

Brief Overview

There are two primary differences between “male” and “female” vocal physiology: **vocal tract length** and **vocal fold mass**. The exercises provided here are intended to help individuals feminize their vocal fold mass. The mass of the vocal folds can be modified through an interaction of 3 primary elements: configuration, closure, and force of air. Configuration refers to a spectrum of “thick” to “thin” sound quality which is controlled by engaging or disengaging more or less of the vocal fold tissue. While thinness to thickness is a continuum, there is a discrete flipping point between the physical two states. Closure refers to the clenching or opening of the vocal folds (adduction/abduction). Force of air refers to how much strength is applied with the lungs to move air.

All elements are deeply connected, but these elements can be controlled pseudo-independently of each other. Control over all gives the greatest freedom, but control over thickness and thinness gives the greatest feminization out of the vocal fold mass “ingredients”. Learning to alter vocal fold mass and ultimately reduce it for speech is a fundamental part of voice feminization. See: <https://youtu.be/gZWQ7MICbDY> for more info. This document contains an instruction on how to use, ear training for basic quality recognition, and 10 exercises to interact with, explore, induce, and observe vocal fold thinness and thickness.

How to Use:

The exercises provided primarily focus on inducing and building awareness of the different discrete configurations: thick or thin. To do this, many of the exercises create conditions and environments where the thick or thin state is encouraged or discouraged. While thick to thin is a continuum, there is a clear audible and physical crossover point between the two qualities. Students should work to isolate the sensation and experience of both “modes”.

Ideally, we freely explore the concept, observe it, gain awareness of it, isolate the sensation, implement it with basic speech, refine control, apply it to much longer passages/windows of speech, and then ultimately normalize it through consistent application.

Exploring, conquering, and cultivating the discrete “break” or “glitch” that occurs between the two states is very beneficial. It’s one of the best ways to directly feel the subtle muscle motion that drives vocal fold thickness/thinness. Listen carefully, have fun, and be observant! Always try to innovate and create your own exercises or modify these exercises to fit your needs.

To make the most of these exercises, listen carefully to the ear training section to gain an understanding of the sound you’re seeking. Then, explore and experiment with different approaches! Listen to the audio file, mimic along, and adjust accordingly. If you get stuck, try a different approach or come back to it later.

Listening and Ear Training

Listen carefully to the following examples of thin vs thick sounds:

Basic examples:

[Thick vs Thin | Random Sounds](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Heat from Fire Comparison](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Dark Resonance + Low Pitch](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Bright Resonance + Higher Pitch](#)

Notable Examples:

[Thick vs Thin | During R1 exercise](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Going up in Pitch](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Freestyle](#)

Listen carefully to the “break” point between the two states:

[Thick vs Thin | Transition Point](#)

[Thick vs Thin | Transition Point with Moving Pitch](#)

We are trying to develop a clear “thin” and “thick” bank of experiences and associations for you. When you listen, try to recall previous times where you’ve heard it. The goal is to build sensory continuity between thick and thin experiences. Then, the associations are formed more deeply and are recalled with greater ease.

10 Simple Exercises to Explore Thinness:

1. Pitch Slides for Thinness

[Example 1](#)

Start with a thick and full sound then begin sliding upwards in pitch. The folds should automatically encourage thinning. The student can try to bring the thinness back down while maintaining the configuration. When doing this on your own, it’s important to listen carefully to hear if the sound “glitches” throughout the pitch slide. After it glitches to thinness, bring the pitch back down and work on speaking comfortably with thinness.

Try to avoid going too high and up into the falsetto, which can often imitate the glitch we are seeking. This method seems to help people who can’t find the coordination well in other ways. Estill documented that 1/2 or 1/3 of the way through a "trained singers" vocal range, the coordination would flip from thick to thin. This happens in untrained voices as well and makes for a very easy approach. This is especially interesting as it creates a connection for pitch training in feminization. It's really great to anchor the higher pitches with thinness to build the foundation behaviorally quicker.

2. Thick to Thin Pop Test

Example 2

Start with thick, heavy singing at any pitch then add a momentary burst of hot air. If done correctly, this should trigger a highly audible and sensible cue by exposing the break point between the thick configuration and thin configuration. This method is highly visible on a spectrogram as it shows up as a tall vertical line.

3. Pure Mimicry

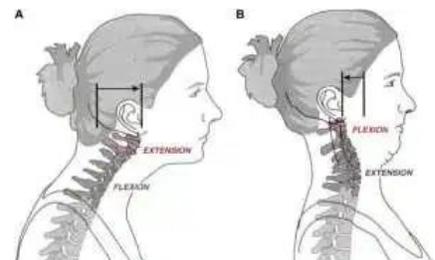
Example 3

Often voices can achieve different qualities of thinness and thickness simply by mimicry. This approach should always be tried because it can lead to disproportionately fast growth. If you find success through pure mimicry, reflect on how the different qualities feel and try to isolate the muscular movement or sensation responsible for shifting between thick and thin.

4. Physical Compression of the Neck to Explore Thick vs Thin

Example 4

Movement of the neck and/or head can alter the vocal fold mass. This method is a fun and insightful approach to observe thin and thick sounds without requiring direct control over the muscles we are trying to learn. Consider this an exploratory exercise. There are several ways to do this. The simplest is to simply extend the head forward like a turtle popping out of its shell, this should stretch the folds, causing a thinning event. If the head is drawn back tightly over the shoulders, the configuration will thicken. If you manage to get very noticeable effects with this, try returning to the resting position while maintaining the sound thin quality produced by moving the head forward. See:



5. Onset and offset based approaches

Example 5

The beginning and end of a spoken sound is called the *onset* and *offset*. Thicker vocal folds have much clunkier onset and offset. Thin vocal folds allow for very delicate and graceful onset/offset. By developing very gentle onsets and offsets, we thereby also train thinness. These approaches are very valuable for voices of all skill levels. All qualities of onset should be played with and all onset qualities are used in regular speech. However, isolating these “light onsets” can be a valuable self confirmation tool for vocal fold thinness.

Avoid being excessively breathy as thickness can be masked by added air. Retraction of the vestibular folds is baked into this exercise approach. Work to create the purest, cleanest, and smoothest possible onset you can. Focus on making the sound consistent and don't let it change after the onset.

6. Behavioral Trigger Approach

Example 6

Individuals often thin their voice in emotionally or culturally specific moments. There are many possible behavioral triggers and the optimal one will be unique for each person. Here are a few common behavioral triggers for thinness: Sobbing often induces thinness. Yawning often induces thinness. Speaking in a cutesy voice to a baby kitten induces thinning. Sighing often induces thinness. Any of these can be attempted to automatically trigger thinness by tapping into familiar states where you do thinness.

=This approach however seems to be less successful in untrained or inexperienced voices which are often uncomfortable really committing to sob qualities or character voice qualities. Behavioral trigger approaches like this require the student to fully “roleplay” the sound/feeling.

7. SOVT Exercises bridged to Non-SOVT

Example 7

Start with the sound /m/ as in *Mom*. Keep the lips closed and lightly try to begin sound. Work to make it as thin and gentle of an onset as possible. When it feels very light, open the mouth and try to preserve the thinness then try to maintain and speak. The /m/ allows for a “semi-occluded vocal tract” exercise (SOVTe). These techniques create a backup of air pressure that pads and cushions the movement of the vocal folds. SOVT exercises are often used in voice therapy and voice rehabilitation. The backpressure makes gentle onset and subsequent thinness much easier. Implementing it into speech with this technique just requires the student to open the lips slowly and begin speaking.

8. Voiceless Thinness vs Thickness

Example 8

The thin and thick sound quality can be heard in voiceless, aspirate airflow. Create the sound /h/ and manipulate the way it sounds. The thicker /h/ is much heavier and compressed. The thinner /h/ has a specific hollow quality. Listen and try to hear/explore/find it.

This exercise specifically works on the false vocal fold behavior. The false vocal folds are glottal tissue that surround the true vocal folds. When the false folds are engaged more, the aspirate /h/ sound will gain intensity and compression. When the false folds are neutral, the /h/ will be moderate and relaxed. When the false folds are retracted, the /h/ will be near inaudible and the airflow will be much quieter and face less resistance. In this exercise, the “thick” /h/ is actually less a distinction of “thickness” and more a distinction of false vocal fold engaged. The “thin” /h/ is false vocal fold retracted.

9. Shreds of Tone

[Example 9](#)

In this exercise, you exhale a strong and sustained stream of air. During this sustained exhalation, try to produce a small and soft amount of tone then shift back into the air stream. This is a confirmation and exploration exercise for thinness. Thin vocal folds are capable of more agile and nuanced sound production. This allows for gentler onsets and the ability to gracefully shift between air and tone. Thicker vocal folds are much clunkier beginning and ending phonation. Because of this, onset exercises like this are a powerful self confirmation tool for thinness.

10. Gentle Ingressive Sounds Made Egressive

[Example 10](#)

Voices can also phonate by inhalation rather than exhalation. It's very difficult to make a comfortable pitched sound via inhalation without thin folds. Often students can learn to gently produce pitch with inwards phonation then reverse the direction of the airflow and remain on the thin folds. This approach can be valuable because comfort guides the student to thinness.

Application

Through experimentation with these approaches, work to isolate the thin sensation and maintain it during moments of speech. Avoid becoming too quiet, weak, breathy, or thick. Often, when an individual first tries to apply a new concept, the speech can become awkward or unnatural in rhythm and flow. Try to speak exactly as you would without the technique but apply its influence. Ideally, we explore the concept, isolate the sensation, try it with basic speech, gain greater control of it, apply it to much longer passages or windows of speech, and then ultimately normalize it through consistent application.

Closing Thoughts

Voice is a complex and non-linear behavioral feedback loop running on bioacoustic hardware. The sum of all behaviors running creates the overall output of a voice. While vocal fold mass is rooted in physiology from hormones and genetics, users can take control of the voice and behaviorally manipulate the vocal fold mass across a great spectrum of options. Gaining control over vocal fold mass is a critical control for vocal freedom. Those who gain

expertise in the realm of thickening and thinning, thereby gain the ability to fluidly manipulate a fundamental sexually dimorphic element of voice. Best of luck, witches.

warmly,

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