

Taking Care of Your Voice

By Adriana Macias and Judith Custodio, CMI.

As interpreters, our voices represent key tools that allow us to practice an income-generating profession, so we need to take care of them. If pianists did not take care of their hands or professional tennis players their arms, they might develop physical problems that limit their ability to perform their jobs. Similar to singers or theater performers, interpreters use their voices more than the average person, so they need to take steps to prevent voice problems that might develop during their careers.

The following recommendations were collected from various resources:

1. **Ask for simultaneous interpreting equipment and avoid whispering.** Whispering tightens the vocal cords, which causes them to rub together and dry out. Therefore, minimize whispering whenever possible.
2. **Eat healthy.** Include fruits and vegetables since these foods are good for the body. Consuming alcohol and caffeinated drinks should be counterbalanced by drinking more water. Greasy and fried foods can cause acid reflux, which might damage your voice over time. Spicy foods such as

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Teleperformance of France Buying LanguageLine for \$1.52 Billion

[From Slator](#)

By selling to French call center operator Teleperformance, over-the-phone interpreter LanguageLine Solutions (LanguageLine) enters another chapter. The company's history stretches back to 1982 when it was founded by a US marine and a policeman to help law enforcement officers communicate with Vietnamese refugees.

...LanguageLine is the dominant US player in remote interpreting. In 2015, the company generated revenues of USD 388m and EBITDA of nearly USD 150m. Of LanguageLine's 8,000 interpreters, 92% work from home; 86% of the business comes from over-the-phone (OTP) interpreting with video and onsite contributing the rest.

Paris-based Teleperformance is new to language interpretation services. One of the largest call center operators in the world, the company was founded in 1978 by current Executive Chairman Daniel Julien. Its 190,000 employees share 147,000 workstations. Like LanguageLine, Teleperformance is highly profitable with an EBITDA of EUR 492m on revenues of EUR 3.4bn in 2015.

[From Interpret America:](#)

InterpretAmerica's Take: Teleperformance who? LanguageLine has long been the giant of the US and global telephonic interpreting market and it

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curry, chili or hot salsas can irritate your vocal cords.

3. **Lubricate the vocal cords.** Vocal folds need to be lubricated, ideally by drinking at least two quarts of water daily. Water also helps to flush out caffeine and alcohol from our bodies which tend to dehydrate and deplete the vocal cords. Drink non-caffeinated herbal teas such as chamomile or mint. Also, warm water with honey and a few drops of lemon help to soothe and relax vocal cords.
4. **Maintain a more humid environment.** Gas furnaces, air conditioners, and climates with a low amount of moisture in the air can adversely impact vocal cords. Using a humidifier at night will maintain more moisture in the air, which is good for the vocal cords.
5. **For voice longevity, warm up every day.** Just as any other muscle in your body works better if you warm it up, so will your speech production muscles. It does not have to be an extensive and complicated warm up as if you were an opera singer. With healthy vocal cords your voice will sound stronger and your articulation will be more clear and crisp. As you strengthen your speech muscles, you will be able to speak longer and avoid vocal fatigue. Use the following warm-up exercises for two to five minutes at the start of your day while getting dress or driving to work.
 - Grin widely, stick out your tongue, and then finish with a big yawn.
 - Relax the face and parts of the body involved in speaking by massaging your face, jaw and scalp with the goal to improve diction.
 - Sing to the enunciators: “Lips, Teeth, Tip-of-the-tongue” so – la – fa-fa-fa-fa, fa – so – mi-mi-mi-mi, mi – fa – re-re-re-re, re – mi – do-do-do-do.”
- Relax. Take a deep breath, then starting quietly begin hissing for 16 seconds. Take another deep breath and start hissing again as you count down from 20 to 4. Increase the volume of hisses during the last three seconds.
- Go immediately into this next exercise. Say notes in different tones. (I.E. Soo-oh-sah-seh-see, do-mi-so-mi-do, do-re-me-fa-so-la-see).
- Practice tongue twisters, e.g. “How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?” You can easily find many examples of English tongue twisters online
6. **A powerful voice is relaxed and comfortable.**

Breathing deeply relaxes the larynx so the voice can settle into a comfortable and natural sound rather than one that is strained or forced.

7. **Take care of your body.** Exercising regularly will help you feel better, strengthen your breathing and, by proxy, your voice. You do not have to do strenuous workouts five or six days a week; simple changes like walking 15 minutes a day, parking your car in the farthest spot from an entrance, taking the stairs instead of the elevator all this little details would certainly make a difference. Having a strong voice will allow you to speak longer and help you project your voice to the audience.
8. **Get plenty of sleep.** This helps you minimize fatigue and maintain a good general health, preventing colds and other illnesses that could affect your voice.
9. **Consult with your MD.** If you have persistent hoarseness, weakness or any kind of throat or voice problem, you should consult your doctor.

Finally, think about how many hours you spend over a lifetime interpreting; care for and avoid straining your voice and getting to a point where you can lose it.

Resources:

[AIIC World Voice-Management 1998-2016](#)

[National Association for Music Education 11/12/2014](#)

[IEO Taking care of your voice 2/5/2015](#)

[Ho, Kerry How to take care of your voice-Vocal Health Tips The Songbird Tree 7/9/2014](#)

Translation and Interpreting Class at Century College with Professor Rachel Herring.

has just been bought by a French company for a whopping **USD \$1.5 billion**. That amount is hard to digest in an expanding but still relatively modest remote interpreting market. Indeed, it represents an estimated 2/3 of the total telephonic interpreting market value.

The potential implications of this purchase for telephonic interpreting in the United States are huge. It may feel like business news unrelated to the average interpreter, but it is important for the individual interpreter as well as for large consumers of telephonic interpreting.

LanguageLine is likely the largest single employer of freelance interpreters in the US (approximately 8,000). It services hospitals, courts, emergency responders (they hold the 911 contract) and other businesses who need interpreting services. How Teleperformance chooses to proceed with LanguageLine's existing labor force infrastructure will impact wages, work conditions and expectations.

Training Seminar **CEU OPPORTUNITIES**

The Interpreting Stakeholder Group in partnership with the Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association is proud to announce the Fall 2016 training seminar:

"Optimizing Outcomes: Effective Collaboration between Speech-Language Pathologists and Interpreters"

[Advanced registration is now available online.](#)

Attendees will receive 3.5 Continuing Education Contact Hours approved by the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI).

When: October 15, 2016

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Where: MN Department of Education Conference Center, 1500 Commerce Street, Roseville, MN 55113

Free parking is available.

[Please click here for seminar details and to register.](#)

(Advanced registration deadline is October 10, 2016 @ 5 pm)

Presenters:

Marilyn Fairchild, M.A., CCC-SLP, is a clinical supervisor in speech-language pathology at the U of MN. She has experience and a special interest in the evaluation and treatment of individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Angela Luther, M.A., CCC-SLP and CHI™Spanish, works in both medical and educational settings as a speech-language pathologist and as a healthcare interpreter when she is not giving therapy to children or adults.

Christianna Mullins, M.A., CCC-SLP, works with both monolingual and bilingual clients and has collaborated with interpreters across a variety of settings.

Kate Parrott, M.A., CCC-SLP, works at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota with special interests in the evaluation and treatment of culturally and linguistically diverse clients as well as augmentative communication.

Following the training seminar participants are welcome to lunch together to continue the conversations and relationships started during the morning. Interpreters are welcome to bring their own "brown bag" lunch. ISG will provide light snacks.

We look forward to your participation on October 15th!