



Feel the beat

Beatboxing good for throat

AND YOU THOUGHT daily beatboxing practice with high-octane percussive sounds would ruin your kid's voice?

Not really. If we believe H. Steven Sims of University of Illinois in Chicago, beatboxing may actually be gentler on vocal cords - even softer than singing itself. Beatboxing (also beatbox) is a form of vocal percussion primarily involving the art of producing drum beats, rhythm, and musical

sounds using one's mouth, lips, tongue and voice.

"Little is known about the structures involved in beatboxing and if it poses a risk of injury to the vocal tract," said Sims, associate professor of otolaryngology. To achieve positive results, Sims imaged the vocal tracts of four male beatbox artists. He also recorded artists as they performed various isolated and combination beatbox sounds.

Sims found that beatboxers use the whole vocal tract to produce a range of sounds,

spreading the energy among several structures and minimizing wear on any single part. "Keeping the glottis - space between the vocal cords - open means that beatboxing may actually be protective of the vocal folds," he added.

The whole vocal tract was used when beatboxers made beats - spreading the energy around that kept them safe from developing scar tissue that are usually developed in singers who strain their vocal cords. In fact, some of the techniques that beatboxers

use could help singers relieve stress on their vocal cords. For instance, using muscles to elongate the vocal tract could help singers get themselves a little closer to that high note, before engaging the vocal folds, said the study.

Next on Sims' agenda is to study female beatboxers as women use their voices differently as their larynxes are smaller and shaped differently than men's, said the study. The findings of the study were published in the latest edition of the *Journal of Voice*. IANS

Keep it real

SUPERMODEL TYRA BANKS has said that she doesn't like to use the label 'plus-size' as it has a negative connotation to it.

The 40-year-old supermodel said that she instead uses the term 'fiercely real.'

"I don't like the label 'plus-size'. I don't want to use the

term 'plus-size', because, to me, what the hell is that? It just doesn't have a positive connotation to it. I tend to not use it," huffingtonpost.com quoted Banks as saying.

Banks is currently campaigning with Special K to ban 'fat talk' and promote a positive body image. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Embrace Life!

As another year passes me by, I look back and see what was accomplished. Many goals were achieved and many were stalled; some were forgotten and some were changed. As always 2013 started with a bang and after the first few months the enthusiasm for a new way of life began to wane. And in no time I was back to living with my old patterns and in the blink of an eye another year has passed.

So what can we do differently to make 2014 a more meaningful year? For starters the best way to invite 2014 is by letting go of all the clutter. Clutter is not just physical things but also the emotional baggage that we tend to carry. So go through your wardrobes, bookshelves, DVD collection, shoes and let go of things that are not needed and are just occupying space. Many charities would be more than happy to accept your unwanted things during this festive season to help the less fortunate.

The next step is to take stock of your life emotionally. Isn't it time that you forgive those who have hurt you and move on to healthy and happy relationships? So join a meditation class or go for a hypnotherapy session - do whatever it takes to let go of your past and move on.

It is also time to clear the clutter from your office. Clean your desk of all paperwork and pending projects. File away old documents and delete unwanted folders from your laptop. The best way to invite new opportunities is by opening up your physical space at work. Enroll in some classes, learn a new skill or simply volunteer to work on a new project.

To stay focused on your path, write down your goals for 2014. Do you want to lose some weight? Are you keen to learn how to play piano? Are you seeking a new job? Do you want to go hiking? Are you looking for a meaningful long-term relationship? Or do you simply want to spend more time with your family? Whatever may be your goal, write it down clearly with realistic timelines. You can even create a collage of your vision and keep it visible at all times. By doing so, you are likely to remember all the goals throughout the year and not deviate from your path.

And last but not the least - take some 'me' time out from your busy schedule to enjoy life. Very often we are so focused on making others happy that we forget about ourselves and never address our needs. So enjoy listening to music, catch up with old friends, buy flowers for yourself and most importantly embrace life in 2014.

Shivani Adalja is a Dubai-based well-being expert. She runs the Alignment Institute which offers effective solutions that focus on stress management and overall well-being. Email align@shivaniadalja.com

