

## Easy Voice

Many people who stutter demonstrate excessive tension and/or discoordination within their phonatory system as they are stuttering (Bloodstein, 1995; Denny & Smith, 1997). When the muscles that control voicing become tense and move incorrectly during stuttered speech, blockages can occur as vocal fold vibration is initiated. These blockages may manifest as breath holding, hard glottal attacks, and silent or audible laryngeal blocks.



Easy Voice (also known as “Gentle Onset”) directly addresses these difficulties. This fluency-enhancing strategy helps students to ease and relax the movement of their vocal folds as they initiate vowel sounds (Cooper & Cooper, 2003; Healey & Scott, 1995; Guitar, 1998; Runyan & Runyan, 1999). It involves moving the vocal folds in an extremely light and gentle way.

### *Easy Voice can be taught in the following way:*

1. Explain the rationale (described above and on page 32 of the Student Workbook).
2. Guide students through steps 1–4 of “How to make an Easy Voice” (see page 33 of the Student Workbook). Provide models as indicated.
  - » Make sure students feel the tiny buzzing vibration at the level of their vocal folds as they produce the gentle humming described in step 1.
  - » Note that the quiet buzzing sound described in step 3 has no particular vowel coloration (it should have a schwa quality).

- » This very quiet sound may be imperceptible to others; therefore, it may be necessary to move closer in order to hear it.
  - » Students will produce this tiny buzzing sound as they begin to exhale, and then gradually shape and color it into a particular vowel. They will use a bell curve as they do so.
3. Model, and have students practice Easy Voice using the syllables on page 34 of the Student Workbook.
  4. Have students do additional practice using the Easy Voice Chart on page 35 of the Student Workbook.
    - » Encourage them to feel the gentle vibrations of their vocal folds as they initiate phonation.
    - » Remind students that, as they practice, they can take as long as is necessary to produce the Easy Voice. Tell them that, eventually, they will use this skill at much faster speeds.
  5. Students should also practice this strategy as they produce the Easy Voice Words (see page 36 of the Student Workbook) using Slow Stretched Speech. When doing so, each of these one-syllable words should be prolonged for approximately two seconds.

## A/V Resources for Easy Voice

### Audio Files

[Track 1.23](#): Easy Voice [1:11]

[Track 1.24](#): How to make an Easy Voice [3:35]

[Track 1.25](#): Easy Voice Chart [1:47]

[Track 1.26](#): Easy Voice Words read at Slow Stretched Speech [2:39]

### Video Files

[V35](#) Therapist Instruction #1 Younger Student [3:55]

[V34](#) Therapist Instruction #2 Older Student [1:15]

[V36](#) Student Example #1: Workbook Syllables [4:36]

[V37](#) Student Example #2: Workbook Words and Phrases [4:44]

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