

Supporting your speech

A patient's advice sheet

How can this information help me?

Dysarthria is the reduced ability of your tongue to make distinct sounds. Dysarthria can vary widely from barely noticeable to speech that can be difficult to understand. These tips can help to take the pressure off your speech.

Tips to help your speech

Reducing the background noise helps to reduce the overall sound in the room. It also helps both you and your listener to focus on what you are saying. This can mean simply turning off the television. It can be helpful to reduce the noise levels prior to a conversation, for example when booking a restaurant ask for a table in the quietest area.

Sit or stand close to the listener. Reduce the distance your voice has to travel. Try to be in the same room as the listener, and face to face if possible. Remember to respect other people's personal space, which is generally a stretched arm length for strangers and closer for family or friends. However, you can ask them to move closer or move your head closer to indicate that they need to move nearer to hear what you have to say.

Support your speech with breath.

Circumstances such as speaking on the phone, with strangers, in time pressured situations or when you are tired can make it more difficult to speak clearly. Allow yourself the time you need to get your message out. Taking a moment to pause and take a deep breath can help to support and strengthen your speech. Ask for the Breathing Exercise Patient Information sheet. We can provide you with this for you to practice.

Keep sentences and phrases short with pauses between each one. Keeping to shorter sentences or phrases will help the listener by providing information in small chunks. It will also help you to take regular deep breaths to support your speech.

Use gesture or writing to support your speech. We naturally use body language along with speaking. Use gestures to help the listener to understand what you are saying. Write down key words or sentences to support your speech if you are in a noisy environment.

If you have any questions, please contact Speech & Language Therapy on 01223 638732.