

The *Younger* Voice Programme

A 6-week, science-informed training plan to keep your voice strong, clear and youthful, in about 15 minutes a day.

6 weeks

15 min a day

Based on voice research

Free guide

Your voice can stay young longer than you think

Voices change with age, but much of what makes a voice sound “older” (less power, more breathiness, quicker fatigue) responds to regular practice, much like a muscle.

This guide brings together exercises drawn from approaches that speech-language pathologists use with ageing voices, and that have been studied in research. We’ve adapted them into a simple daily routine you can do at home.

What to expect, honestly. Regular voice exercise can make your voice stronger, clearer and less tiring to use, which often makes it sound younger. It does not reverse ageing, and results vary from person to person. Think of it as fitness for your voice.

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Important. This guide is for general information and voice fitness. It is not medical advice and does not replace a doctor or a speech-language pathologist. If your voice has changed recently or without explanation, read page 10 before starting.

Why voices age

The age-related change of the voice has a name: *presbyphonia*. It comes from gradual changes in the larynx and the breathing system.

What changes

- The vocal folds can lose muscle tone and bulk, so they may not close as firmly.
- Breathing support weakens with age, giving the voice less power.
- The result can be a softer, breathier, shakier voice that tires faster.

What helps

- A systematic review describes speech therapy as the treatment of choice for presbyphonia, with significant improvements in voice performance.¹
- Researchers have observed that older adults with presbyphonia tend to use their voice less, which supports a “use it or lose it” view of vocal ageing.²

10–
20%

of older adults are affected by presbyphonia, according to a systematic review, and it can weigh on quality of life.¹

~19%

is the overall prevalence of voice disorders in older adults estimated by a 2023 meta-analysis, which notes that ageing itself is not the main cause: other conditions often play a role.³

That last point matters. A voice that changes is not always “just age”, which is why page 10 tells you when to get checked.

The five principles of voice training

The programme borrows its logic from three families of exercises studied in voice research.

Strength through easy loudness

Phonation Resistance Training Exercises (PhoRTE®) were designed for ageing voices and focus on louder, projected voice. In a small randomised trial, they improved voice-related quality of life and reduced perceived vocal effort after 4 weeks.⁴

Coordination through sustained sounds

Vocal Function Exercises use sustained notes and pitch glides to balance breath and vocal fold closure. In the same trial, they also improved voice-related quality of life.⁴

Efficiency through a straw

Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises, such as phonating through a straw, make voicing easier by lowering the pressure needed to start vibration.^{5,6} A study in older adults reported better quality-of-life scores after 4 weeks of straw phonation in water.⁷

Use it daily

Because older adults with voice changes tend to talk less,² reading aloud, singing and conversation are part of the training, not extras.

The five principles

- 1 **Little and often.** 10 to 15 minutes, 5 or 6 days a week, beats one long session.
- 2 **Effort, never strain.** Work should feel like exercise, not pain. Stop if your throat hurts or feels raw.
- 3 **Breath first.** A relaxed, low breath powers the voice; a tight throat does not.
- 4 **Progress gradually.** Add duration or loudness week by week, not day by day.
- 5 **Keep going.** Benefits fade without practice: research on straw exercises notes that continued practice is needed to maintain them.⁷

PhoRTE® is a registered trademark of its authors. This guide is inspired by published research on these approaches; it is not an official version of any therapy programme, which is delivered by trained clinicians.

The daily routine

Six exercises, about 15 minutes. Sit or stand tall, shoulders relaxed, a glass of water within reach.

1 Low, easy breathing

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES

Place a hand on your belly. Breathe in slowly through your nose for about 4 counts and feel your belly move out, not your shoulders up. Breathe out gently on a soft “sss” for 6 to 8 counts.

Repeat 5 times. Your breath is the engine of your voice.

2 Gentle humming

WARM-UP · 1 MINUTE

With lips lightly closed, hum “mmm” on a comfortable note, as if saying “mm-hmm” in agreement. Aim for a gentle buzz on your lips and nose. Then hum slowly up and down a few notes, like a lazy siren.

3 rounds of 15 seconds.

3 Straw phonation

EFFICIENCY · 3 MINUTES · YOU NEED A DRINKING STRAW

Seal your lips around the straw and hum or say “ooo” through it, so the sound and air go through the straw only. Start on a comfortable note for 5 seconds, then glide slowly from low to high and back.

Weeks 1–2: 5 glides in the air. **From week 3:** put the straw 2 to 5 cm into a glass of water and phonate so it bubbles steadily, 5 glides.

It should feel easy, with almost no effort in the throat.

Building strength and range

4

Sustained “ee”

COORDINATION · 2 MINUTES

Take a low breath and sustain a soft, clear “eee” on a comfortable middle note, as long as feels easy. Stop before you run out of air or the sound wobbles. Note the time if you like: it often grows over the weeks.

Repeat 3 times, resting between each.

5

Pitch glides

RANGE · 2 MINUTES

On “ooo” or on a hum, glide smoothly from your lowest comfortable note to your highest, then from high to low. Keep it light and continuous, like a slide, with no jumps or pushing at the top.

3 glides up, 3 glides down.

6

Strong, easy voice

POWER · 4 MINUTES

Imagine calling to a friend across a room, with a strong, full voice that comes from your breath, not a shout from the throat. Say each phrase clearly and with energy:

“Good morning, how are you?” · “Let’s meet at eight.” · “Can you hear me well?” · Count 1 to 10.

5 phrases, twice. Then **read aloud for 3 to 5 minutes** (a book, the news) in this same full, comfortable voice, or sing a song you like.

Stop and rest if you feel pain, a scratchy or raw throat, or if your voice becomes hoarse during or after practice. Resume more gently the next day. Effort is good; strain is not.

Your 6-week plan

5 or 6 sessions a week. Increase gradually, and only if the previous week felt comfortable.

WEEK	FOCUS	WHAT CHANGES	DAILY TIME
1	Learn the moves	All six exercises at a gentle level. Straw in the air. Read aloud 3 minutes.	10 min
2	Settle the routine	Same exercises, a little longer and more regular. Do your first progress check (page 9).	12 min
3	Add resistance	Straw in water. Strong-voice phrases a little fuller. Read aloud 4 minutes.	13 min
4	Build power	Add 3 new phrases of your own to exercise 6. Second progress check.	14 min
5	Widen your range	Glides a little higher and lower, always without pushing. Read aloud 5 minutes, or sing.	15 min
6	Make it yours	Keep your favourite exercises, plan how to maintain them. Final progress check.	15 min

After week 6. Keep a shorter maintenance routine, for example straw phonation, the strong-voice phrases and reading aloud, 3 or 4 times a week. And keep talking, singing and calling friends: everyday use is part of the training.

Your weekly checklist

☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Everyday voice care

The habits voice clinicians commonly recommend to help your voice between sessions.

Keep it hydrated

Drink water regularly through the day. Dry air, heating and air conditioning can dry the throat: a humidifier or breathing steam can help.

Use it, gently and often

Talk, read aloud, sing. A voice that rarely works tends to weaken.²

Don't force it

Avoid shouting over noise; move closer instead. Rest your voice after long talking.

Mind your posture

Head balanced, shoulders relaxed, chest open. Slumping makes breathing, and your voice, work harder.

Go easy on throat clearing

Frequent throat clearing can irritate the vocal folds. A sip of water or a swallow is gentler.

Look after your whole health

Smoking, reflux and some medicines can affect the voice. If you think one of these applies to you, talk to your doctor.

Hear the difference

Record your voice again with the free Voice Age Tester and compare it with your first result.

[Retest my voice](#)

Track your progress

Use the Voice Age Tester at the start and every two weeks. Same room, same time of day, same sentence, for a fair comparison.

CHECK	DATE	VOICE AGE IMPRESSION	SUSTAINED "EE" (SECONDS)	HOW MY VOICE FEELS
Start				
Week 2				
Week 4				
Week 6				

Read your results kindly. The Voice Age Tester gives an indicative impression based on acoustic measures such as pitch, stability, speaking rate and clarity. It is not a medical measurement, and research shows even trained listeners misjudge voice age by several years. What matters most is how your voice feels: stronger, clearer, less tiring.

Ready for your starting point?

Record 5 seconds of your voice. It runs entirely in your browser and your recording never leaves your device.

[Test my voice now](#)

When to see a professional

See a doctor, ideally an ear, nose and throat specialist, if you notice:

- hoarseness or a voice change lasting more than 2 to 3 weeks;
- pain when speaking or swallowing, or a lump in the neck;
- coughing up blood, or difficulty breathing;
- a sudden loss of voice, or a voice change after a cold that doesn't go away.

Voice changes in older adults have many possible causes, not only ageing,³ and some need treatment. A **speech-language pathologist** (speech therapist) can then build a personalised programme: research programmes like those that inspired this guide were delivered with professional sessions several times a week.^{4,8}

Sources

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