

# Nebuliser vs Steamer

Both nebulisers and steamers can benefit singers by hydrating and soothing the vocal cords, but they work in different ways and offer distinct advantages depending on your needs. By choosing the right tool and using it effectively alongside appropriate warm-ups and correct technique, singers can maintain optimal vocal health and performance.

## What Is a Nebuliser?

A nebuliser is a device that converts liquid into a fine mist of microscopic particles that can be inhaled directly into the lungs and throat. It delivers direct hydration deep into the respiratory tract, reaching the vocal cords without excessive heat.

## How to Use a Nebuliser for Singing:

1. Fill the device with a distilled water - this can be water that has been brought to boil and then cooled. A sterile saline solution (0.9% sodium chloride) may be added.
2. Attach the mask or mouthpiece, whichever you prefer.
3. Turn on the nebuliser and inhale deeply and slowly through your mouth.
4. Use for 5–10 minutes before singing or whenever your voice feels dry or strained. Make sure you wait 15 minutes after use before using your voice.

## Choose a Nebuliser if:

- Your voice feels dry or strained.
- You need a cool and gentle option for hydration.
- You sing professionally and require vocal consistency for long performances.
- You're sensitive to heat or prone to vocal swelling.

## What Is a Steamer?

A steamer produces warm, moist air by boiling water. The steam is then inhaled to soothe the throat, loosen mucus, and hydrate the vocal cords. Steamers can be standalone devices or improvised using a bowl of hot water and a towel.

## How to Use a Steamer for Singing:

1. Follow the instructions on your steamer as some you fill with boiling water and other heat it up for you.
2. If you're using a bowl and hot water, position your face at a comfortable distance (6–12 inches) away from the bowl to avoid burning.
3. Cover your head with a towel to trap steam.
4. Inhale the steam through your mouth and nose for 5–10 minutes.
5. Use AFTER singing and allow the voice to rest at least 30 minutes to clear airways, hydrate your vocal cords and reduce inflammation.

## Choose a Steamer if:

- You're dealing with phlegm, colds, or post-nasal drip.
- You need to clear mucus from your vocal cords.
- You are able to rest your voice after use.

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| Feature     | Nebuliser  | Steamer   |
|-------------|--|---|
| Temperature | Cool mist (no heat)  | Warm or hot steam   |
| Moisture    | Fine mist penetrates deeper into the vocal cords and lungs   | Moisture mainly hydrates the throat and upper airway              |
| Mucus       | Not as effective as breaking up mucus  | Effective at loosening mucus and clear airways                    |
| Safety      | Can be used before singing (allow 15 minutes)<br>Safe for prolonged or frequent use, even inflammaed vocal cords | Care needed; avoid burns from hot steam, use AFTER singing        |
| Portability | Lightweight, compact and travel friendly   | Larger and less portable; requires access to boiling water        |
| Best for    | Chronic dryness, hydration, soothing inflamed vocal cords, increasing vocal cord flexibility                     | Congestion, phlegm, clearing blocked airways, reducing hoarseness |

## Tried and Tested:

[Ultrasonic Nebuliser](#)  
[Omron MicroAIR U100 \(nebuliser I use\):](#)  
[Dr Nelsons Inhaler](#)

Remember, drink plenty of water alongside using these devices for maximum vocal health. Nothing replaces good vocal technique so make sure you are working with a qualified vocal teacher. If you have any respiratory conditions, check with your doctor before use.