

Getting Your Equipment Needs Met

My director knows our studio microphone is broken and agrees we need to fix it right away. She says she has requested a repair. Yet 3 weeks have elapsed, and nothing has been resolved. Meanwhile, my voice is shot. If I refuse to teach until the mike is repaired, I will be considered a problem instructor. But if I continue to teach without a mike, my voice will suffer even more. What should I do?

Janelle Mason
Miramar, Florida

You have good reason to be concerned about straining your voice. Excessive overuse can cause vocal nodules and/or laryngitis. Your voice is an important tool, and you shouldn't be made to feel guilty about repeatedly bringing this problem to your director's attention.

My advice is to approach your director from a business perspective. Tell her that not having a mike makes it difficult for your participants to follow along in your classes, and point out that this could lead to frustration, a decrease in attendance and possibly even injuries. I would also mention that the continued strain on your voice could become severe enough that you might no longer be able to conduct classes at your full potential.

Another solution would be to purchase a mike yourself and submit the bill to management for reimbursement. Or you could go directly to manage-

ment and ask that the matter be resolved immediately.

Janelle Mason is an AFAA-certified instructor and personal trainer. She owns and operates a martial arts school and kickboxing studio in southern Florida.

Angela Broderick, MA
Leawood, Kansas

As with many challenges at work, a problem like this presents an opportunity for you to "shine" as an employee.

I would recommend you call your director before you teach again. Explain that you want to follow up on the mike issue and offer to help resolve things. Say you know she is very busy and you would be willing to take the mike in for repair or ship it back to the vendor if it's still under warranty.

This approach will reinforce to your director the importance of providing a working mike for instructors. It will also present you in a positive light as someone who is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty. While this may involve a little more work on your part, it sure beats destroying your voice. In all likelihood, however, your director will move the mike problem to the top of her priority list and you won't need to do anything. In the meantime, turn the music down and refrain from yelling to compensate for the lack of proper audio equipment.

Angela Broderick, MA, has 18 years' experience in the fitness industry. She is a program director and vice president of Club La Femme fitness centers in Leawood, Kansas.

Katalin Rodriguez Zamiar
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In my experience, it is usually the person directly *above* the director who causes the holdup in these situations. This has happened to me several times, and each time the delay was caused by the general manager, who didn't want to purchase new equipment or pay to have the old equipment repaired. If I were in this situation, I would go directly to the general manager for an explanation.

But if it turns out that your director simply dropped the ball, I suggest you explain to your participants before each class that your voice is hoarse and that you don't have a mike to use. Your students will probably have a less enjoyable class since they will not be able to hear you over the music. At the end of class, I would apologize and make it very obvious you tried to do your best under the circumstances. I would hope this would inspire participants to complain about the situation and ask that it be rectified.

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