



## Vocal Overdoer Voice Rehabilitation

For true vocal cord swelling & vocal cord pre-nodules

### Basic Guidelines

- Good hydration (at minimum 2 large glasses of water with each meal)
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, spicy/fatty/acidic foods
- Avoid decongestants
- Avoid environments without good ventilation (ie, avoid smoke, dust, and other air pollutants)

### The Vocal Do NOTS!

- NO screaming, yelling, whispering, and voice elevation (ie, no voice abuse)
- NO coughing and throat clearing
- Avoid environments where the baseline noise is elevated (which would force you to raise your voice just to be heard; ie, loud bars, loud restaurants, etc)
- Do not even attempt to talk to anybody more than one arm-length's away from you. Either you walk over to the person or they come over to you before you even attempt to start talking.

### The Vocal Do's

- Use personal voice amplification systems if you need to be heard (megaphones, microphones, etc)
- Do talk in a low-energy voice, much as one would talk to a person one arm-length away in the lobby of a library. Do NOT whisper, but do talk quietly.
- Take regular 10 minute voice breaks where strict voice rest is observed for every 30 minutes of talking (or 5 minute breaks for every 15 minutes of talking). Why? If one equated talking to marathon running... most people will physically break down if attempting to run the entire marathon without any breaks. BUT, if a jogger took 5-10 minute breaks for every 15-30 minutes of jogging, it's more likely the jogger can complete the marathon without causing physical harm.
- Good breath control. Make sure you take an adequate breath in before talking. The corollary would be to not talk when you are almost out of breath.

### If you are a singer (but this applies to everybody!):

- TEST your vocal range in the pianississimo (ppp) voice DAILY and before practice. If the vocal range is reduced in the upper pitch range with pitch breaks and onset delays, there has been an increase in the edema of your vocal cords. In this situation:
  - Voice rest if your upper ranges are severely affected over a wide range. If this limitation is persistent, you may require voice pedagogy instruction to recover your voice quickly without damage (back to basics).
  - If your upper ranges are affected over only a limited range, do sing, but limit your singing to soft arias and other vocal pieces where singing with gusto is avoided. Once your vocal range recovers in the ppp voice, one may resume normal singing gradually, but keep testing your ppp vocal range daily for baseline monitoring.
  - Re-focus on the foundations of singing (breath support, posture, neck muscle relaxation, etc).
- If you have a performance and your voice is sub-optimal:
  - Call for an appt to have your voicebox checked with strobe
  - Barring any findings that would mandate strict voice rest (ie, cancel the performance), the following will be recommended:
    - Ensure a microphone with voice gain is utilized. Do NOT elevate your voice to sing up to the audience (or other singers if present). Sing the way you practice in the quiet of your home or music studio
    - Mandate that there be no smoking or talking in the audience
    - Steroids may be prescribed to get you through the performance. Understand that steroids is a one-time deal and not to be used on a regular basis, but in only special circumstances (ie, upcoming concert).

If there are any questions, please call our office at 540-347-0505.