

Elo Kiddies, in part one of "What is vocal weight?" I defined what exactly it is and the ways it can affect your voice in a VERY uncool way.

Ok (tap tap), what to do, what to do?

Fear not, there are some exercises you can do to lighten the load .

### **EXERCISES:**

The following exercises are designed to assist in releasing vocal weight by accessing the thin edge function of the vocal cord for proper development and production of the head voice or light mechanism and avoiding a basic laryngeal attack.

### **The GRUNT!**

What the heck is "the grunt" you may ask? Visualize a caveman who has no spoken language. He grunts to communicate. The pitch isn't important, what is important is that when you grunt you engage the lower back muscles abruptly. Place your hands on your waist and grunt. When you feel a sudden outward movement of your waistline around the back you're doing it right.

Before attempting the yodels described below perform the grunt repeatedly in any range that has felt thick/heavy OR overly thin and colorless and try to employ it as a regular function of breathing.

"GRRR!" Hey you're a CAVEMAN! (or cave person for you politically correct folks).

**Exercise #1** - Yodeling within one register: Work slowly at first on this approach, using the "OH" vowel. First use a simple interval (whole step, major 3rd) and deliberately yodel from the lower note to the upper note without changing registers. Use this exercise anywhere that the voice has felt thick/heavy OR overly thin/colorless.

**Exercise # 2** - Yodeling between registers: Yodel a full octave between low chest voice and middle register, using an "AH" sound on the lower pitch and an "OOO" sound on the upper pitch. Yodel between registers quickly, keeping the pharynx or open acoustical space stable. When forming the "OOO" sound, make sure that only the lips adjust (the throat space stay primarily the same and the root of the tongue stays wide and does not bunch). Next go into the head voice and sing a descending rounded "E" vowel with a rounded mouth opening. Stop just before you hit chest voice.

**Exercise #3** - The Use of a Vowel Sequence to Drop Vocal Weight: The following arpeggio is designed to drop vocal weight through specific vowel sequencing. Think "light and wide" in the back of your throat. NO STRAINING!

1...3...5...8...10...8...5...3...1  
A...E...I...O...U...O...A...E...I

**Exercise #4** - AH-E-AY: sweep through these sounds on a triplet making the "E" sound extremely short. The "E" should also be produced with a quick "flip" or movement of the tongue.

Exercise #5 - LAY-LA: alternate between these sounds on 5 tone scales. Again, the tongue should flip freely and quickly. Perform in all registers. Try alternating between YA sounds and LAY-LA's and matching the physicality.

Exercise #6 - VOLEY (pronounced "VO-LAY"): perform this word alternating syllables on a basic 5 tone scale ("VO-LAY-VO-LAY-VO-LAY-VO-LAY-VO") Pronounce the changing phonetic clearly and distinctly with free and rapid movement of the tongue.

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Wow, now that was informative but sounds awfully confusing right? Nah...read through it again taking each exercise by itself, one at a time. Do them SLOWLY until you get the gyst of the exercise. If you're one of those that just read all that and thought "sounds simple enough", now, now, now my quick thinking friend, they may seem like simple exercises in theory, but they can be tricky to perform correctly.

The simple mental picture you want to have is light and free. Nothing should feel heavy, strained or choked. If it does, YOU'VE GOT AN ANCHOR. DROP IT with these exercises!

Until Next Time - YOU RAWK!

Kevin Richards