



Duke Voice Care Center

Where everyone has a voice

How to Make Your Voice Last for a Lifetime

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What our voices mean to us

- Personal identity, self-esteem and self-image
- The voice is our instrument
- Livelihood and income
- Quality of life:
 - Source of artistic and creative expression
 - Source of relaxation and fun
 - Source of worship and spiritual activity
- **All of which is jeopardized by a voice injury or age-related voice changes!**



Vocal Performers: High risk for voice injury

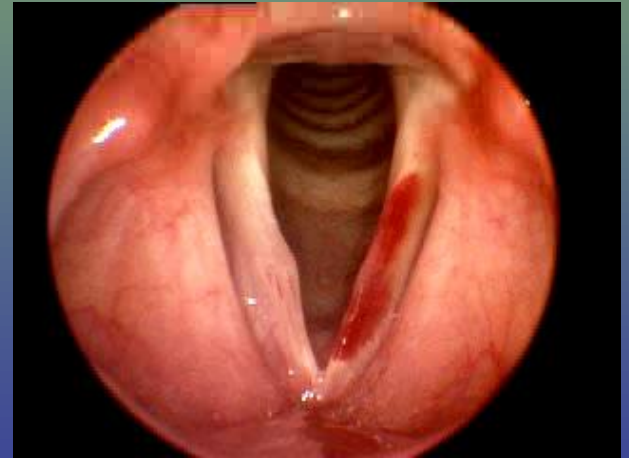
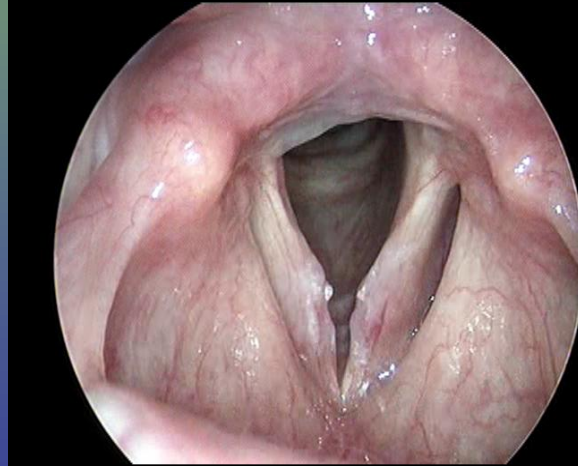
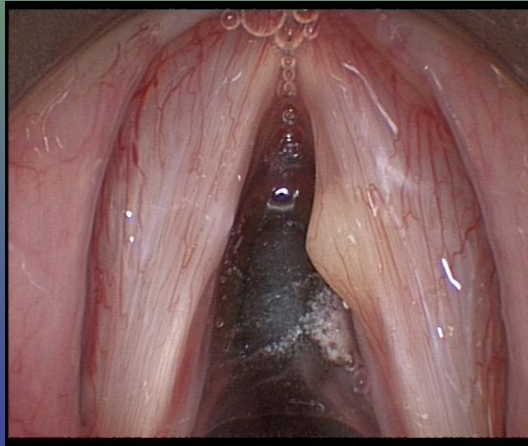
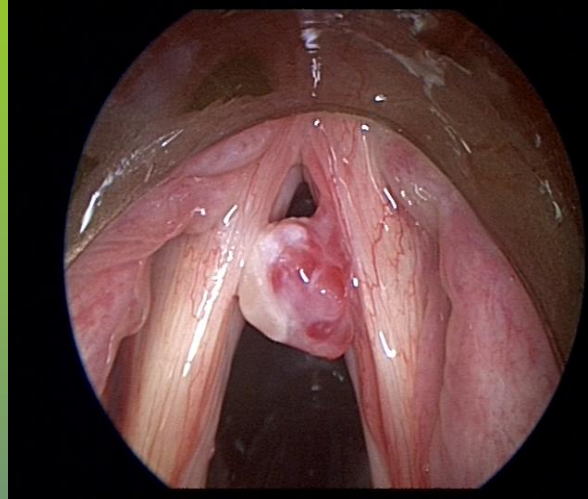


- Need to perform at extremes of pitch and loudness levels
- Often use their voices more than non-performers
- Usually gregarious, talkative people
- Occupational problems
Travel, changing environments, lifestyle, medical conditions

Quick Review



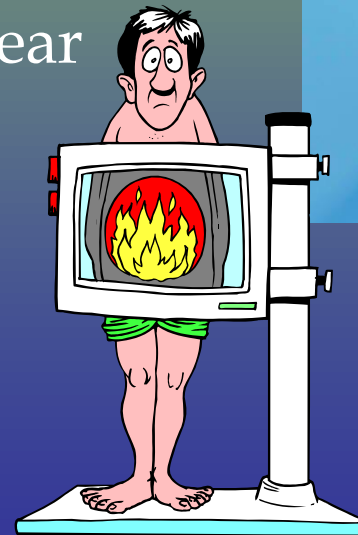
Use-related voice injuries



Vocal Hygiene

The things we do to keep the voice healthy

- Hydration: 64 ounces per day
- Management of reflux, allergies, etc.
- NO SMOKING
- Avoid cough and hard throat clear



Vocal Hygiene: Taking Care of Your Body

Maximize your resistance to illness

- Exercise regularly
- Eat well
- Sleep well

Minimize your risk of infection

- Wash hands often and well
- Keep hands away from mouth and eyes
- Avoid contagion whenever possible



Vocal Hygiene: Using Your Voice Well

Vocal fold edges come into contact with every cycle of vibration

- Easy, gentle contact → vocal resilience
- Hard, forceful contact → vocal fold injury

Vocal behaviors that can be harmful to your voice

- Yelling, screaming and hollering (including cheerleading)
- Throat clearing and coughing
- Loud talking
- Talking in noisy situations (sporting events, restaurants, bars, parties social gatherings, industrial settings)
- Singing

Avoiding a Vocal Fold Injury

Avoid talking or singing if you have a cold or laryngitis

- Change in range
- Hoarseness/change in quality
- Increased effort/pushing



Vocal Hygiene: Using Your Voice Well

Learn to use *your speaking voice well*

- Posture
- Good breath support
- Frontal placement of the tone
- Minimizing muscle tension and straining

Special Considerations for Singers



- Warm up your voice before singing, cool down your voice after singing
- Consider taking voice lessons to learn how to sing without hurting your voice

The Vocal Clock

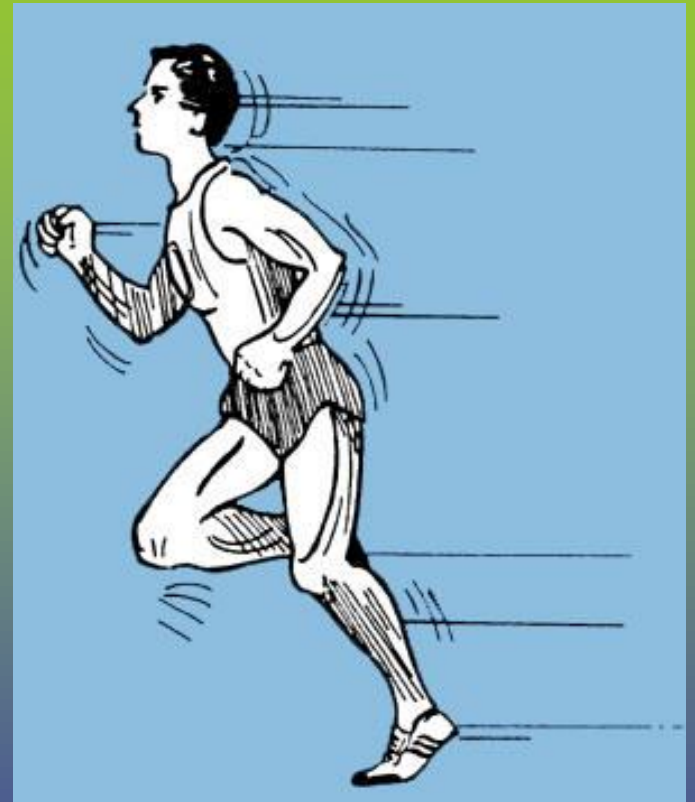


- Give yourself “voice breaks”
- Look for opportunities to rest your voice
- Plan your voice use

Vocal Pacing

Plan your voice use

- Look well ahead in your singing schedule
- Adjust voice use accordingly



Vocal Pacing

- Monitor voice use during rehearsals
- Rest your voice before and after a big singing day
- Avoid overbooking
 - Prioritize activities



Vocal Pacing

Know your limits

- Range
- Loudness
- Stamina



Vocal Pacing

Make your practice
time count

- Try not to “spend”
your voice on
learning the music



Age-related voice problems



Age-related voice problems

- Vocal Fold Atrophy
 - Glottal gaps in men
 - Changes in configuration in women (more anterior with age)
- Thickening of SLP/loss of elastic fibers
 - Decreased flexibility/vibration
- Stiffening of laryngeal cartilages
- Decreased lung volume
- Decreased muscle elasticity in resonator
- Oral dryness/thick mucous
- Hormonal changes
- Spinal column/bone changes
- Hearing loss

Age-related voice problems

- Reduced vocal activity
- Lack of a regular warm-up/vocal exercise regimen
- Lack of a solid foundation in vocal technique
- Fluctuating vocal demands
 - Vocal pacing may mean MORE voice use on a regular basis to prepare for times when vocal demands will increase

Age-related voice problems: Menopause

- Loss of agility
- Voice breaks
- Register difficulties
- Breath support changes
- Loss of range
- Unsteady vibrato



Age-related voice problems: The Good News

Singing is good for
aging voice!*

- Can result in regaining or warding off loss of function
- Regular exercise of the voice is essential!



Treatment of age-related voice problems

- Re-training: Back to the Practice Room
 - Register stabilization
 - Laryngeal control
 - Dynamic control
 - Re-train breath support
 - Stamina building



Treatment of age-related voice problems

- Adapt repertoire
 - Possibly adapt voice part
- Stay active and healthy
- Address medical factors
 - Consider hormone replacement
- Address hearing problems
- Surgical options: augmentation



Special Considerations for all Voice Professionals

You are your
instrument!

You have greater voice
demands than people
who don't use their
voices for singing



How Will I Know if I Have a Voice Injury?

- Change in voice quality that lasts for more than 2 weeks
 - Hoarse, raspy, breathy, gravelly
- Loss of voice loudness
- Loss of voice range
- Voice breaks
- Change in the amount of effort it takes to speak or sing
- Decrease in vocal stamina

What Should I Do if I Think I Have a Voice Injury?

The voice care team:

- Laryngologist
- Speech-pathologist
- Singing voice specialist

****As a voice professional, you deserve and owe it to your voice to get the care these specialists can provide**



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Vocal Exercise for Singing: An Overview



Vocal Exercise for Singing

Hands-on training is essential

Your voice teacher: the fit matters

- NATS
- DVCC website
- Observe voice lessons
- Ask the people who sing well who they study with



Vocal Exercise for Singing

How much practice is enough?

Set an achievable goal

- With good training and a commitment to 20 minutes of practice four days per week, you should see progress

Happy, Healthy Singing: Make Your Voice Last a Lifetime!

