

CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MATURE VOICE

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- I. First, the Bad News: What Happens
 - A. Muscular atrophy
 1. Occurs naturally to a small extent, exacerbated by under-use
 2. Can contribute to wobble (overly wide or slow vibrato)
 3. Difficult to correct once muscle mass is lost, but daily vocalization can help
 - B. Hormonal changes
 1. Women's voices become lower in pitch with falling hormone levels
 2. Men's voices become lower in pitch until the early 50s then begin to rise with falling hormone levels
 - C. Vocal fold changes
 1. Folds lose elasticity
 2. Collagen begins to be depleted
 - D. Nerve changes
 1. Nerves begin to lose mass
 2. Nerves fire more slowly
 - E. Ligaments and joints
 1. Ligaments weaken
 2. Loss of range of motion in moving parts of the larynx, affecting how the arytenoid cartilages bring the vocal folds together
 - F. Breathing muscles
 1. These begin to weaken after age 70
 2. This impacts sustaining pitches and projecting the voice
- II. Next, the Good News: You Can Slow It Down!
 - A. USE IT OR LOSE IT
 1. The most important thing is to KEEP SINGING EVERY DAY
 2. Daily singing should work out the entire range and the entire dynamic spectrum (pp to ff) on all vowels
 3. Buy yourself a pitch pipe!
 4. If you practice in your car, buy yourself a back cushion!
 - B. Establish alignment
 1. Feet
 2. Knees
 3. Hips
 4. Shoulders relaxed

5. Ears aligned from side view
 6. Open thorax with arms up and down
- C. Breathing exercises
1. Open thorax
 2. Always breath in silently through both mouth and nose
 3. Use the following sounds for exhalation: ssss, shhh, ffff, thhh, aaah, ohhh, ehhh, oooo, eeee
 4. Breath in 4 seconds, sound out 4 seconds
 5. In 2, out 6
 6. In 1, out 7
 7. In 1, out 11
 8. In 1, out 15: Stay relaxed
- D. Open the throat
1. The incipient yawn
 2. The incipient sneeze
 3. The cutest baby/puppy/kitten in the world “awwwww”
 4. The mischievous inner smile
 5. [hi___] 123217671
 6. [hia___] 15___4321
- E. Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises
1. The “blowfish” exercise
 2. Singing through a straw
 3. [v___i___] 123212321 or 135313531
 4. [m___u___]
 5. [ng___a___]
 6. For an instructional YouTube video, see:
<https://youtu.be/0xYDvwvmBIM>
 7. If you’re curious about why this works, check these out:
 - a) https://youtu.be/BRJUwQW_3Gs
 - b) https://youtu.be/_Qc7qauolQc
 - c) <https://youtu.be/03C7GjG9XmQ>
 - d) ...or this paper:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16671856>
- F. The Stemple vocal function exercises
1. sustained “ee” vowel, not smiley but not fish-lips, pp but not breathy, as long as possible
 - a) F4 for females
 - b) F3 for males
 - c) keep track of how many seconds and work to increase

2. upward slide on the word “knoll” [nol]
 - a) [n] initiates resonance and causes helpful sympathetic vibrations in the face
 - b) [o] requires focus
 - c) [l] requires a flick of the tip of the tongue and prevents carrying the phonation past the “squeeze” point of the breath
3. downward slide on the word “knoll”
4. sustained pitches on the syllable “oll” (“knoll” without the initial [n] sound)
 - a) C3, D3, E3, F3, G3 for males
 - b) C4, D4, E4, F4, G4 for females
 - c) keep track of how many seconds and work to increase
5. For an overview, read this:
 - a) <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5429c0dfe4b041fc9d87d529/t/54b498bbe4b02b8a0e42cd9a/1421121723771/Vocal+Function+Exercises.pdf>
 - b) Or this: <http://emilygreenleaf.com/vocal-function-exercises/>
6. For a guided YouTube video, go here:
 - a) <https://youtu.be/eMTYSdWBLJ4> (for sopranos and altos)
 - b) <https://youtu.be/Zf11ylrhoSw> (for tenors and basses)

G. Range expansion exercises

1. Start in middle range and slide up a 5th and back down, mp<mf>mp, using a variety of vowels
2. Slide down a 5th instead
3. Slide up an octave and back down as above
4. Slide down an octave instead

H. Flexibility exercises

1. 1232123212321 on a single vowel, 16th notes at quarter = 96
2. 5 note scales up and down (123454321) on a single vowel, 16th notes at quarter = 96
3. 9 note scales up and down on a single vowel, 16th notes at quarter = 96
4. alternate any of the above between two vowels: one going up and the other coming down

I. Diction exercises

1. “The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue”
2. Hymns or folks songs in ridiculously fast tempos with exaggerated diction

- J. For a whole lot more traditional warmups that you can sing along to, I recommend Roger Hale's YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxfJURRxSIEb9Tyq_OCULqsdgfgW2K7Ms ...scroll through his videos, try a few, and stick with the ones you find helpful.
- K. For additional resources, I highly recommend the following:
1. Bauer, Karen. *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing*. Scarecrow Press, 2013.
 2. Gates, Forrest, and Obert. *The Owner's Manual to the Voice*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
 3. Rayapati, Sangeetha. *Sing into Your Sixties...and Beyond*. Inside View Press,
 4. Smith, Brenda. *So You Want to Sing for a Lifetime*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.