



Love Your Voice

Vocal Health Basics

- What do vocal folds look like?



- Vocal folds live inside the larynx and are the size of a dime.
- Similar to eyeballs, they do not have pain receptors.
- They vibrate together up to 980 times per second, depending on the pitch

***Drinking
Water***

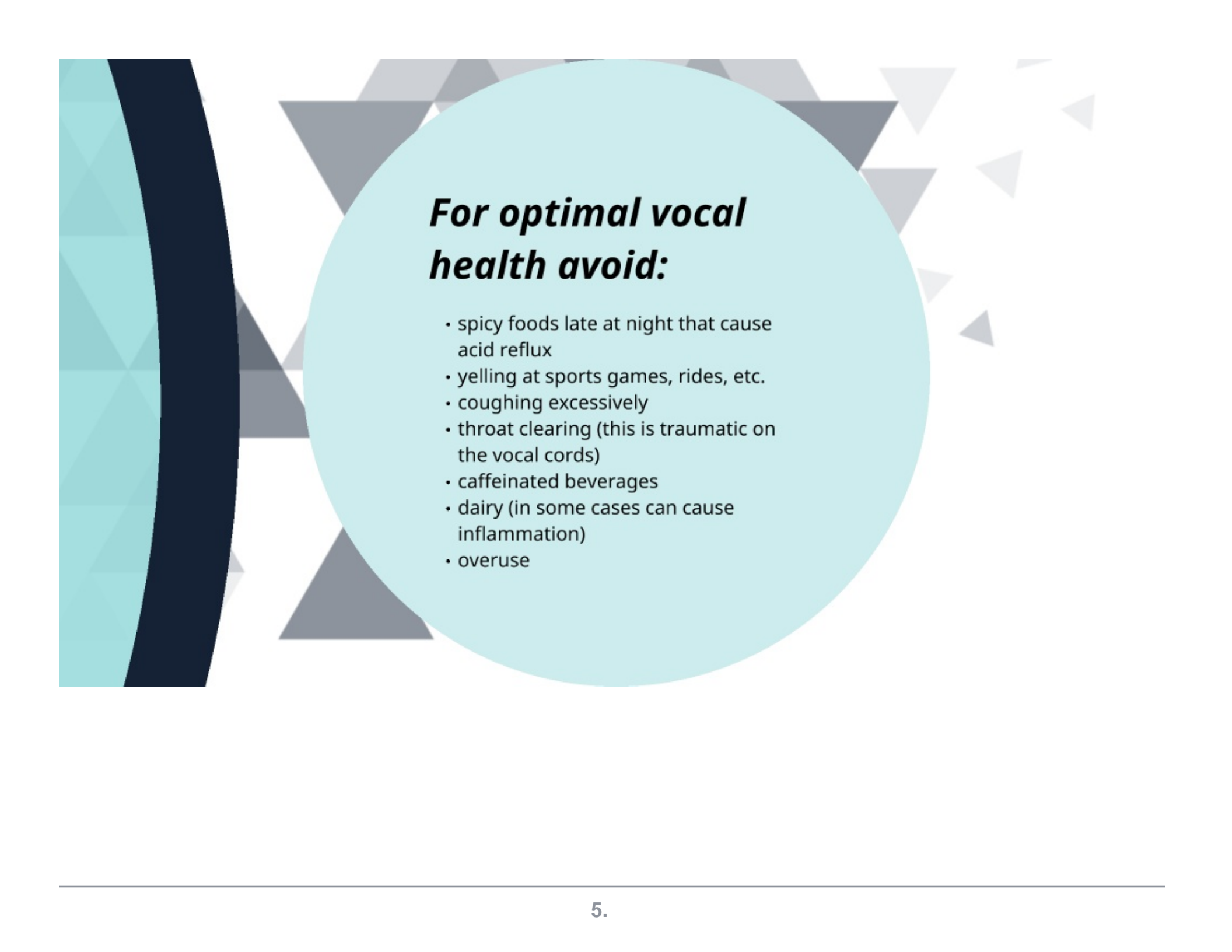
***Things to
Avoid***

***Things to
DO***



Drinking Water

- Vocal folds are protected by a mucous membrane coating.
- This helps reduce damage done to the folds when vibrating at high frequencies.
- The body makes this coating when it is hydrated, meaning that it needs enough water to produce the mucous membrane.
- Drinking enough water will help keep your vocal cords protected!!
- How much water should I drink? Your weight/2= how many oz of water per day



For optimal vocal health avoid:

- spicy foods late at night that cause acid reflux
- yelling at sports games, rides, etc.
- coughing excessively
- throat clearing (this is traumatic on the vocal cords)
- caffeinated beverages
- dairy (in some cases can cause inflammation)
- overuse



Things to do

- Drink lots of water to stay hydrated and protected
- Use a humidifier at night or personal steamer to put moisture directly on the vocal cords
- Warm up every morning before singing or talking
- Sing through a straw (more on SOVT exercises later)
- Voice rest when you are feeling vocally fatigued

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Tips and Tricks

- If you are a teacher, use a personal amplification device. This helps reduce the strain of projecting and talking over students every day.
- Dr. Gould's Gargle can be used to clean and soothe the throat
- SOVT exercises which help stretch and build the voice without excess pressure or strain
- VocalMist personal steamer which uses an isotonic saline solution to clean, hydrate, and soothe nasal passages, sinus cavities, throat, and vocal cords

***Amplification
Devices***

***Dr.
Gould's
Gargle***

SOVT

VocalMist

Amplification Devices



Dr. Gould's Gargle

Prevention

Often prevention is the best course of action. When you are sick or you feel laryngitis developing, the best thing to do is take care of yourself and your voice. Use your voice only when you need to and follow the steps mentioned above. Hopefully this will keep you from losing your voice and keep you out of the doctor's office.

Steam & Gargle

These will help lubricate your throat and add direct moisture to your vocal folds. These practices are beneficial before and after singing. These practices will also thin mucus. It is recommended using them together in this order. You may use them several times a day.

Steam

Use a facial steamer (available at drug stores or Internet) or bowl or pan of hot water. Make a tent with a towel. Breathe in the steam with your mouth and nose gently for 3-5 minutes. Do not add any other ingredients to the water.

Dr. Gould's Gargle

½ tsp salt

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp clear corn syrup

6 oz. water

Gargle small amount quietly (no voice), spit and repeat until all is gone. Do not rinse your mouth or eat or drink for 20-30 minutes after.

Benefits of Semi Occluded Vocal Tract (SOVT) Exercises

*Semi Occluded: phonating with the mouth partially closed
i.e. straw phonation, humming, lip trills*

SOVT Exercises = Less collision, impact and pressure on the folds while still getting them to stretch in a balanced position

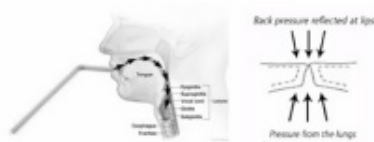
Like doing stretches in the pool –
less impact and stress on your muscles

When the mouth is open, air pressure comes up from the lungs, impacts the bottom of the folds and is expelled through the mouth.



While some pressure always returns, when the mouth is more closed (semi-occluded) more pressure is reflected at the lips and returns to the folds.
This back pressure helps align the folds up in a more balanced, squared up position

****Great for transitions in the voice and finding a mixed register****



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Vocal Mist





Love Your Voice

Love Your Unique Sound

- We can love our voice both by taking care of it physically and by appreciating its unique beauty. Your voice is beautiful simply because it's yours!
- It is important to acknowledge the gift we have of being able to sing and share our one-of-a-kind voice with the world.
- Sometimes by judging ourselves, being our own worst critic, trying to be a perfectionist, and comparing our voices to others, we create challenges and insecurities for ourselves. It can help to turn those negative thoughts into gratitude for our ability to sing!
- In barbershop, sometimes we limit ourselves by putting our voices in a "Part Box".



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We face 3 unique challenges...

- Physical- Sore throats, fatigue, nodules, polyps, etc.
- Emotional- When you feel like crying, your throat tenses up. When you are nervous, your body shakes making it hard to sing.
- Mental- Telling ourselves limiting beliefs that hold us back from being our best. Some examples are:
 - "That note is too high for me"
 - "She sounds way better on that part than I do"
 - "I will never be that good"
 - "Everyone thinks I'm terrible. I should just quit"
 - "I can't do this"
 - "My voice sounds horrible"

How?



How do we face these challenges?

- Support your sisters by uplifting them in their success. Help create a culture that doesn't tear down other singers and speak negatively of their voices.
- Pay attention to your thoughts. If they aren't helpful or negative, deliberately think positive ones. This will help create new habits and pathways in the brain.
- Take time for self-care; journaling, meditation, yoga, exercise, go to the salon, talk to a friend etc.
- Acknowledge the challenge you are facing and take it a day at a time. We are the most successful when we start small!
- Give yourself grace to mess up, make mistakes, and keep pushing through. We all deal with these challenges every day. You are not alone!



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