

# Exploring Your Voice

## Two Major Modes

- Chest Voice/(M1)/Thick vocal folds/Speaking range: Most Rock, Soul, Blues,
  - Head Voice/(M2)/Thin vocal folds: Classical, Some Jazz,
- Often one is preferred. The ranges of the natural chest and head voices overlap and this range is called the **Passaggio**. The voice can be quite unstable here.

## Start your voice

- Glottal start – alerting “Uh- Oh” ` Chest Voice
- Smooth start– soothing ‘Awww’ ` Head Voice
- Breathy onset – breathy voice tends to be in higher range – recommend limit to decoration as otherwise you will run out of air/dry out your vocal folds very quickly

*Did you know? **Optimal Closure of vocal folds ~.6mm***

## Laryngeal Elevator

- Low – sob/dark/dawning realisation: Classical, Opera, Soul, some Rock & Cabaret
- Medium – normal speaking range: Rock/MT
- High – excited, bright: Some Pop

**The Vocal Folds close tightly:**

- As part of freeze before fight/flight
- Doing heavy work

**They tend to overclose when**

- Trying hard
- Singing at limits of range
- Singing loud

**Overclosure can cause significant damage.**

## Physical Warm-Ups

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Yoga, Tai Chi
- Tongue Stretch
- Wide Throat Stretch – if you want to be able to sing loud or high safely– counteracts overclosure.

## Breathing

- It’s good to be able to adjust your abdominal muscles – slight difference in chest and head voice

## In Summary

To Develop	Use
Chest Voice	<b>Uh Oh</b> onset. Working up from ~G2(males)/G3 (females) up ~ octave
Head Voice	“yoo/noo/woof (very loose!) Working down from C4 (males) – C5 (females) & release the abdomen.
Higher laryngeal position	Think bright happy,



Some good websites: <https://www.australianvoiceassociation.com.au/>  
<http://voicefoundation.org/health-science/videos-education/>



# Warm Up Sounds

## Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract Exercises (SOVT)

Through physics + brainstem reflexes

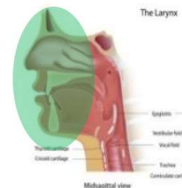
Stop the vocal folds from overclosing/causing damage

↑ the size of the area above the vocal folds – ↑ amplification

**= Safe, Efficient, Sustainable, Resonant Voice**

The Sounds	When to Use Them ( <a href="#">Stemple 2011</a> )
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voicing through a wide straw (.8-1cm) into 1-5cm of water.</li> <li>• Singing through a normal straw</li> <li>• Lip trill/tongue trill</li> <li>• Tongue out raspberry</li> <li>• Vvvvvv, Zzzzzz, Voiced “Sh”</li> <li>• M, N, Ng – great for breathiness in head voice</li> <li>• Honking – for chest and mixed register</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm ups before &gt;average speaking demands</li> <li>• Warm ups &amp; Cool Downs</li> <li>• Smoothing out the passagio – create “mixed register”</li> <li>• Difficult phrases in songs</li> <li>• To develop safe/efficient loudness</li> <li>• Voice recovery</li> <li>• Singing High (ng with tongue pushed forward)</li> </ul>

**NB: Don't try to do these loudly!** The loudness will come when you go back to regular singing or talking. Do everything **playfully** rather than trying hard. **Resonant voice** = feeling vibrations around the front of your face and top of your mouth – sign of safe voicing.



➔ **Add Vowels -> Return to normal lyrics/speech.**

## Voice Care

1. **Steam vs Nebulised Isotonic Saline** Instantly hydrate the surface of the vocal folds, prevents them sticking together and causing strain.
  - 90° C – hot water no added oils OR
  - Ultrasonic Nebuliser with Isotonic Saline (0.9% no additives) *Discuss with your GP/ENT as this is a relatively new practise with only limited research*
2. **Gentle use of voice – increases anti-inflammatory factors, shifts excess fluid**
  - High soft/silent sirens on ng,
  - Speaking range sirens through wide straw into water.
3. **Earplugs in noisy environments.** You automatically tend to overclose when you can't hear yourself (Lombard effect). The ear plugs allow you to hear your voice better and optimise the closure of the folds
4. **See an ENT for Stroboscopy** (looking at your vocal folds with strobe lighting able to see much better detail) **for any voice difficulties that last > 2 weeks** (requires a GP referral)