

— THE SINGER'S WORKBOOK —

# *Sing Stronger* *After 40*



*A printable companion to the complete guide  
for singers over forty*

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*Print these pages. Pin them up. Use them every day.*

*JenniferCellaVoice.com*

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# The Vocal Range Map

*where the passaggi live in your voice*



FEMALE

MALE

Head Voice

2ND PASSAGGIO · B4-C#5

Head / Falsetto

2ND PASSAGGIO · A4-Bb4

Mix Voice

1ST PASSAGGIO · E4-F#4

Mix Voice

1ST PASSAGGIO · E4-F4

Chest Voice

Chest Voice



*the passaggio is not a wall  
it is a transition you learn to walk through*

# The High Note Trap

*two cycles, two outcomes*



## THE FORCE CYCLE

the high note feels difficult

you push more air, squeeze harder

the vocal folds blow apart

the note cracks or shuts down

*"my voice is gone"*

## THE RELEASE CYCLE

the high note approaches

you lighten and redirect resonance

mix engages, folds thin cleanly

the note releases, easier than expected

*"my voice is still here"*



*the high note is not a wall to push through.  
it is a door you stop blocking.*

# The Five Adjustments

*a quick-reference card for singers over forty*



I

## Lighten the Approach

*Begin mixing earlier than you think. Ease off before the curve, don't brake at it.*

II

## Redirect the Resonance

*Place the sound forward, in the mask. Behind the eyes, not down in the throat.*

III

## Stop Over-Breathing

*High notes need precise air, not more air. A comfortable breath, never a maximum gulp.*

IV

## Release the Tension

*Soft jaw. Flat, wide tongue. An open throat. The body must allow the sound.*

V

## Honor the Warm-Up

*After forty, twenty minutes is the minimum. Your warm-up is the work, not a formality.*



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# Hormones & the Voice

*what changes, and what helps*



<i>Hormone</i>	<i>What it does</i>	<i>What you may notice</i>
Estrogen	hydration & pliability	drier folds, narrower range, longer recovery
Progesterone	fluid balance	swelling, heaviness around the cycle
Testosterone	fold mass & muscle tone	thinner sound, less low-end power
Cortisol	stress & muscle tension	jaw, neck, tongue tightness; harder high notes
Thyroid	metabolism & vocal stamina	fatigue, lower stamina, range loss



*this is a medical conversation, not a vanity issue*

# Self-Diagnostic

*technique or physiology – where to focus your attention first*



01  My high notes feel strained even after a full warm-up.

02  My voice feels rougher in the morning than it used to.

03  I push more air to reach high notes than I used to.

04  I notice jaw, neck, or tongue tension when I sing.

05  My recovery between performances takes longer.

06  My range has shrunk, especially on top.

07  I'm in perimenopause, menopause, or post-menopausal.

08  I'm taking antihistamines or other drying medications.

09  My voice cracks or flips through the same zone.

10  I'm sleeping less than seven hours most nights.

## Scoring

0–3 *mostly technique. focus on the five adjustments and daily practice.*

4–6 *mixed. address technique and physical factors together.*

7+ *physiology in play. consult a laryngologist; review hormones and thyroid.*

# Your Daily Practice

twenty minutes, every day



## I

Five Minutes

### Awakening

- Silent yawns to open the throat
- Gentle humming on a comfortable pitch
- Lip trills, sliding gently up and down

## II

Five Minutes

### Explore the Top

- Light octave slides – gentle, no push
- Easy sirens up and back down
- Exploration, not performance

## III

Eight Minutes

### Cross the Passaggio

- Five-note scales on a relaxed syllable
- Travel up by half steps through the transition
- Stay light; allow the mix to engage
- Repeat – this is the most important phase

## IV

Two Minutes

### Sing One Song

- Something familiar, in a comfortable key
- Notice what's working. Listen carefully.

# Vocal Hygiene Checklist

*print. post. run through it daily.*



## *Daily*

- Drink half my body weight in ounces of water (more on performance days)
- Add sugar-free electrolytes or coconut water — especially on performance and travel days
- Sleep 7+ hours
- Limit alcohol — actively dehydrating to vocal folds
- Limit caffeine to morning hours; balance with extra water
- 20-minute warm-up before any serious singing
- Notice and release jaw, neck, and tongue tension throughout the day
- Do not whisper when my voice is tired (more strain than full voice)

## *Topical Hydration (as needed)*

- Personal vocal steamer — 10–15 min before warm-up on demanding days
- Nebulizer with sterile saline — 5–10 min, once or twice daily in dry conditions
- Steam or nebulize after performances to support recovery

## *Eating Around Performances*

- Full meal eaten 4–5 hours before show — never within 2 hours of curtain
- Light snack only if needed close to show: watermelon, cantaloupe, or banana
- Avoid dairy, spicy food, heavy fats, fried food before singing
- No alcohol on performance days

– VOCAL HYGIENE CHECKLIST (CONTINUED) –



### *Smoking & Vaping*

- If smoking or vaping – understand the direct impact on vocal fold tissue
- Smoke and vapor cause inflammation, dryness, and long-term fold thickening
- Vaping is not a safe alternative – propylene glycol actively dries the mucosa
- No technique adjustment fully compensates for this at the tissue level

### *Weekly*

- At least one full vocal rest day (minimal talking, no singing)
- Two deeper 45–60 minute practice sessions
- Steam inhalation if voice feels dry or recovering
- Check medication list – note which dry the mucous membranes

### *Monthly / Ongoing*

- Track menstrual cycle (if applicable) and note vocal patterns
- Schedule annual physical including thyroid panel
- Schedule laryngology visit if persistent hoarseness or range loss
- Discuss hormones with my doctor if in perimenopause/menopause
- Address acid reflux if mornings are consistently rough
- Have an honest conversation about smoking/vaping and your instrument

# 30-Day Practice Tracker

*One mark per day. Don't break the chain.*



<b>Day 1</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 2</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 3</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 4</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 5</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____
<b>Day 6</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 7</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 8</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 9</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 10</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____
<b>Day 11</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 12</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 13</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 14</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 15</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____
<b>Day 16</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 17</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 18</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 19</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 20</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____
<b>Day 21</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 22</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 23</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 24</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 25</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____
<b>Day 26</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 27</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 28</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 29</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____	<b>Day 30</b> Date: _____ Notes: _____ _____

*Consistency beats intensity. Every time.*

# Performance Day Checklist

*what to do — and not do — before a show*



## *Morning of the show*

- Wake up at least 4 hours before show time if possible
- Hydrate immediately — 16 oz water on waking; add electrolytes or coconut water
- Eat a real, full meal 4-5 hours before show: protein and complex carbs
- Avoid dairy if it makes you mucousy; avoid spicy, fried, or heavy foods
- Do a gentle 10-minute vocal check, not a full warm-up
- Plan light activity, no shouting or extended talking

## *90 minutes before show*

- No heavy meals from this point — digestion blocks the diaphragm
- If hungry: watermelon, cantaloupe, or a banana
- Use vocal steamer 10-15 minutes if voice feels dry
- Begin full 20-30 minute warm-up
- Phase I: humming, lip trills, gentle awakening
- Phase II: explore the top — light octave slides and sirens
- Phase III: cross the passaggio — scales through the transition zone
- Phase IV: sing through one or two pieces lightly
- Hydrate continuously — water and electrolytes



*Just before downbeat*

- Final hydration sip – not a flood
- Body release: roll shoulders, drop jaw, stretch tongue
- Three slow breaths – long exhales
- Trust your preparation. The work is done.



*The downbeat is not the start of the work.  
It is the moment you trust everything you've already done.*

# After the Performance

*cool-down & recovery protocol*



## *Immediately after your last note*

- Find a quiet moment as soon as possible — do not skip this
- Cool-down: gentle descending sirens, start mid-range and glide down
- Follow with quiet lip trills or humming on a descending pattern
- Finish with 3–4 gentle sustained hums — low, barely any volume
- 5–10 minutes total. Then stop completely.

## *The first hour after*

- Water and electrolytes immediately — replenish surface hydration now
- Steam or nebulize with saline if possible — 10 minutes post-show
- Minimal talking for 30–60 minutes post-performance
- No yelling, loud laughing, or projecting across a noisy room
- If drinking alcohol — match every drink with a full glass of water

## *That night*

- Hot decaf tea with honey before bed
- Use a humidifier overnight, especially in heated or dry rooms
- Sleep at least 8 hours — the folds recover during sleep
- Avoid late-night dairy and alcohol (reflux triggers)



### *The morning after*

- Wait 30–60 minutes after waking before any vocal use
- Hydrate before speaking – water first
- Slightly rough morning voice is normal; significant hoarseness is a signal
- Shorten warm-up if rough – do not push through with aggression
- If roughness persists more than 2–3 days, see a laryngologist

### *Back-to-back performance nights*

- Every element of recovery matters more – nothing is optional
- 8 hours sleep is the target between shows
- Pace yourself on night one – night three voice depends on it
- Protect the voice socially between shows
- Steam before and after every performance in a run



*Rest is not failure.*

*It is the most sophisticated recovery tool available.*

*Your voice is not done with you.  
Don't be done with it.*



– Jennifer Cella

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