Getting the Most out of Practice

Hey everyone, this is a mostly copy-pasted document from where I wrote these points in other places, but. When we approach voice training one of the things that can either accelerate our progress or grind it to a halt is the way we interact with practice.

Before we properly get started in this document I want to highlight one very very important thing. If you're about to read this, or watch a video to procrastinate getting started actually working on or avoid making sounds, that is a pretty naughty thing to do. Aside from practicing the best u can, actually practising and using your voice is the most important thing, so while reading this, if you havent done anything yet, I urge you to hum softly and just get a feel for what moving around pitch in your voice feels like. Take that first step.

Control

So the first thing I want to throw out there is that, when training our main aim and judge of progress should be control and not necessarily proximity to the exact voice we want. If we look past the fact that often times people do use their voices in a range and don't just stick to one voice, there are plenty of reasons why aiming for control is better. (and more)

1. More resistant to pain and fatigue - if we just gun for getting the voice we are aiming for and sacrifice control as a goal it becomes a lot easier to develop bad habits that will make our voices unsustainable for usage.

2. It's easier to stay motivated, when our goal is control. When we focus on control we can celebrate small victories and therefore stay more motivated to continue working on our voices, often times with more control often comes greater benefits in terms of end result as well.

3. When we focus on control it allows us to start troubleshooting our own issues - if you've ever worked with a teacher what you've essentially done is outsourced the problem solving to someone else (this being said, you don't necessarily know e-e-everything that a teacher does, and that's fine, but that's why voice training often also involves learning about underlying factors, this being said, we can of course find our voice goals by 100% focusing on the sounds we are making)

4. This final point somewhat relates back to the last one, but when it comes to control exploration is key, and that sounds kinda weird, but what it means in this context is that when we do an exercise, we want to think about what its helping us learn that's new, or how its helping us with our voices, the more we can start thinking about the factors behind working on voice, the more progress we can make more quickly. This is why we rarely see

good results from simply drilling one exercise over and over again, we should be iterating upon an exercise so that we can get the most out of it we can.

Fun

All this being said, our secondary aim should be fun.

If we can make the process of voice training fun, or at least take away the aspects of it that make it hard to do mentally, we should see progress a bunch quicker. B-uut how do we do this?

1. Try taking shorter but more frequent practices. I'm literally a voice teacher and most of my practices consist of short 10-30 second chunks of making sound (and if we want to call researching about stuff, well this takes longer but still same theory kinda applies, make things manageable. There are multiple reasons why shorter lengths of practice can be better (though different lengths of practice can be more applicable at certain times e.g. practising normalisation can be good to do for longer). If we think about it though there are two key benfits. Firstly its way more manageable to commit to 10 seconds of practice, than 10 minutes of practice, if we get in even 20 seconds of practice, every day, that is far far more desirable than just 10 minutes in one chunk. (think easier to get motivated, less likely to be fatigued etc and less likely to get caught up in dysphoria). Secondly humans do just learn better with spaced repetition and taking shorter more frequent goes at practice tends to net better results, especially because it helps us not view practice as grinding, which spoiler alert tends to lead to bad habit formation and incorrect assumptions.

2. Try to move on from things if they are making us feel uncomfy, its fine to run an exercise 2-4 times, but if after that we aren't seeing the result we are looking for, chances are we aren't gonna see it right now, and it may be the case that a different road block is getting in the way. Often times if we do try to brute force it, it can end up making us feel much worse because it tends to lead to runaway expectations. Key point: often times, we aren't really shooting for maximum anything, when it comes to getting a passing voice (if that's our goal) it's about the whole vocal mix and not just what one variable is doing. This is your prompt to stop grinding voiceless resonance exercises yall.

3. EXPLORE, make weird sounds. DO anything with your voice. As long as it doesn't hurt you or cause discomfort, chances are what you're doing is gonna help you learn control in one way or another. For this reason, branching out and trying new things is one of the best things we can do. It can be fun and it can also help us get past plateaus. My suggestion would be here, if u get to a new sound, maybe you can try to re-create it, and maybe play around with other stuff as you do it. can you modify the sound? if so how? the more you build up a mental map of your voice, the better your control is gonna get.

4. Mimicry, mimicry is a great tool, and can be great fun. However, when we play around with it, we have to be careful to not get tooo caught up in getting things perfect. When we play

around with mimicry its all about trying new things and playing around with your voice. If you can mimic a voice or a sound perfectly? That's frickn great!! but at the same time, not getting it perfect can also be fun if it sounded goofy or off let yourself lean into the cringe and have fun :3

Couple of Points on Effectiveness of Practise

Okay I don't feel that I could necessarily squeeze these in in other places, but there were a couple things I wanted to add in on the end here.

1. Not getting the result you want can actually be a good thing. When things go wrong they give us an opportunity to learn, if we let ourselves play around with something when it goes wrong, these are the best times to get to know our voices, and as a result can be great ways of identifying what we want to work on next, and therefore can actually end up being a good thing.

2. Hiiighest is not always best, please please for the love of god, stop aiming for the highest or lowest every time you do something. This also applies to value chasing in general, having your voice at one value or another, is not what makes a voice sound passable or good. As I go into more detail on in this comment:
https://www.reddit.com/r/transvoice/comments/pd4ejr/trying_to_learn_voice_feminization_is_actually/hanoube?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3 voices and the expectations placed on them, can be heavily context dependant. You've gotta take in the whole voice and not get caught up in specific values if u want your end voice to sound good. Don't get me wrong it can sometimes be good to play with your limits, but if that's what most of your practice looks like its probably not productive. + voices will sound weird and atypical if always pushing to their maximum, variation within a congruent range sounds much more natural.

3. Practising with others can be a great way to get better at voice and can also be a good way to stay on track. Consider doing this and you might find that voice training is more fun and productive in the end!!

Ear Training

So, one of the most broadly useful skills is ear training, and this applies to everyone, both to transmasculine and transfeminine people, as well as anyone else interested in modifying the gender (or vibe) of their voice.
Whilst maybe not as important as actually playing around with your voice and getting to know it, its a skill that for most will be the single best way to evaluate your voice. For this I recommend getting started here.

Zhea and Clover's Ear Training Livestream https://youtu.be/rvet1PwCoG

More on Best Approaches to Practise

One final thing I want to comment on is thinking about our goals and troubleshooting in practice, and how to relate them back to what we are aiming to do. In this scenario below is the idea is that we want to contextualise resonance practice as much as possible within speech as often this is the best way to approach this topic.

An example of this would be.

Okay I'm doing big dig small dog exercise, first thinking why am I doing this? Okay so I'm working on resonance.

How can I further relate this back to speech? Okay so I could try whispering words? Yeah let's do that. (or use a vowel)

Okay how else can I make this more speech like, oh I could add voice?

If I can add voice, can I try speech?
Okay I've added speech but it sounds off, I wonder what happened.

If we get to this point we might want to ask for advice or if we have a good guess we might start thinking about how we can troubleshoot it.

A few things could have gone wrong here, but for the sake of the example I'm going to go for: Resonance dropped as we add speech.

In this scenario as you may expect, we have a few options, 1 we could try eliminating certain factors, e.g. going for a robot like sound and only using one set of vowels e.g. the a vowel see hearths example that mad black cat attacked that plastic bag. In a sentence like this we may be able to better spot resonance dropping and therefore fight against it. On the other hand we might try to do something like get a grip on modifying resonance while going for voiced sounds. This is more difficult to learn but in the end hard stuff does get us to learn more, and if we do it this way then we can correct as we speak instead of worrying about stuff dropping we can be safe in the knowledge that if they do start dropping we can simply raise them up again.

Other Resources

Consider Going to Workshops or Getting Lessons

Workshops are a great thing to do to try out a teacher or get started with voice training, they can also be useful for troubleshooting issues tho.

(all servers in alphabetical order)

Adi's Nook https://discord.gg/sKVqvKX99z is the server where Adi teaches. The server has a number of resources e.g. regular workshops, workshop recordings and lessons you can listen in on, and is just generally a space where you can get together with other people to work on your voice or learn more about voice.

Fluid Voice Studio https://discord.gg/pkDBV6tHmP is a community server where Dusty Nebula teaches (with apprentice teacher Finch). In this community is a number of workshops/group lessons, the community is also fairly active and is a decent place to learn about, and play with your voice.

Online Vocal Coach https://discord.gg/XRchCnPXGB is a community server where Hearth(wellingtonofthejungle) teaches, and (dont forget apprentice teacher Hazel). The server has a fair number of workshops each month and a bunch of auditable/public lessons every week. Aside from this there are also a number of clubs e.g. book club.(edited)

Scientifically Augmented Voice https://discord.gg/HY4S48XkzX is a community server where Savvy teaches. The server has a fairly active community as well as a number of workshops every month and auditable/public lessons every week.

Scingusitics https://discord.gg/aMxrdq8eDc is a community server where CRAMD Voice lessons teaches as well as Ama and hosts a number of apprentice teachers who are just getting started in teaching. The server has a number of community led events as well as workshops and public lessons to listen in on every week.

Up finally for now would be the Trans Voice Lessons discord server, its a community server centred around Zheanna, unfortunately it's pay-walled right now so I can't provide a convenient link, but if you're interested you can gain access through the Trans Voice Lessons patreon.

Fem Resources

For transfemme people my general suggestion for most people is

First - focus on finding soft, slightly higher pitched, clean sounds (i.e. free of turbulence or breathiness)

So a good place to start for this might be here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfCS01MkbIY

and

Second- Play around with resonance, see if u can modify resonance during speech, maybe first by focusing on modifying it with voiceless exercises, and then trying to carry that across, when we do this we should prioritise, two things, 1 noticeable changes, we don't need to find absolute extremes, but a noticeable change in our own voices is the most important first step. and 2 retaining the clean vocal qualities we found beforehand, if we do this, we should be setup for success.

Masc Resources

Unfortunately for people people looking to find more masculine qualities in their voices there is a plethora of bad resources, and a dearth of good ones. For this reason I personally think that right now the single best resource on this topic are the workshops led by teachers on finding more masculine voice qualities(e.g. me, nebula savvy hearth etc). Aside from this though, my recommendation probably lies here https://soundcloud.com/adi-phoenix-658511988/voice-masculinsation-rundown there are other resources out there, but I don't feel particularly confident that other ones are super super productive. .

Troubleshooting

Useful Troubleshooting/More Info Stuff

Beyond this, there is a large degree of troubleshooting on your part that's going to be required to get you where u want to be. For this these videos from Zhea may help :3

The Big Picture of Voice Feminization https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZWQ7MICbDY

8 Exercises to Reduce Vocal Fold Mass https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PNnBRBfOVY

The Gender Knob (R1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BW8X2nXexQs

False Vocal Fold Control https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdsaPJdU24s

8 biggest trans voice mistakes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnUD0gfLevo

The Art of Voice Feminization https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynFqjE2AEGk

HOW TO MASTER VOICE: 7 Guidelines of Practice https://youtu.be/fylIX28mlyY(edited)