

Basic training–Electrolarynx (EL) also known as an artificial larynx (AL)

- Just mouth the words when you are learning to speak with the EL.
- Keep your arm close to your chest when you are speaking, it helps position the head of the EL against your neck.
- Keep your chin in a natural position and do not force air out of your stomach when trying to speak.
- Use natural pauses and sentences; articulate clearly when you speak.
- Practice with a family member; it is important that everyone gets used to this new way of communicating.

How to use your electrolarynx with neck placement

1. Familiarize yourself with the EL, read the instructions carefully and practice using the controls.
2. Firmly, but gently, push the top of the EL into the soft area below your chin so that the entire top is in contact with your neck.
3. Press the “ON” button when you begin to talk.
4. Mouth the words, “Hello, how are you?”
5. If you do not understand what you said, move the EL to another soft spot on your neck and try again.
6. Keep moving the EL around the soft spots on your neck or underneath your chin until you find the place where you can clearly hear yourself the best.



What is an intraoral device and when would you use it?

There may be tissue swelling around your neck after surgery. An intraoral device (oral adaptor and tube) attached to your EL can be helpful in this situation. The intraoral adapter is a rubber cap that can be placed on top of your EL along with an oral tube so that you can use the EL in your mouth.



How do you use an oral adaptor?

1. Place the oral adaptor on top of the EL so it fits snugly.
2. Insert the oral tube into the opening at the top of the cap of the adaptor.
3. Place the oral tube in the space between your cheek and teeth.
4. Press the “ON” button when you begin to talk. Keep the tube in mouth while trying to articulate clearly.
5. When you place the tube into your mouth, do not cover your mouth. Many listeners read lips to help them understand what you are saying.



Pitch and loudness

- Pitch should be adjusted to a level that is more appropriate to your age and gender; and
- The loudness level should be set so that you can clearly hear yourself within your environment.
- If you need assistance, the pitch of the EL can be set by your clinician during a treatment session.

Articulation (how clear is your voice)

You shape sounds into speech using your lips, teeth, roof of your mouth and tongue.

1. Practice mouthing words silently without using the EL.
2. Practice saying “T”, “K”, “P” and “S” silently.
3. Mouth the phrase “I’d like a cup of coffee.”
4. Repeat the above phrase with the EL turned “ON”.
5. Over-exaggerate the movements of your tongue, teeth and lips so that you can be understood better.

Timing

- Use the “ON/OFF” button so that sound is only coming out while you are talking and there is no sound during pauses or in between sentences.
- Practice placing the device against your neck or in your mouth (with the intraoral adapter) before pushing the “ON/OFF” button to start the sound.
- Practice the following:

Count # 1-20

Days of the week

Months of the year

- Once you can be easily understood with the words above, start saying longer words, 2-3 word phrases and then sentences while practicing when to turn the EL “ON” or “OFF”. Read a few paragraphs of a favorite book out loud to help with timing.
- You should pause and turn the device off when you would naturally hear pauses in speech. For example, pause after a phrase, when you want to emphasize a word and/or in between sentences. This gives the listener extra time to understand what you have said.



Tips for EL speech while on the phone:

- Try setting the pitch a bit lower than normal. Phones often distort high-pitched sounds.
- Lower the volume of the EL. Phones amplify sound, so it sounds even louder to the listener.
- Keep the EL and the phone mouthpiece as far away from each other as possible to prevent the phone from picking up extra noise from the EL.

More Practice:

“Hello, how are you?”

“I’d like a cup of coffee.”

“What time is it?”

“My name is...”

Days of the week

(say all days of the week without pausing)

Months of the year

(pause at April and August)

Count from 60-80

(turn on at 60, pause at 65, 70 and 75)