



How to Reduce Irritation That Triggers Coughing

A cough is triggered once irritation builds up to a certain level. Reducing irritation in your throat and airway will reduce coughing.

Hydrate

The most important thing you can do is to drink plenty of water to reduce dryness of your throat. Drink at least 1 and a half litres of water each day, that is about 6-8 glasses of water. Not including tea, coffee or soft drinks as they usually contain caffeine.

Breathing

1. **Sit and stand with good posture.** Sit and stand with your neck and back straight and your chin gently tucked in. This opens your airway, makes breathing easier and allows you to relax the throat.
2. **Avoid bad posture.** When you slouch standing or sitting, your shoulders tilt forward and your head tilts back and your chin lifts slightly. This puts pressure on your throat and vocal cords and your neck. It can increase irritation and put strain on your voice.
3. **Breathe through your nose.** Mouth breathing dries your throat. Breathing through your nose cleans, warms and moistens the air before it reaches your throat and vocal cords.

Talking

1. Limit harmful voice use, such as shouting, grunting, or screaming. Talking, laughing or singing too loudly can also damage your vocal cords.
2. Try not to speak over other noise such as television or music or around machinery such as a lawnmower.
3. Do not whisper, as whispering increases air pressure in your vocal cords and may irritate your throat.

4. Use your natural voice, not too high, not too low or not too loud.
5. Limit coughing and clearing your throat. Sometimes coughing can be excessive and clearing the throat can become a habit. When you cough and clear your throat it puts too much force on your throat and vocal cords.

Everyday

- Get plenty of sleep. Have a short rest during the day to stop and relax.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise gives you energy and strength.
- Limit caffeine drinks to 2 cups each day. Caffeine can increase dryness and irritation in the throat.
- Do not smoke anything and avoid smoky environments.
- Limit alcohol. Alcohol can dry the throat and vocal cords. It also increases the likelihood of heartburn, which can also damage the throat and vocal cords.
- Do not use mouthwash that contains alcohol as this will dry your throat.
- Remember to drink plenty of water every day! Take a water bottle with you everywhere you go.

Look after your throat, voice, and airways