



# EMERALD

## CHORAL ACADEMY

Vocal Emergencies  
Monday, April 12, 2021

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### ***PROPER VOCAL HYGIENE***

#### **DO**

- Stay hydrated - strive to drink two liters (approximately 8 glasses) of water per day
- Get enough sleep - 7-9 hours per night is a great goal
- Eat regular meals and maintain a balanced diet
- Treat acid reflux/indigestion
- Practice good vocal habits, both speaking and singing
- Minimize speaking in loud environments
- Attempt to reduce stress, throat clearing, and non-productive coughing
- Maintain a routine of vocal warm-up and cool-down exercises, and practice regularly to stay in shape (just like any other physical activity)
- Work with a voice instructor to build strength, stamina, and efficiency in your singing
- Establish a relationship with a laryngologist, and get a baseline examination of your vocal folds *when you're healthy* (in case of any issues that arise)

#### **DON'T**

- Sing if discomfort results from either singing or speaking (STOP and consider seeking medical care)
- Take in substances that irritate and/or dehydrate the vocal folds, such as cigarette smoke, alcoholic drinks, excessive caffeine, and medications that dry out mucous membranes (antihistamines, decongestants)
- Eat late at night (may cause indigestion which can irritate the voice)
- Use medicated throat lozenges directly before or while singing (these numb sensation and may risk more vocal strain and potential damage)

- Use aspirin or ibuprofen (can increase the likelihood of vocal fold hemorrhage; acetaminophen is best for pain relief)
- Whisper when your throat is sore (this is much harder on your voice than talking softly, or even better - just REST!)

## **STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING SIMPLE VOCAL “EMERGENCIES”**

- drink warm liquids (herbal tea, lemon, honey, ginger)
- antacids for simple acid reflux
- inhale warm steam/humidified air in home, car, office
- gentle, dedicated vocal warm-up

## **VOCAL “MARKING”**

Similarly to marking in dance, “marking” in the vocal music world refers to when a singer reduces their vocal load to preserve their voice. What does that mean practically speaking? It means that in a rehearsal, a singer may sing in a sort of half-voice, or exceptionally lightly. They may also sing an octave down, especially if the music sits high in the voice as it often does for sopranos and tenors. In essence then, marking is a tool for vocal health.

<https://operaversity.com/performance/what-marking-in-singing-how-to-do-it>

## **SEMI-OCCLUDED VOCAL TRACT EXERCISES (SOVTE’s)**

- Lip trill
- Tongue trill
- “Raspberry” (labio-lingual)
- Hum postures: m, n, ng
- Straw phonation
- Water bubbling

## **SEATTLE-AREA VOICE CARE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Dr. Albert Merati - University Of Washington Dept. of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery <https://otolaryngology.uw.edu/faculty/albert-merati>

Dr. Craig Villari - Bellevue ENT  
<https://bellevueent.com/about-us/physicians/dr-craig-villari/>

University Of Washington Performing Voice Clinic - Dr. Neel Bhatt, MD/Juli Rosenzweig, MS, CCC-SLP <https://otolaryngology.uw.edu/faculty/neel-k-bhatt-md-performvoiceclinic@uw.edu>

Virginia Mason Clinic for Performing Artists - Dr. Jamie Chang, MD/Allison Hirst, MS, CCC-SLP (206) 223-6374 <https://www.virginiamason.org/performing-artists-clinic>