

Alignment

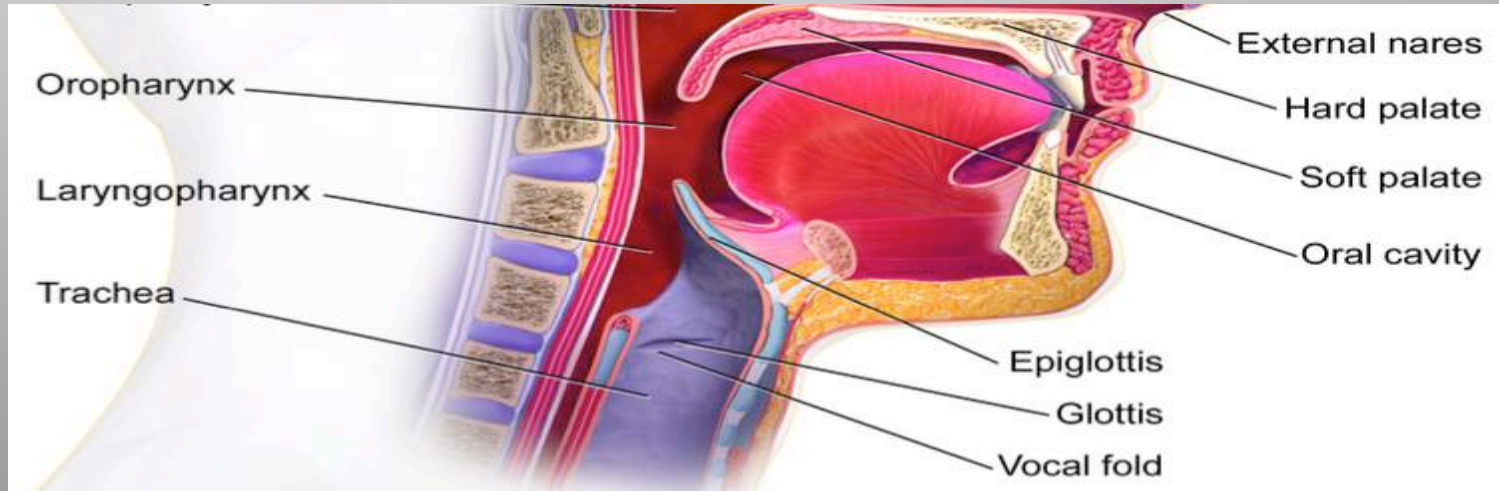
Nancy Kelsall
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Human Voice is an Instrument

- Power Source = Air
- Vibratory Source = Vocal Folds
- Resonating Source = Vocal Tract
- Articulatory Source = Tongue, Teeth, Lips, Palates

Filtering Sound: the Vocal Tract

Imagine your voice makes a note like the string of a guitar and your vocal tract is the body of the guitar enhancing that sound



So what?

- Changes to the size and shape of the vocal tract have acoustic results
- What we do with our neck, larynx, tongue, jaw, mouth and lips will affect the sound we make

Application: Alignment

We live in a society that doesn't remember how to walk, etc.

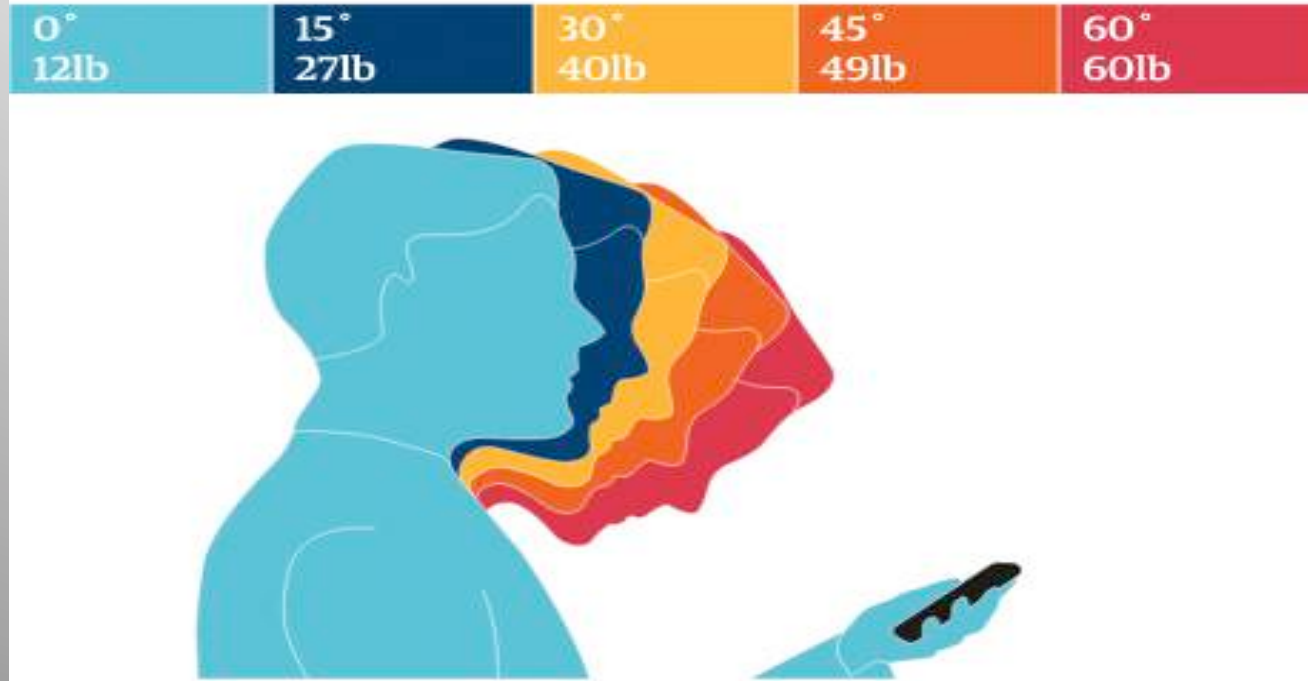


And now we have Pokémon Go...

Impact of increased head position on spine/neck muscles

The burden of staring at a smartphone

Effective weight on the spine as forward tilt increases



Why is Alignment Critical?

- Efficient alignment:
 - Makes breathing more natural
 - Allows the skeleton to do most of the upholding work
 - Allows muscles do the least amount of work
 - Allows for the most efficient functioning of the voice
- Tension:
 - Using muscles not required for the task or
 - Using muscles beyond what is necessary for the task
- Tension anywhere in the body = tension in the voice

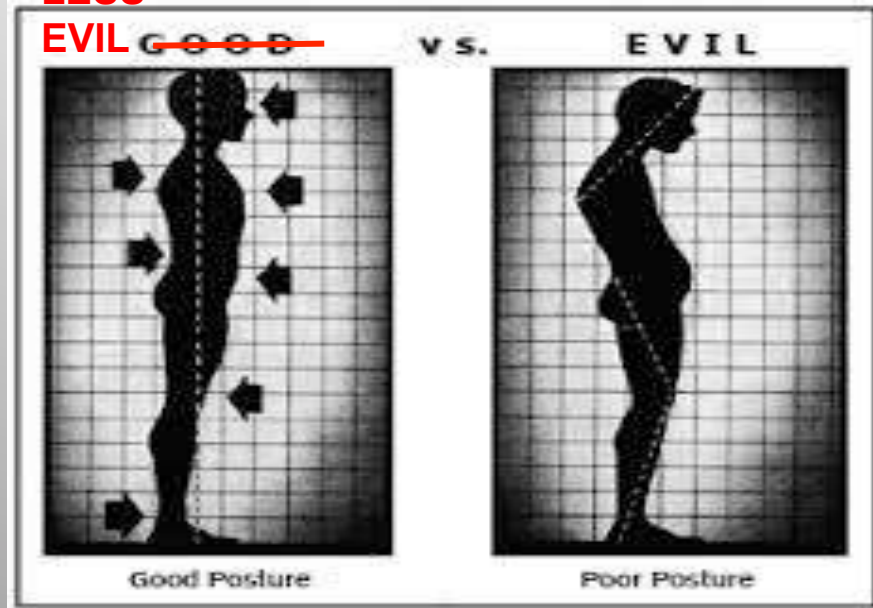
Alignment Observations

- If your neck is aligned your vocal tract is in an optimum position for resonating space
- If your lower body is aligned it 'naturally' engages muscles to breathe and keeps tension away from vocal tract

We can't stand up straight, but we can be more or less straightly aligned

LESS

~~EVIL~~



Alignment Checklist

- Weight balanced over arches in the foot
- Feet body-width apart, one slightly in advance and turned out
- Aligned points of alignment:
 - Middle of the Ankle
 - Middle of Knee
 - Highest part of the Iliac Crest (Hip Bones)
 - Highest part of the Shoulders
 - Middle of the Auditory Meatus (holes of the ears)

Alignment Points

- Knees: buoyant (check alignment of the pelvis)
- Pelvis: rotated to the point of releasing the knees
- Sternum: noble, moderately high (this should not move when breathing or singing)
- Shoulders, arms, and fingers: released.
- Check for overuse of the abdominal and/or back muscles

Head/Neck Alignment

CRITICAL to alignment of the vocal tract and efficient vocal production

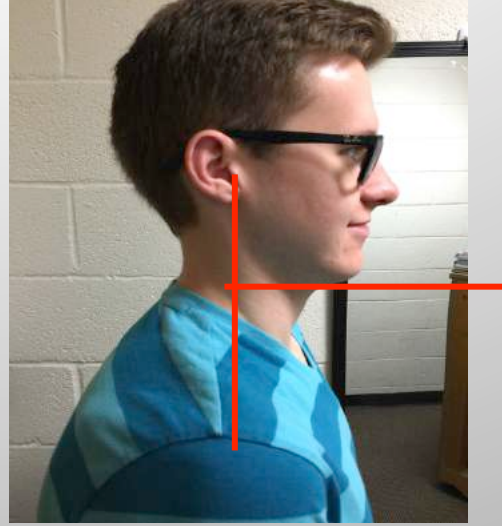
Follow these guidelines:

- Long back of neck, short front of neck
- Holes of the ears over the highest part of the shoulders
- Level gaze at the horizon
- A gentle elongation of the back of the neck
- A very soft, flexible neck
 - Only use enough muscle energy to keep the head up

More Head/Neck Alignment

Why is this so important?

- Craning the neck forward (turtling the head) bends the vocal tract
- The head weighs 10-12 lbs when aligned over the spine; when off axis, torque is increased
- If the head is misaligned, the spine applies pressure on the larynx from behind to bear the increased weight



The auditory meatus of this student aligns with his shoulder and his chin is parallel to the ground

Tools for alignment

- Neighbour work (but be careful)
- hands by head (lifts sternum as well as helps shoulder/ear alignment)
- Stand on one leg (assists pelvic tilt)
- If we align our neck and bodies it has big effect on the sound

Tongue placement and tension

- Tongue tension can create tension in the vocal tract which will impact resonance
- Tongue placement can 'block' throat space if tongue slips back and will impact resonance
- An ee vowel opens the throat and an ahh vowel closes the throat – try it !

Vocal tract shape on vowels



Tools tongue

- Tongue tension/ensure tongue does not slip back into throat
 - sylvester/singing with tongue out
 - speak then sing
 - dee dee dee tongue
 - ‘pre-taste’ or pringle tongue
 - straw under tongue or between teeth

Summary

- Align body/neck to be in best position for singing
- Check tongue placement and jaw opening
- Eliminate tension (tongue, neck, jaw)

Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away Antoine de Saint-Exupery