing arts groups and is the host of the Facebook Live Series *Tune In to Tune Up*. Visit Professional Voice Care Center on the web at <https://provoicecare.net> and on Facebook @professionalvoicecarecenter.