

SOVTEs



Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises (“SOVTEs”) are voice exercises used to reduce tension and improve vocal function by creating more balanced air pressure above and below the vocal folds (vocal cords). The best part is, you don’t need any special equipment to do them!

Step 1: Choose Your Occlusion

- Lip Trills
 - Relax your lips and blow so they vibrate, similar to “blowing raspberries”. If this is tricky, you may have more luck starting with an unvoiced sound and then adding in voicing.
- Tiny Lips
 - Pucker your lips in a small circle, almost like you are holding a Capri-Sun or espresso straw between them) and make the “ooo” sound. The opening of your mouth should be small enough to make your cheeks puff up with air when you start blowing.
- Straw Phonation
 - Put a straw between your lips and start to hum! You can make this even more effective by putting the straw in a glass of water (just don’t fill it all the way to the top unless you want to clean up a mess)
- Fricatives
 - Use consonants sounds like “Z” or “V”

Step 2: Practice, Practice, Practice!

- Take 1-2 minutes to practice deep belly breathing and gentle stretching.
- Using your occlusion, hold a steady and comfortable pitch, starting with about ~10 seconds. Repeat a few times.
- Using your occlusion, do some upward and downward pitch glides. Alternate how high/low you go, how quickly you move up and down in pitch, and how much variation is in your pitch changes. Repeat a few times.
- Starting with your occlusion, slowly and gently move into humming while maintaining the same relaxed sensation in your throat. Move into gentle counting, short phrases, or speech tasks.
- You can do SOVTEs however often is comfortable for you without causing additional strain or fatigue. Consider doing SOVTE routines periodically throughout the day to “reset” your voice and before/after periods of intense speaking.