

False Vocal Fold Retraction

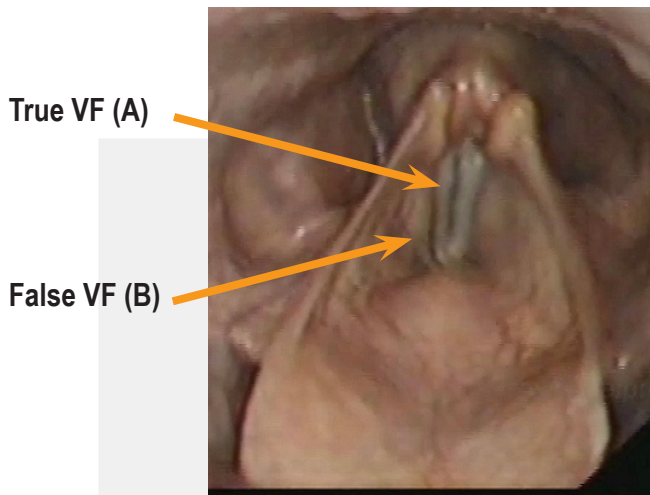
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It is important to learn to retract the false vocal folds as misuse of them can lead to sore throats, loss of vocal power, loss of voice, nodules and other vocal dysfunctions.

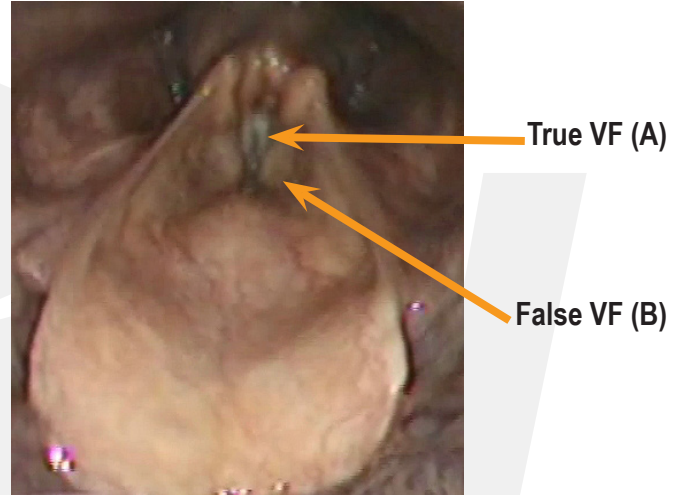
Application

The false vocal folds (B) are situated just above the true vocal folds (A) and are used for swallowing, coughing, and pushing.

Retraction



Constriction



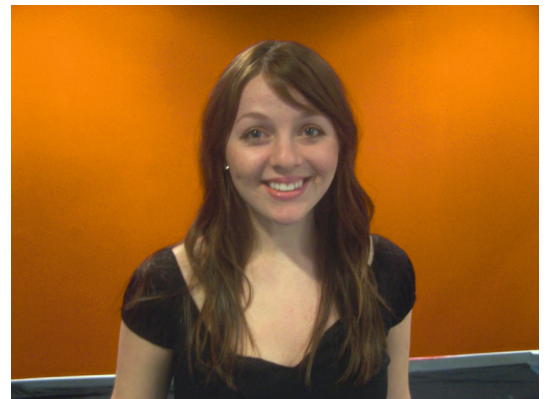
(Used by permission from the video ebook Constriction and Release, made by Jeremy Fisher for Vocal Process; <http://www.vocalprocess.co.uk>)

Some vocal styles require guttural sounds such as growling, strained singing, screaming, contemporary edges on vowels, & loud whispering. Using the false vocal folds in this way can cause damage to the true vocal folds.

The following examples are 3 different approaches to help isolate, control and retract the false vocal fold muscle movement. To help gain the larynx posture, use facial muscles in sympathy of each exercise.

1. Silent Laugh or Giggle

- Think of something that is very amusing.
- Now create a big grin on the face.
- Extend this smile to inside the mouth where the teeth and hard palate are.
- Move this feeling back to the soft palate
- Now continue to move this sensation to the back of the throat.
- Follow this stance down into the larynx to where the false vocal folds are.



2. Surprise

- A. Imagine that someone has given you the most expensive and amazing holiday
- B. Now without gasping or dropping the larynx, retain the feeling of surprise with regulated breathing



3. The Rose

- A. Imagine a bunch of magnificent roses; breathe in as though sampling their fragrance.
- B. Retaining the posture felt in the larynx, hold this and breathe in and out regulated.



To find out if any of these exercises have worked, the ear test needs to be done. First of all, place fingers in ears and breathe normally. A slight breathing noise should be heard. When false vocal fold retraction is successful the sound will be considerably quieter if heard at all.

Using a regulated breathing pattern to a slow count of three, breathe in and out **through the mouth** to eliminate any extra noise caused by small nasal passages. Don't allow the larynx to drop (as in a yawn) as this will also affect the noise level.



With fingers in the ears to monitor the sound level of the breathing, use a steady count of three to regulate a slow breath in and out, starting with empty lungs.



Follow the above breathing pattern in each of the following sequences:

- A. Twice with standard breathing
- B. Twice using the silent giggle
- C. Twice returning to standard breathing
- D. Twice using the surprise stance (don't drop the larynx)
- E. Twice returning to original standard breathing
- F. Lastly, twice using the muscle posture of the rose (through the mouth)

One of these postures in comparison to the standard breathing should have made the sound of the breath quieter. The false vocal folds are now retracted, and the next step is to use this in conjunction with singing.

Be Aware

The use of the false vocal folds in creating extreme vocal sounds is an advanced level of vocal expression and should be only used in a controlled and limited way. Even though success may have been achieved in identifying false vocal folds, it is recommended that you seek further and more detailed training to employ these techniques in performance on a regular basis. You should not expect to achieve mastery within a short time.

You can purchase a video demonstration of false vocal fold constriction and retraction following the link below provided by Vocal Process in the UK as featured on the BBC's Science programmes Leading Edge and Science In Action.

<https://store.vocalprocess.co.uk/CompleteVoiceboxVideos>