

A Trashed Voice”

Anyone who sings a lot of hard rock or heavy metal knows what this is about. It happens when you sing incorrectly and completely blow the voice out. It can cause hoarseness, even laryngitis. Sometimes it can be helped: we all have to do what we have to do get through the song.. The important thing is to know when your doing something wrong and how to fix it.

Good Singing is Correct Placement

Singing freely and easily is about keeping your voice open: placing it in its natural physiological center and avoiding any bad habits that may obstruct it’s production or sound. I call this right placement. Let’s look now at a few more key ideas that will help us achieve this goal!

Speaking and singing are similar actions

Its often been said that if you can speak a note, you can sing it. That’s because singing is nothing more than sustained speech. For example, take the vowel, “O” and choose a note, to say the word “oh” on. Say the word aloud several times. Now start that word just as you would speak it, but this time hold the “O” for a few seconds. The premise behind this is that if you speak a note, and then sustain it by exhaling the breath, you’re holding the note just as you would when you sing. If you take this idea one step further by using the speaking ice to speak each note of a melody, you have song.

With this idea in mind, you can see how important the speaking voice is to the singing voice because it acts as the foundation. If you have trouble knowing what a chest or head voice is, playing around with the speaking voice will help you to find them.

Chest Voice

For a good chest voice, it’s important to be speaking with cord effort. One way to check to see if you’re using good cord effort it’s to start talking out loud in what you think is your chest register on a word like “hello”. Put you’re finger on your Adam’s apple, and see if you can feel it vibrating when you speak. Once you feel it vibrating, also check to see if you can feel the word resonating at the mouth level. If you are not feeling either of these things, change the pitch you’re chosen to speak on and try talking louder. Play around with it until. You feel the vibration and the resonance.

If you know you have what’s referred to as a “breathy” voice, then working with the speaking voice in this way is going to be very important. Learning to speak with more cord effort will strengthen the thyroid muscles, the group of muscles that controls the lower register.

Falsetto

To work on the head register, specifically the falsetto, I suggest playing around with talking high. This often isn’t nearly as difficult for women as it can be for men. Some men really do not want to do this exercise because it messes with their image. This is considered the “girl’s” voice or the “child’s” voice, and it’s a voice that conjures up memories some men would rather leave behind. So in help those of you may have this problem, let me enlighten you about the importance of the falsetto.

The falsetto is the healing part of the voice. When singing in the falsetto, it is only the inner edge of each vocal cord that vibrates. To be singing it correctly, the cords have to be pulled apart just enough for some air to pass through them freely. If not, you'll be squeezing to try to get a note out, and the cords will be rubbing together. Do this all the time when trying to sing high and it will cause nodes (though sometimes it's a stylistic choice to sing like this because of a style of music). Nevertheless, there will be times when you have thrashed your throat, or times when you sing so much that you don't feel that you have much voice left. The way to restore the voice is through the falsetto --- because it pulls the cords apart and gives the full weight of them a chance to rest while working on getting the stretch back.

To get into the falsetto, you can try using the phrase, "Oh no!" or "very airy". Start on a note that is in what you know to be your upper register and pretend to be a cartoon character (Minnie or Mickey Mouse often works best). Do not take in too much breath. Take in the kind of breath that you'd take in for simple conversation. Just because you're taking high does not mean you have to "fill up the tank." Remember that less is more. You'll start by speaking that first word on the note you've chosen. You'll find that in order to complete the phrase, you have to use your breath, exhaling; otherwise, the voice won't come out easily. If you're having trouble, try thinking of the breath as talking the voice for a ride. Sometimes I liken it to a rollercoaster : the breath being the tracks, and the voice the little coaster. It's almost like swooning.

Sometimes when you're up in the head voice it will make you lightheaded or even dizzy. Learn to play with your voice. Try making different sounds...experiment. Try to find out what you can do with your voice instead of what you can't.

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