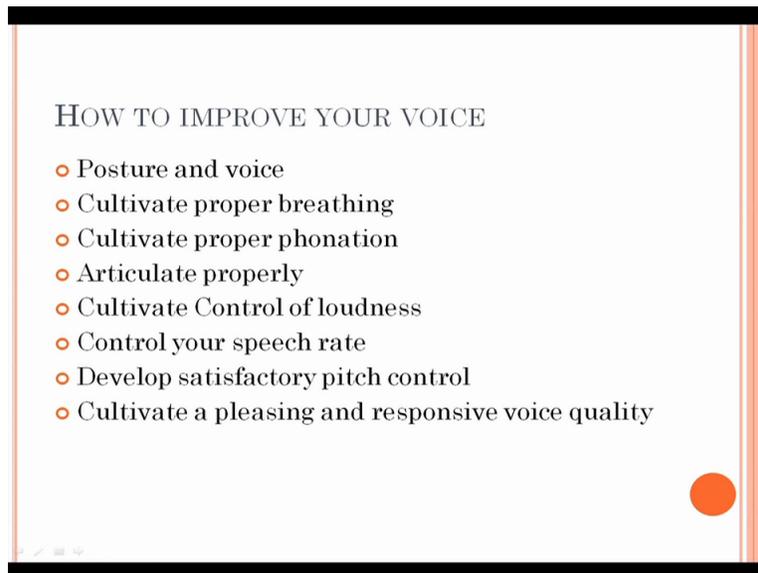


**Speaking Effectively**  
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**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur**  
**Lecture 18**  
**How to Improve Voice**

In the last two units of voice and delivery, I demonstrated the relationship between voice and delivery and speaking, the impact it has on speaking. And in this lecture we are going to do some activities related to how to improve your voice and delivery. So in the first part we look at how to improve your voice.

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how to improve your voice we are going to look at posture and voice, cultivation of proper breathing, cultivation of proper phonation, articulation, cultivating control of loudness, controlling your speech rate, developing satisfactory pitch control and cultivating ultimately a pleasant and responsive voice quality. Let us begin with looking at the relationship between posture and voice and to see I would recommend this video that I found online, which you will find very useful for correcting your posture.

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It is related to singing but you might as well consult it when you are trying to look at how to improve your posture for improving your voice in speaking. So we are going to demonstrate some ways in which you can improve your posture in order to be able to improve your voice. The first thing is to find out what kind of posture you have.

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So I would ask a friend to pass his or her hand to the back of your small of your back. Now if the hand passes through that means your spine is bent. In this case we have an example of a person who does not have a bent spine, whose posture is correct. That is why when we pass the hand, it

does not pass through. Thank you. Now we look at another person and see what happens when he lies down and we do the same thing to him. So now when we pass, does it pass through? No. Okay. So even in his case, his spine is not bent. Good.

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But this for you to find out. You have to find out for yourself if your spine is bent, they the other person will be able to pass his hand entirely through the back of your small of your back. Good. Let us move on to the next activity. In this activity, I would request you to try the old grandmother's recipe. The best way to improve your posture, to get the right posture was to lean against a wall and walk forward. We are going to watch this in action. Lean against a wall. Let the back of your head and your shoulders touch the wall. try not to push your back head so much forward. Let there be, yes, let there be a little gap. Okay.

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Now, you walk forward, you see a difference in the way he walks? His shoulders are now in straight line with his neck. The third exercise you could do in order to strengthen your back and straightening your shoulders is, the normal head roll that we call where you turn your in order to relax your (neks) neck muscles, we normally roll our head and (le) let the (nec) neck muscles relax by rolling our head. You could do it backwards also. Turn your head back, ya, the other way. This is an exercise that is recommended for removing the tension from your neck muscles and straitening your back.

A better way of doing this would be to do to rotate your chin against a wall. Face a wall, this wall is rather scratchy but I hope in the walls of you house you have smoother walls. So try to inscribe a circle using your chin. Inscribe a circle using your chin. Try doing it and see how it helps you. You immediately find that your back is straightening when you try to do this. Thank you. In the next one, I would like you to do the (shh) shoulder roll. In order to take the tension away from your shoulder there is nothing like the shoulder roll. Roll your shoulders. Repeat this exercise ten times and increase the number gradually. Excellent.

The final which we will be doing is, raise your hands, raise your arms straight. Now bend to one side to your left as much as you can. Good. Go back to the original position. Bend to the right, bend as much as you can and do this a few times. Straight, your arms should be straight. Little more, more, as much as you can. Bend to your left, bend to your right, bend to your left, bend to

your right, bend to your left, bend to your right. In addition to these, you could try any of the activities, any of the abdominals you are used to doing because the moment you do the abdominals, you will find that your back immediately straightens.

Any back strengthening exercises that you do, would help to improve your voice because as your posture improves, your voice also improves accordingly. The next thing we move on to is breathing. What is the importance of breathing in your voice? As we said, most of us do chest breathing. We do shallow chest breathing. As a result of that our voices are very constructed. What we need to do is, to do diaphragm breathing. Now I am going to demonstrate to you how one does (demos) diaphragm breathing.

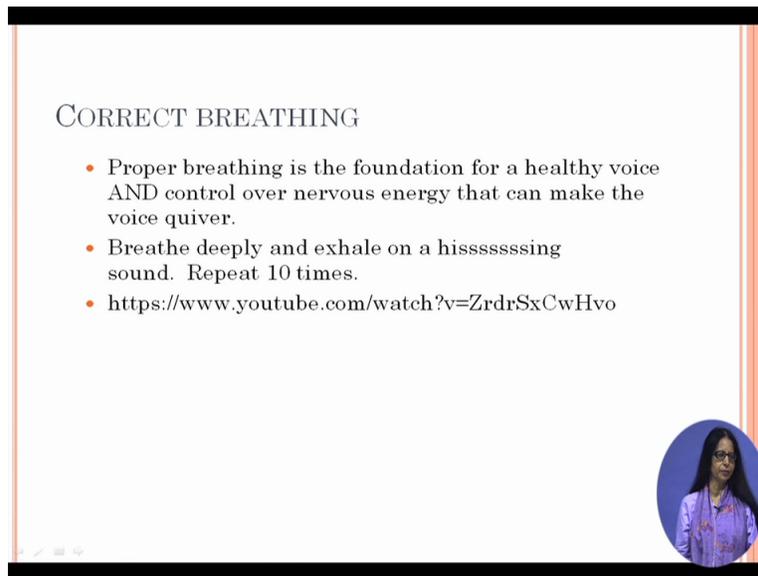
Put your hands on your lowest rib. Put your hand on your lowest rib.

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Ya, now breathe in. Hold your breath. Breathe out. You can feel your diaphragm contracting and expanding. You should be able to feel your diaphragm expand and (brea) contract. The moment you master this art of doing diaphragm breathing, you will find a significant difference in the quality of your voice. Let us try a few more breathing exercises which can help to improve your voice quality and to raise the volume.

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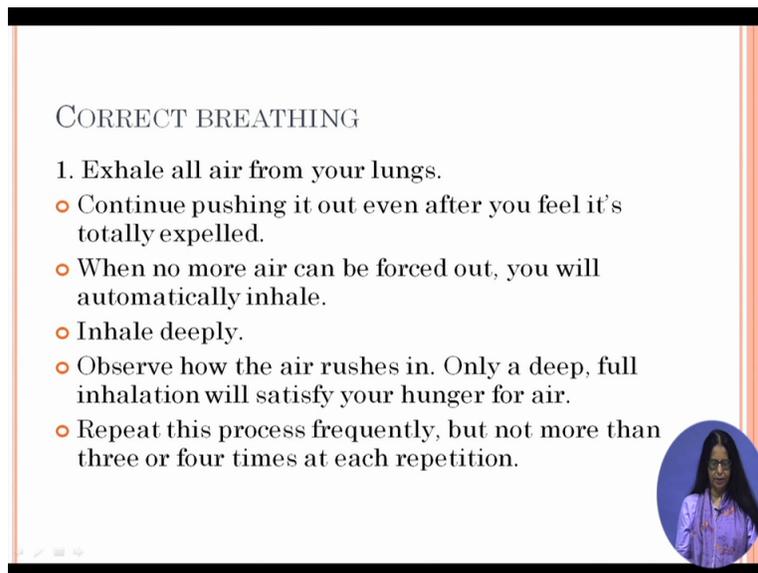
CORRECT BREATHING

- Proper breathing is the foundation for a healthy voice AND control over nervous energy that can make the voice quiver.
- Breathe deeply and exhale on a hissssssing sound. Repeat 10 times.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrdrSxCwHvo>



Proper breathing is the foundation for a healthy voice and control over nervous energy that can make the voice quiver. Breathe deeply and exhale on a hissing sound. Breathe deeply and exhale on a hissing sound. Repeat ten times. In the next activity on breathing you need to exhale all air from your lungs.

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CORRECT BREATHING

1. Exhale all air from your lungs.
  - Continue pushing it out even after you feel it's totally expelled.
  - When no more air can be forced out, you will automatically inhale.
  - Inhale deeply.
  - Observe how the air rushes in. Only a deep, full inhalation will satisfy your hunger for air.
  - Repeat this process frequently, but not more than three or four times at each repetition.

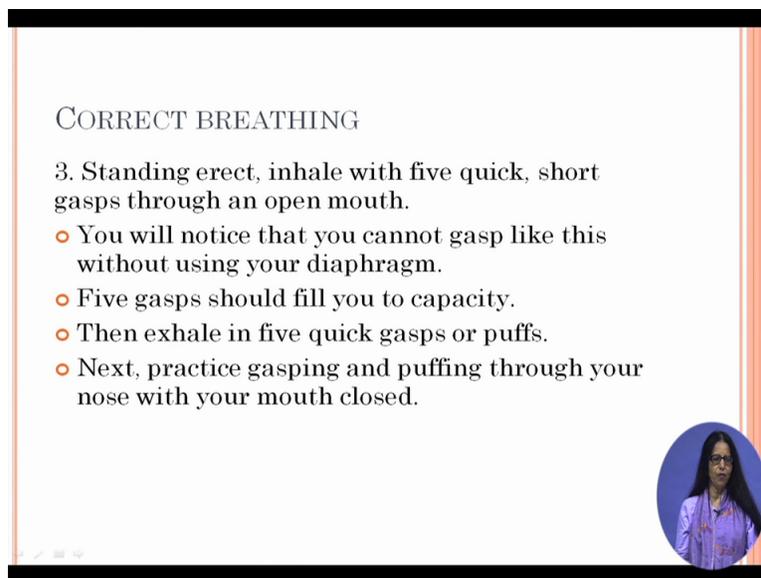


Exhale all air from your lungs. Continue pushing it out even after you feel it is totally expelled. When no more air can be forced out you will automatically inhale. Inhale deeply. Observe how the air rushes in. Only a deep full inhalation will satisfy your hunger for air. Repeat this process

frequently but not than three or four times at each repetition. We move on to the next exercise. Exhale comfortably. Then a moderately filling breath not crowding your capacity. Hold it for fifteen seconds. Now exhale quietly.

Repeat this process frequently for several days. Then gradually increase your holding time to twenty seconds, thirty seconds and forty five seconds. Eventually you will be able to hold your breath for a full minute. This exercise will help you to develop breath control by strengthening your diaphragm and related muscles. Let us move on to the next exercise, exercise three.

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CORRECT BREATHING

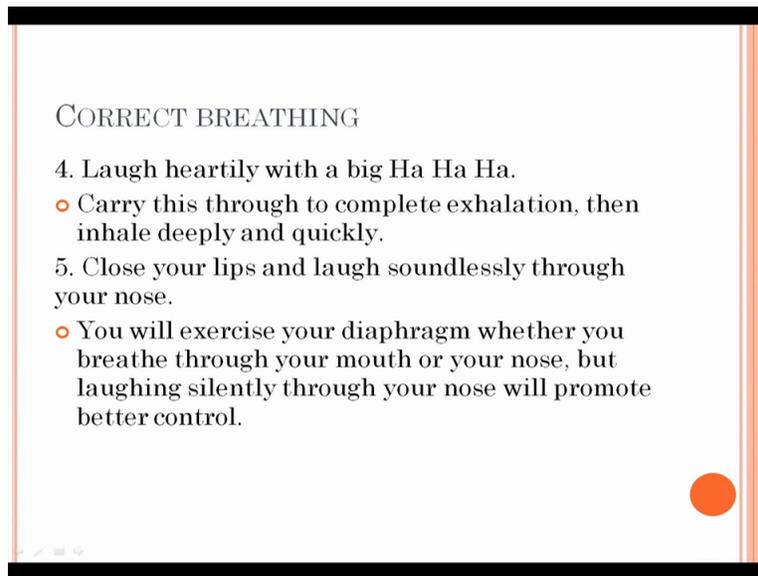
3. Standing erect, inhale with five quick, short gasps through an open mouth.

- You will notice that you cannot gasp like this without using your diaphragm.
- Five gasps should fill you to capacity.
- Then exhale in five quick gasps or puffs.
- Next, practice gasping and puffing through your nose with your mouth closed.



Standing erect, inhale with five quick, short gasps through an open mouth. Inhale with five quick short gasps through an open mouth. You will notice that you cannot gasp like this without using your diaphragm. Five (gaps) gasps should fill you to capacity. Now, exhale in five quick gasps. Exhale. Wonderful. Now practice gasping and puffing through your nose with your mouth closed. Close your mouth, gasp and puff through your nose. Brilliant.

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Now let us try this one. Laugh heartily with a big Ha Ha Ha.

Student: Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha.

Carry this through to complete exhalation.

Student: Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha.

Now inhale deeply and quickly. Close your lips and laugh soundlessly through your nose. You will exercise your diaphragm whether you breathe through your mouth or your nose. But laughing (sa) silently through your nose will promote better control. Let us move on to the fifth exercise for correct breathing.

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CORRECT BREATHING

6. Lie on your back.

- Place a book on your diaphragm.
- Try to relax each part of your body, then concentrate on the movement of your diaphragm.
- As you inhale, the book rises. As you exhale, flatten your abdomen as much as you can.
- Repeat this exercise until you automatically expand and contract your waist as you breathe.

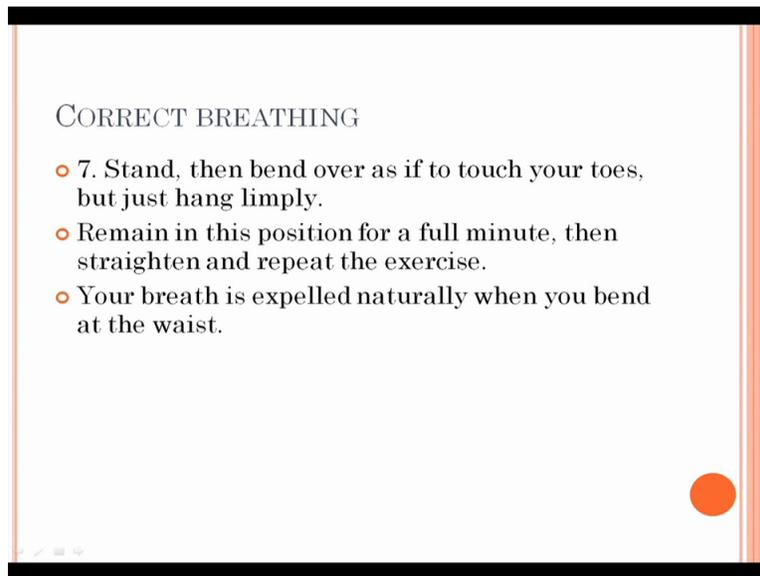


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In this one, you have to lie on your back. Lie on your back, place a book on your diaphragm, try to relax each party of your body. Try to relax each part of your body and concentrate on the movement of your diaphragm. As you inhale, the book rises. As you exhale, flatten your abdomen as much as you can. Repeat this exercise until you automatically expand and contract your waist as you breathe.

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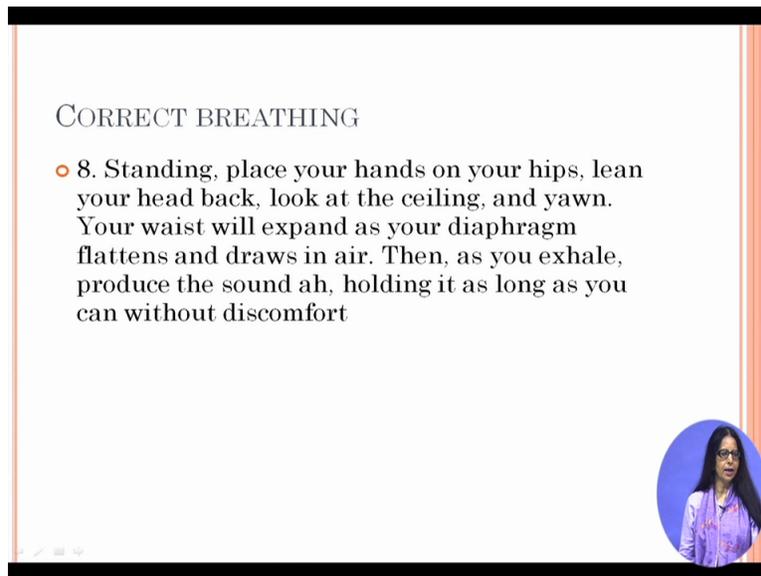
Stand, then bend over as if to touch your toes but just hang limply. Bend over as if to touch your toes but just hang limply.

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Remain in this position for a full minute. You may straighten. Now you can repeat this as many times as you want. Remain in that position for a full minute and repeat it as many times as you can because this way, your breathe is expelled naturally when you bend at the waist. Okay.

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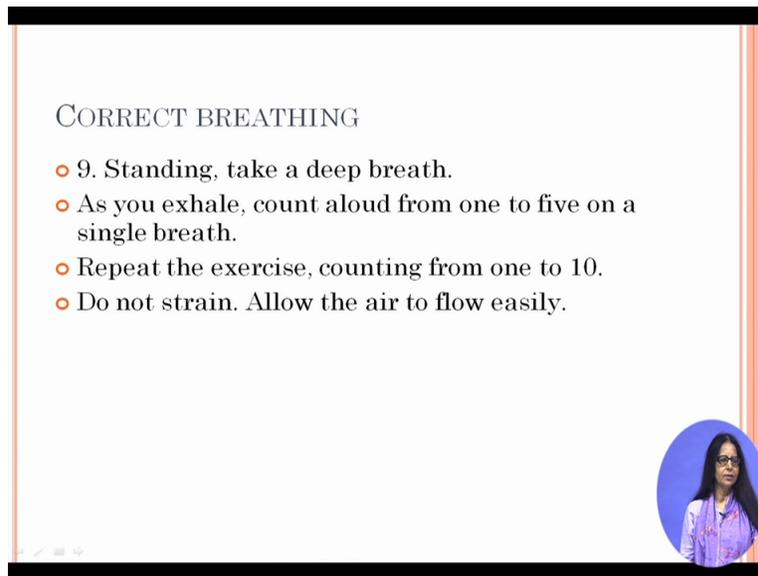
The eight exercise is stand standing place your hand on your hips, lean your head back, look at the ceiling and yawn.

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Your waist will expand as your diaphragm flattens and draws in air. Then (ex) as you exhale, produce the sound ah, hold it as long as you can without discomfort. Great.

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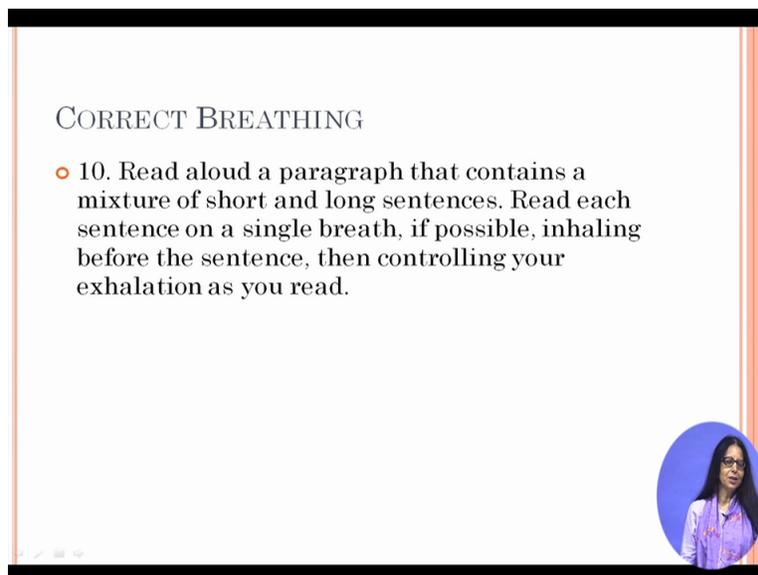
CORRECT BREATHING

- 9. Standing, take a deep breath.
- As you exhale, count aloud from one to five on a single breath.
- Repeat the exercise, counting from one to 10.
- Do not strain. Allow the air to flow easily.

A circular inset image in the bottom right corner shows a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a purple top, against a blue background.

The (ne) ninth on is, standing take a deep breath. Take a deep breath. As you exhale, count aloud from one to five on a single breath. Repeat the exercise counting from one to ten. Do not strain. Allow the air to flow easily.

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CORRECT BREATHING

- 10. Read aloud a paragraph that contains a mixture of short and long sentences. Read each sentence on a single breath, if possible, inhaling before the sentence, then controlling your exhalation as you read.

A circular inset image in the bottom right corner shows a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a purple top, against a blue background.

The final one. In this you need to read aloud a paragraph that contains a mixture of short and long sentences. Read each sentence on a single breath, if possible, inhaling before the sentence, then controlling your exhalation as you read. We will do this when we move on to delivery and

we will show you how correct breathing also impacts correct delivery. How your reading of a paragraph changes if you read with the right breathing.

Now we will have Shubhangi Goswami, our young eastern and western vocalist, demonstrate to you and also share with you some tips on how to improve your voice.

Good morning everyone. Thank you mam for giving me the opportunity. today I will be sharing some tips regarding how to improve your voice. I will be mainly focusing on four areas which extending and controlling pitch, projecting your voice, how to improve resonance and last but not the least, articulation which refers to correct and clear pronunciation of every word. So let us begin with extending and controlling the pitch. In order to do that, we first need to know the pitch, the correct pitch or the vocal range of your voice.

So to begin with, first you relax yourself, sit in a correct posture and then make an aah sound without any undue pressure on your voice. Like, aah. So, while I did this I did not feel any undue pressure, nor did I feel any kind of breathiness or heaviness in my voice. Then start moving up the ladder. Like, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah, aah. So after this I am feeling a certain constrain in my voice. So I have to understand that after this my voice will be strange. So this is the upper range of my or upper limit of my voice or this is the pitch that I can go to.

Similarly to find the lower half the lower limit of the range, I started with aah. I have to go down the ladder now. Aah, aah, aah, aah, aah. So now I am feeling a breathiness and my voice is continuously coming from within. Just from just above the diaphragm. So when we do this, we are actually going towards resonance. So when you find the range, your vocal range you will be able to understand that when to use or how much of power to give to your voice when you need to talk at a louder pitch. A louder pitch is actually narrowing your voice. So, it is coming from up the chest or the throat.

So when you find the correct pitch you know where to use the correct pitch like when you are talking in public, make sure that your pitch is just perfect because if you talk in a very loud pitch, your voice might get cracked. There is a risk of voice cracking if you talk in a very loud pitch. Then next we come to projecting your voice which basically comprises reducing the vocal constriction. Now what do we mean by that. Here when we talk, we generally do not know or we

are not aware of how the muscles are moving like when I am talking the muscles of my jaw, the tongue is a muscle.

These are doing continuous random movements because of which different sounds are being produced. So to understand this, let me give you an analogy. Like, suppose you want to use your bicep to the fullest. So what do we do? We exercise the bicep, that is constriction followed by relaxation, followed by constriction followed by relaxation, which actually strengthens the muscles to the fullest. And then we all know that an exercised muscle can lift more load. Similarly whatever sounds we are producing it is because of the movements of the various muscles in coordination with our voice box that is the larynx located right here.

So the muscles that are involved when we speak are the entire facial muscle starting from here to our diaphragm. Just from where the chest and the stomach begins. So the entire use of these muscles to the fullest will be beneficial in order to project your voice. So first we have to start with reducing a vocal constriction. If you tighten your jaw or talk in a very compact manner like if I talk like this while using the minimum of my jaw and tightening my jaw muscles in fact. This is constricting my voice as well as putting a lot of undue pressure on my jaw.

But if I relax, like, say for example, repeat after me the sound aah, eeh, aah, eeh. Now you can clearly see that I am using my jaw while I pronounce aah and eeh. But I can do the same thing without using the maximum of my jaw. Now put your hand like this and now similarly pronounce aah, eeh, aah, eeh. Use your tongue, roll your tongue to pronounce eeh. So (th) these muscles are relaxed. Aah, eeh, aah, eeh. Now you see that the jaw muscles were not used. The jaw is relaxed. So first is to know how to relax the jaw. So you pronounce any vowel or consonant and let the jaw hang or drop. Like aah.

Concentrate on the voice coming from here, from within and not on the movement of the jaw muscle at all. So, one thing is relaxing the jaw and the other thing is exercising the jaw. Quite contrary, but both are essential. When you exercise your jaw, you have to actually as I said use or find the range of the muscles and use the maximum of it. Like if you say eeh, aah or nay, you are actually extending your muscles, constricting them to the maximum. Open your mouth as big as you can and then close it slowly. Again open it to the maximum as you can then close it slowly.

Then smile to the widest like ee, like you should feel the pressure here and then come back to normal. So these things will actually exercise your jaw muscles which will in turn help in projection as well as articulation. We will come to that. We will see that how jaw exercises can help (articu) articulate properly. then in projecting we also need to focus at reducing the breathiness. Now when we are talking, obviously the breathing were if you are suffering from cold or if you already have a breathy voice, along with the (vo) voice the air comes out.

Like haa, this haa sound also comes out along with the voice. In order to reduce this we have to isolate these two. Like if you are fully voicing means, your voice in totality is coming out and the (breathin) breathy part is removed out of it. So, to do this, you might start with an aah sound. Like aah. So when I started, there was a breathy part to it like, aah. I could feel air. Like a breathy aah will sound like this, haa. Along with my voice the (breat) sound of my breath is also coming out. But if you want to isolate that, you can just go on saying aah till you find that the voicing and the breathing is isolated like aah.

The moment I increased the loudness, the breathy part was isolated. So you what you can do is you can exercise till you find that this is isolated. Do not, again I am repeating it, do not strain your voice. You can do it in short spurts. You can do it only till your breath lasts. Then we come to resonance. Now resonance or phonation is basically the reverberation, how your sound reverberates or comes back or in simple terms it is the humming or the heaviness of a sound. A (resona) (reso) resonant voice is very much liked, desired by people, people who have a good (ba) baritone.

Say for example, the announcers on radio. We have not seen them but they sound very resonant. So how to improve the resonance? it is a likeable quality definitely but in order to in improve the resonance we need to low know the lower limit of our voicing. So, the best exercise for resonance is humming. Simple but true. So, when you are humming any song, say normally, so we hum it in our normal day to day voice. but of you do the hum sound and progressively come down. Say for example, hmmm, hmmm. Now this is the normal hum that we do. Now if you continuously come down ladder by ladder like say hmmm, hmmm.

Feel it, feel it, feel it coming down your throat until you reach the diaphragm. Hmmm, put your hand on your chest, if you put your hand on your chest you will feel your chest vibrating. Now,

progressively if you feel that your sound is resonating, you will feel the vibrations coming from deeper and deeper. So I do this, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm. Until actually just a vibration come out and there is no sound. That is the point where you have hit the lowest and that is improving on that actually increases your resonance. And the more you exercise you will see that the lower level is going even lower.

So this humming sound humming is one of the best exercises and to give you another example to understand from where actually the voice comes in or come out. maybe sometime in your life you must have felt very pukish or vomited. At that time the force comes just right from above the diaphragm. So when you do this, puking exercise or activity, the pressure comes just from above the diaphragm. Now from there is from where the resonance comes in. So you have to exercise till that point in order to improve your resonance.

Then lastly we come to articulation or a correct or clear pronunciation. Now I will go back to the jaw exercises. I have already covered how to relax your jaw. So the more you relax your jaw, the more actually you can constrict them. This is like the law of pendulum. Like the more pendulum goes to the right, it can go to the left. So the more relaxed you can go with your jaw, the more constriction you can actually apply to your jaw. So first you need to learn to relax it. So, hang the jaw, then while pronouncing just let it loose so that you do not feel any kind of pressure in your jaw as if your jaw is dropping.

So and put your hand like this and try to pronounce the (le) vowels and the consonants. Without feeling any kind of movement here. So, that is relaxing the jaw and similarly when we come to exercising the jaw, fully extend the jaw, aah or eeh. Do these exercises for full extension of the jaw and then repeat these after me. Aah, aah, eeh, eeh, zee, zee, nay, nay. Sounds like this with you can use mix consonants and vowels. you will be surprised to know that while using all the vowels we do not need to use our jaw. Like, while you say A, E , I, O, U. I have extensively used my jaw.

Specially while saying E and I. But I can say all the vowels without using my jaw. See, A, E, I , O, U. Just while rolling your tongue, you can pronounce all. So, practice both. Practice both. pronounce all the vowels while using extensively your jaw. Similarly pronounce all the vowels without using your jaw. So, jaw exercises, I will again repeat exercises does not only mean

constricting, relaxing followed by constricting, relaxing followed by constricting. So jaw exercises will actually help you to articulate properly. Another very important thing is to listen.

In order to speak effectively, you need to listen very properly. So there are many (oth) languages that we come across. In India we are all multi-lingual. So listen to the different pronunciations properly and it our tendency human tendency to copy, to there are mirror selves in our body which generally copy what is happening. Like children sometime copy the facial expression of whatever they are seeing in front of them. Similarly when we are pronouncing, we tend to listen and then the muscles of our entire mouth will try to repeat the same sound.

So, key to speaking effectively is first of all listening effectively. So with full concentration listen, close your eyes maybe, listen to the different pronunciations, then break them and then slowly repeat them at first. we know that we are not specialist in all languages or all kinds of sounds. So first listen, break them into components, then repeat them and may be then you can increase the speed to attain perfection. So, think that is all from my side. Thank you very much for your time.