

The Spinal Roll - Exercise to improve speaking voice:

There are three areas we focus on for improving the speaking voice.

Relaxation: If we hold any tension in our body it will reflect in our voice and the way we hold ourselves and move. Any tension will limit and distort the sound of our voice and our avenues of communication.

Breathing: The human voice is an instrument. A wind instrument. Our voice will only ever be as good as our breathing technique allows it to be. Shallow breathing will result in a shallow voice, that runs out of breath at the end of sentences and it will also be difficult to increase volume and bring light and shade to our voice when we speak.

Resonance: How deep, clear and fully reverberating our voice is depends on us being fully present in our physical body.

The following exercise helps all three areas.

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Roll downwards, folding over towards your toes. **Do this very slowly** only going down as far as you want to go. Feel your arms falling forward and heavy, let your head drop slowly forward. (This position is sometimes called a 'rag doll'). Whilst down in this position breathe in and exhale. You will feel your body relaxing. Repeat a couple of times whilst in this position breathing gently in and out.
2. Now roll up, slowly stacking vertebrae upon vertebrae right up to lifting the head. **(Do this slowly)**
3. Do step one again and this time when you reach the head down position, breathe in and when you breathe out sigh out the word **WAY**. *(Stay down in this bent forward position).*
4. Still in the head down position breathe in again and this time when you breathe out sigh out the word **WOE**.
5. Still in the head down position breathe in again and this time when you breathe out sigh out the word **WOW**.
6. **Roll slowly all the way up.**
7. Repeat the roll down breathing out and as you go down sigh out the word **WOE**
8. Roll up and repeat these two steps with the words **WAY & WOW**

Repeat as many times as you desire.

The effect of this exercise is three fold:

Relaxation: Rolling up and rolling down helps us to relax and feel more grounded and at the same time expanded. When we speak, and we are more relaxed we connect with our audience on a deeper level.

Breathing: Our breathing becomes slower because our body starts to let go. We breathe more deeply. Our voice becomes stronger and clearer and more fluent. The pace at which we speak becomes slower and more deliberate. It also helps us to think more clearly.

Resonance: As you roll up and down you can feel your voice moving through the body. With every new position of your body, your voice changes. You discover how your voice is connected to your physical body and feel the vibration of your voice within your body. When you start to feel this vibration you realise you are speaking with your whole being. Your audience will pick up on this as you speak and your whole communication comes to life.