



followed by the swallow. It should sound and feel different again and be limited in expressive range.

Please note that you aren't meant to practice this at all – it is just to further your understanding.

This experience should be followed by looking straight ahead at the horizon, repeating the phrase and then followed by one more swallow. Both should now feel comfortable and easy. This then proves that the default position is looking towards the horizon. Think about how you position yourself at the microphone – is your chin raised? Perhaps you could look at your self in a mirror to adjust your posture and your microphone to improve personal comfort.

Let's now take a brief look inside the larynx. It is the size of a walnut (yes, it could fit into a nutshell!)

and sits in the airway (trachea) behind the thyroid gland. If we literally looked from the top of someone's head straight down that air way tube we would see that

the larynx is like a valve inside it. Inside it are two 'doors' that can close together (picture on the left) or open (picture on the right). The black triangle is the gap where air passes either down to the lungs or up towards the mouth and nose. The doors are always attached at the front (near the Adam's / Eve's apple) and the back part move together and apart.

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The movement is rapid. It demands an impressive gymnastic performance from the two vocal cords (anatomical term is vocal folds). On a middle C they open and close together almost 262 times per second. The higher we go, the faster they perform. The octave above middle C is already doubled to 524 per second and the C above that to 1048. When we interfere with the overall position of the larynx, we compromise the ease and efficiency of this movement so that tension creeps in and the vocal folds can be in danger of bashing together.

The flesh inside us is like the flesh outside us. Try clapping your hands together very hard. It stings, tingles or hurts and the skin changes colour as blood rushes to help that area. We can't even begin to clap our hands at the speed of the vocal fold closure. Imagine bashing these vocal folds together repeatedly over a few

seconds (which happens to most fans at a football match or most people trying to communicate over loud music etc). The voice begins to feel different and a tell-tale huskiness can quickly appear. A temporary swelling can appear about half way along the edge of each vocal fold. It's not hard to imagine the impossible task these folds now have in closing together. There will be irregularities and gaps through which air will now constantly escape. This gap and this air-escape can work towards giving the husky voice sound.

The good news is that about 24 hours later the temporary swelling will have been reabsorbed. However, if someone were to continue day in and day out with this vocal 'abuse', the swellings would become hard like callouses. This is what we call nodules.

So think about the importance of being comfortable and having good physical posture for your work. Think too about caring for your voice against background sound.

If you have any questions or would like to work through any issues, I would love to hear from you.

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