

Auctioneers Risk Voice Damage

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To counteract the problems from this situation, Americo recommends investing in a personal steamer set up in a secluded room at the auction, which would enable the auctioneer to take a break at regular intervals and breathe in the steam.

Americo said the smallest muscles in the body are in the voice box. Stress changes the sound of a voice. It is important to learn to speak in a relaxed voice.

"If the voice is hoarse for 7-10 days, one should see a throat specialist. There is a tendency to wait too long when hoarse, which can cause scarring and permanent voice problems," Americo said.

Americo said that auctioneers usually require only one session with him to learn voice relaxation principles.

Auctioneers can clearly develop the habit of using false vocal cords. Americo teaches techniques to choosing the right vocal cords.

"If properly trained, auctioneers can learn to project their voices without shouting. To make your voice heard in noisy situations, tighten your stomach muscles, not those in your throat and neck,"

Americo said.

Americo suggests the following techniques to enable auctioneers to speak longer and more effectively:

- Stretch shoulder, neck, and facial muscles periodically.

- Don't try to speak without adequate air. Renew your breath often, and take slow, deep breaths between pauses.

- Keep vocal folds moist by drinking plenty of water. Avoid caffeine and alcohol because they cause dehydration.

- Be careful what you eat. Frequent heartburn and a sour taste in your mouth may mean stomach acids are spilling over into your larynx. Avoid spicy and acidic foods. Stop late-night eating to help eliminate symptoms.

"An auctioneer's voice is a personal asset. He must learn to conserve and preserve it," Americo said.

For more information on voice care, contact Americo by calling (800) 346-2272.

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