

The Three American Speech Sounds Produced in the Nasal Cavity

- **File 3, Track 12 Test for Nasal Speech 4:54**

There are three American speech sounds that automatically resonate in your nasal cavity regardless of where you place your voice. They are /m/ as in “mom,” /n/ as in “never,” and /ng/ as in “song” or “working.” When these sounds are produced, sound waves briefly vibrate in your nasal cavity, producing a buzzing vibration in the bridge of your nose that can be felt with your fingertips. These three sounds are always placed in the nasal cavity. It can’t be avoided.

Try It

Place your fingers on the bridge of your nose. Say “mouth,” “name,” and “going.” You should feel a buzzing vibration in the bridge of your nose. You should *not* feel a buzz with all other *non-nasal* sounds. If you feel a buzz in your nasal cavity with non-nasal speech sounds, then too much nasal resonance is being used. This is your cue to drop your voice into the optimal pitch range and speak with better oral resonance to redirect those speech sound waves.

The Test for Nasal Speech

Find out if you speak with nasality. Place your fingers on the middle portion of the bridge of your nose and say the following words:

Sour Hot sauce Cat Book Bracelet Briefcase Tiger

You should *not* feel a buzzing vibration because these words do not contain the nasal sounds that resonate in your nasal cavity. If you feel a buzz, then your voice is placed too high in your nasal cavity, creating nasal resonance. Lower your voice by speaking in your optimal pitch range, and speak from your oral and pharyngeal resonating cavities.

Try these phrases. Again, you should *not* feel a buzz in the bridge of your nose because there are no nasal sounds in these statements. To find your ideal pitch range, say “uh-huh” or “um-hmm” or sigh on down and get into your optimal pitch range.

- It was sour.
- I rode the bike.
- Please pass the hot sauce.
- The stove is hot.
- Put your briefcase here.

If you feel vibrations on the bridge of your nose, you do not pass the test for nasal speech. You are speaking with nasal resonance. Continue your practice and you can change your voice. If there are no vibrations, then congratulate yourself because you pass the test.