**COOLING DOWN**

We are vocal athletes!

Runners don’t stop and sit down after a marathon or a sprint ; they walk about and gently stretch until their muscles have returned to normal.

Vocal muscles (vocal folds) are very small in comparison with runners’ leg muscles but they undergo a similar workout when we sing or do a lot of vocal exercises. On a day like today when there has been much participation in vocal exercises and performance, or after a day at a chorus retreat, cooling down is crucial to help your vocal muscles return to a “normal” speaking setting.

Here is a reminder of some of the vocal exercises we used today.

* Start with an upper body stretch. Gently reach up with your arms, gently roll your head from side to side. Make sure you don’t overstretch. Be gentle!
* Gently stretch your mouth and neck. Open your jaw and YAWN on an AAAAH. Try a gentle neck stretch.
* Short sighs – use a straw if one is handy. Straw phonation is a brilliant tool to help reset the vocal muscles.
* Lip trills ( bubbling / lip flutters) ensuring there is space inside your mouth when you perform the trills. Try some silent lip trills too.
* Slides : from root to fifth ( 1 to 5) and back again – use humming, zzzz, vvvv or a straw. Imitate the sound of a siren.
* Downward slide : 5-3-4-2-3-1-2-7-1 on a pitch that is comfortable to you. Gentle hum or straw.
* Long slide : I like to think of this one as putting your instrument away at the end of the day!

Cooling down is really the opposite of warming up and instead of waking up your voice you are restoring your voice to its default setting.

How long should a cooling down session last? You’ll be the judge of that as you will know when your voice sounds comfortable and is back to normal. Up to 5 minutes should be enough but be gentle!

Any questions? Contact me on alysonchaney@yahoo.co.uk