

MADE FOR LIFE
ON THE ROAD

Vocalzone

TOUR **SURVIVAL** GUIDE FOR VOCALISTS

KEEP YOUR VOICE HEALTHY
AND STRONG THROUGH
YOUR NEXT TOUR



WILL YOUR VOICE SURVIVE YOUR NEXT TOUR?

Touring isn't always the glamorous business it is often made out to be.

Sleep deprivation, questionable food, the discomfort of constant travel and the pressure to always be on top form takes its toll on the body, mind and voice.

In many ways, the challenge is greatest for vocalists, as your body is your instrument, and it's one that's being used all the time.

If your voice gives out mid-tour, the financial and reputational hit can be significant.

This can put artists in a serious bind where they know they need to rest, but the costs can seem too high.

With that in mind, Vocalzone has teamed up with **Rebecca Downes**, touring musician, vocal rehabilitation specialist, coach, educator and Vocalzone endorsed artist to offer you some advice to help ensure your voice is thriving, and not just surviving through your next tour.

Let's go.





SIGNS OF TROUBLE AHEAD

We should point out that this guide is only for informational purposes, and **not** a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

But before we dive into how to support your voice on tour, we need to know how to identify the signs of vocal problems.

Here are some of the warning signs of a voice problem:

Sensations & Feeling

- Unresolved throat pain before, during, or after speaking or singing.
- Unresolved hoarseness, croakiness, airiness, or roughness of the voice.
- A constant need to clear the throat or a “lump” sensation.
- Burning sensation in the throat on awakening or after eating.
- Unresolved throat muscle pain or tension.
- Constant dryness or scratchiness of the throat.



Vocal Performance & Range

- Loss of voice before, during, or after singing or speaking.
- Weakness or difficulty when projecting your voice.
- Increasing effort required when speaking or singing.
- A new and unexpected gap in the middle of your range.
- Sudden new vocal breaks or cracks.

Tone & Pitch Control

- Unintentionally producing more than one pitch at a time.
- Uncontrolled pitch changes when speaking or singing.
- Unexplained changes in your vocal tone and/or quality.
- Loss of pitch control, range, volume, or strength.

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should rest your voice immediately until things resolve, and if symptoms persist beyond 2 weeks, **seek medical advice**.

From Rebecca:



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Too many artists think it's normal to be croaky after singing a full set. **It's not!** It's a request from your body for change and a sign of potential vocal damage.

"Losing the top of your range is one of the first signs of trouble, in my experience."

//



YOUR TOUR SURVIVAL GUIDE

IT STARTS WHEN YOU WAKE UP:

Start the day with a glass of water and steam your voice*. This hydrates the voice both systemically and topically.

Systemic hydration is absolutely essential to keeping your vocal cords lubricated and it needs to start hours beforehand.

If you only do one thing, do this.

Check in with your voice too, particularly if you performed the night before. Does anything feel different or off?

If it does, proceed with extreme caution. Is one show worth potentially risking lasting damage to your voice?

DURING THE DAY:

If you are performing today, try and keep as quiet as possible throughout the day.

Warm-up before you sing - and that includes sound check too! Our favourite warm-up exercise at Vocalzone is the straw exercise:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Take a 3-4mm diameter straw (thinner = harder), place it between your lips and make a seal around it. | 2. Place the straw 1-2 inches into a cup half-filled with water (deeper = harder). | 3. Hum gently through the straw. | 4. Slide your pitch up and down. |
|---|---|---|---|

*Get professional advice about how to do this properly and safely first.

The idea is that by narrowing the airflow, it creates back pressure that helps the vocal folds vibrate more freely and with less strain.

This can help your vocal folds vibrate more efficiently and with less effort, reduce tension and improve resonance and breath control.

The straw technique can be used as a warm-up or cool down, during vocal rehab or anytime your voice feels tired.

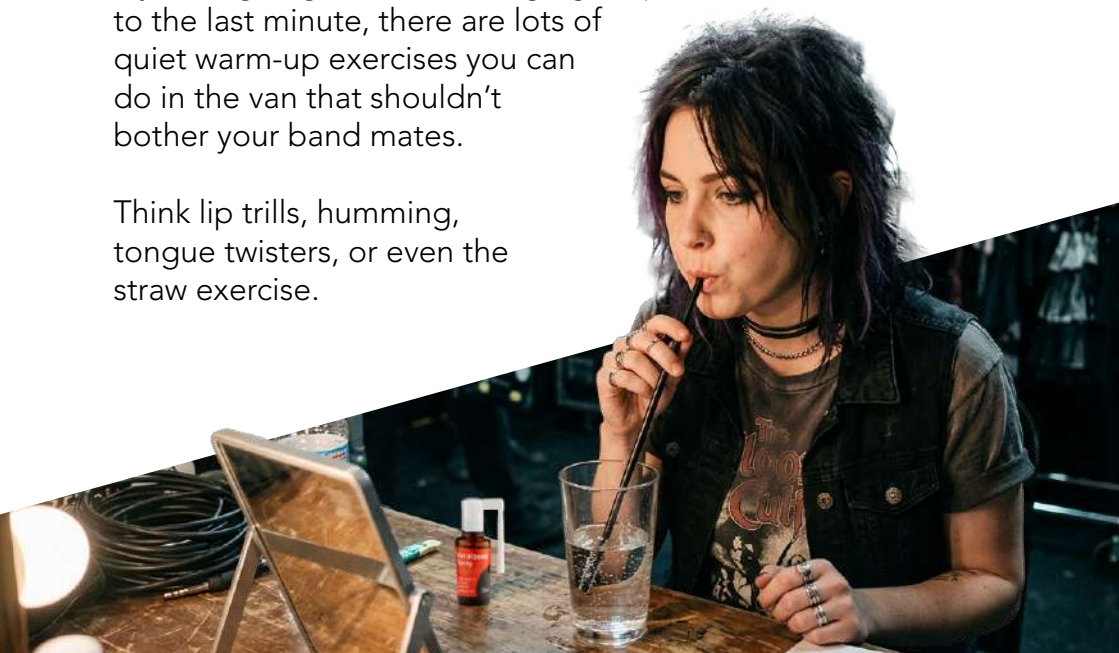
Some artists have been known to tone down their singing during rehearsals and sound checks in order to save the “money notes” for the actual performance.

This might be worth considering if you are feeling the strain today.

ON THE GO:

If you're going to be travelling right up to the last minute, there are lots of quiet warm-up exercises you can do in the van that shouldn't bother your band mates.

Think lip trills, humming, tongue twisters, or even the straw exercise.



DURING THE SHOW:

Having warmed-up and being well hydrated, you should be in good shape for the show.

While it's a good idea to have a drink on hand, stay away from cold water straight out of the fridge. The cold can cause the muscles of your throat to tense up.

Lots of artists like Vocalzone Tea as its designed to soothe and coat the throat.

Vocalzone Pastilles and Spray are also popular tools to use mid-performance as they provide quick, soothing relief to over-worked voices.

If you're feeling the strain today, can you lean into your backing vocalists or audience participation to give you some respite mid-set?

AFTER THE SHOW:

Athletes cool down their body after a race, and vocalists should think about their voices in the same way after performing.

From Rebecca:



// Too many artists seem to view warm-ups as something for wimps, but really, they are an insurance policy for your voice.

All they cost you is the time, so why would you risk your livelihood by just diving into your performance without preparing your voice? **//**



Some things to try:

- Steaming.
- Room temperature water.
- Vocal naps of 15-20 mins of pure silence.
- Gentle exercises like the straw technique.
- Vocalzone Pastilles, Teas or Spray.

One of the challenges for singers is that they are often the only person in the band who needs to take the time to warm up carefully, watch what they eat and drink, be careful to rest their voice etc.

When other band members are heading out to party or are overindulging, it is very tempting to join in, but when your body is your instrument it's so important that you weigh up the potential risks.

Your voice is your livelihood, after all.

WATCH OUT FOR GERMS!

Another key thing to bear in mind is the importance of general hygiene.

Catching a cold, cough or other illness can present you with an enormous challenge as a vocalist, and the best medicine for your voice in this situation is absolute rest.

To avoid ending up in this situation, regular hand-washing/sanitising, a healthy diet and as much sleep as you're able to get are simple steps that go a long way, as is avoiding anyone who is unwell.



REBECCA'S EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

If the worst happens, it's important to know what to do. Here is what Rebecca recommends if the warning signs turn into red flags:

"If you suspect you have damaged your voice, immediate, absolute rest is essential, and try steaming your voice for 15 minutes twice a day if you can.

"If any of the red flags persist for more than a fortnight then you should rest your voice and seek medical advice but if your voice goes suddenly and completely, then seek medical advice and do not continue to sing.

"In the meantime, at the end of each day after you have brushed your teeth, gargle with salt water. This can help soothe inflammation in the throat."

Do not attempt to push through and perform. The risks of causing long term damage to your voice are too high.

WHERE IT GOES WRONG FOR MOST ARTISTS

As someone who has toured extensively and spends a lot of time helping artists rehabilitate their voice, here's Rebecca with the last word on what to avoid:

"I see so many artists who are chronically dehydrated. If your vocal cords aren't lubricated, then they are liable to become inflamed when they rub together.

"As mentioned before, too many artists skip warm-ups altogether, and it never ceases to amaze me how many vocalists smoke or vape heavily.

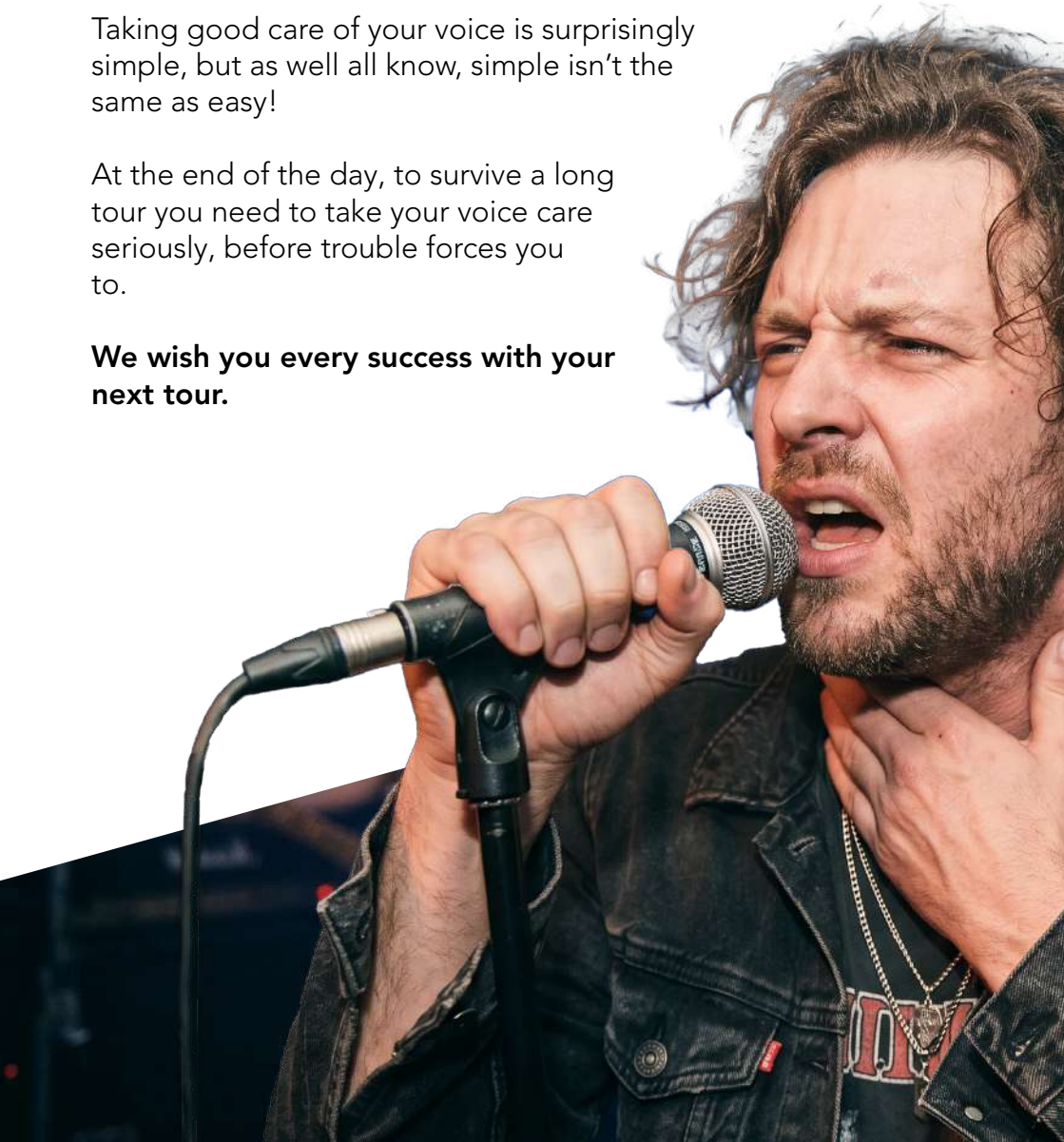
"When your voice is strained, technique slips as you struggle to reach your top notes, which in turn increases the strain, potentially trapping you in a vicious cycle."

Good vocal technique is of course the other big piece of the puzzle.

Taking good care of your voice is surprisingly simple, but as well all know, simple isn't the same as easy!

At the end of the day, to survive a long tour you need to take your voice care seriously, before trouble forces you to.

We wish you every success with your next tour.



ABOUT REBECCA DOWNES

Birmingham-based Rebecca is a fully independent artist creating original blues/rock music with her co-songwriter Steve Birkett and releasing it on her own label Mad Hat Records.

She has released six studio albums, a live album, two EPs and several singles.

In addition to being voted Female Blues Vocalist of the Year in the FORM UK Blues Awards 2018, Rebecca was voted Female Vocalist and Emerging Artist of the year in the British Blues Awards 2016.

She has provided tuition to other contemporary professional singers, X-Factor / West End singers and actors and has also advised on rehabilitation for recovering vocalists.

She has taught people of all ages for over fifteen years, and works at two universities in Birmingham.

She is proudly endorsed by Vocalzone.



PHOTO: MAL WHICHELOW



ABOUT VOCALZONE

In 1907, Enrico Caruso, the most famous singer in the world and the first man to sell one million records had problem.

His chain-smoking had caused his voice to give out ahead of a major performance in London.

He commissioned famous ENT specialist William Lloyd to create a solution to get him back on stage. The name of his creation?

Vocalzone.

Lloyd's creation became a pastille in 1912, designed to soothe voices over-worked from excessive, singing, speaking and smoking.

Trusted and beloved by many of the most iconic voices of all time, Vocalzone has been there for performers for almost 120 years.

HOW CAN VOCALZONE HELP ME?

First things first: there isn't a single product available that will heal vocal damage.

There is no substitute for taking care of your voice and using it with proper technique and control.

What the Vocalzone range can help with is soothing, relieving and clearing over-used voices and irritated throats.

In practical terms, this is about helping you keep a clear voice and giving you confidence in your voice before performance.

Something that sets Vocalzone apart from other products is that the fact our products contain no anaesthetics. This means that you won't mask any of the warning signs of vocal trouble and inadvertently damage your voice further

With millions of packs sold over the last century, we've learnt that how and when you use Vocalzone is largely a matter of personal preference, so we encourage customers to experiment with what you take and when.

Our key pointer is not to use it for the first time right before a performance.

Whether you prefer the pastilles, teas or spray, just remember that Vocalzone is a powerful tool, but it should not be used as a crutch.

Look after your overall health, your vocal health, learn and utilise proper vocal technique and act quickly when you notice signs of trouble.

AVAILABLE ONLINE
AND IN PHARMACIES
NATIONWIDE

When should I
use Vocalzone to
help keep a clear
voice?

BEFORE VOICE WORK

Vocalzone Pastilles are the anchor of the range and our most complete product, suitable for use before, during and after vocal work to soothe, relieve and clear.



DURING VOICE WORK

Vocalzone Spray is designed for those moments when you need quick relief but don't want a pastille in your mouth and a tea isn't feasible.



AFTER VOICE WORK

Vocalzone Tea is very popular pre and post-performance as it is formulated to help soothe an overused or irritated throat.



All Vocalzone products are designed to work before, during and after you use your voice to help you keep a clear voice and relieve throat irritation.

Vocalzone

BUILD YOUR
ULTIMATE
SINGER'S
TOOLKIT.



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