The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of different surgical treatments as well as of radiotherapy for laryngeal carcinomas on health-related quality of life (QL). In a prospective, randomized multicenter study (five university hospitals in Germany), a total of 146 patients with laryngeal carcinomas (UICC stages: I-IV) underwent different surgical treatments (32 total laryngectomies, 81 CO(2) laser microsurgical partial laryngectomies, 33 open partial laryngectomies). Postoperative radiotherapy was performed in 44 patients. QL data were obtained by using the EORTC QLQ-C30 questionnaire (developed by the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer). Impaired QL data were seen after total laryngectomy and after radiotherapy. Radiotherapy seemed to have more impact on QL than surgical treatment. Global QL was not affected by any treatment. In general, the QL data were not as discriminating as presumed. To evaluate coping abilities, objective measures (voice, swallowing, breathing) should be obtained for comparison in further investigations.