

Introduction to Singing

	Warm-up / exercise	Why we do it
1	Stretches and posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To relax the body then position it to deliver maximum volume at minimum strain to the voice using the legs and abs for strength
2	Getting the breathing right - In for 4, hold for 4, out for 8 to “sss” - Deep breath in then sss out for as long as you can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So that we sing from our diaphragm rather than from the throat To strengthen lung capacity hence vocal endurance.
3	Rhythmic diaphragm pushes To “sss” and “vvv”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushes us to breathe in quickly and use up all inhaled air for maximum projection.
4	Lip trills / tongue rolls / motorboat Up and down a scale, sirens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To relax the lips and facial muscles To control the voice up and down a scale and over your “break” To give a good indication of breath support
5	5ths – mmm, ahh, eee, ooo etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To begin to warm up the voice. Just as you would warm up before exercising, we warm up the voice before singing to avoid damaging the vocal chords
6	Ascending and descending 5ths & 9ths – ahh, eee, ooo etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase intensity of warm ups To work on rounded vowel sounds
7	Arpeggios / Dom 7ths - lah, mee, mah, loo etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To stretch and extend vocal range To practise singing over our break and maintaining chest voice
8	Sirens and slides - slurring from lower to higher notes and back down again (ahh, eee, ooo etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To exercise vocal control by enabling a smooth bridge between head and chest voice To stretch out vocal range
9	“Alleluia” (descending major scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practise a smooth transition between notes with changing vowel sounds To improve diction and loosen the jaw
10	Ya ya ya ya ya (descending 5 ^{ths} , Dom 7ths, arpeggios)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To push sound forward to the resonators (nasal tract), aiming for a nasal tone.
11	Zeeee ah-ha-ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To co-ordinate ab kicks with note entry and attack.

Most of these exercises and others are used on The Musicademy Essential Vocals Warm-Up CD available from www.musicademy.com

TIPS FOR BETTER SINGING

1. Start drinking water at least 20 minutes prior to singing.
2. Avoid consuming dairy products, caffeine, acidic drinks and chewing gum before you sing. These will either cause post nasal drip or dry out your voice.
3. *Always* warm-up for at least 10-15 minutes before singing. (Use our warm-up CD's if you need some help.)
4. Perform vocal exercises daily to improve your ab support, tone, range and technical ability.
5. Practise correct breathing technique as much as possible – breathe through the mouth (never through the nose when singing), stomach out and relaxed when you inhale, stomach in when you exhale. (Again, our CD's can help you.)
6. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, your knees unlocked, back straight, shoulders relaxed and jaw loosened.
7. Don't strain to reach high notes – loosen your jaw, open your mouth wide, lift your eyebrows and dig deep down from your abs. You'll be surprised at how effective this can be!
8. Don't depend entirely on your throat when singing – think of your entire body as a column of air and source of vocal power.
9. Try speaking through the words of songs before you sing them. Aim to over-articulate, making every consonant clear and every vowel as rounded as possible. This will get your mouth moving and help with enunciation.
10. Make sure you understand and “own” the songs you sing before you attempt to perform them – 50% of singing involves communication.
11. Be confident and allow yourself to enjoy singing. Let this show in your posture, your facial expressions and your body language.

GLOSSARY

The **diaphragm** is a muscle that extends along the bottom of the ribcage and causes the lungs to fill with air and empty. When relaxed, it has a dome shape, yet it flattens during inhalation. The diaphragm's primary function is as an inhalation muscle system. The diaphragm is not the muscle system that exhales the breath yet it is the muscle system singers use to CONTROL the breath on the exhale.

Chest voice is the voice and range most tend to speak in. When singing in this voice, your vocal cords are all the way apart and most of the resonance is felt in the upper chest. Chest voice is often associated with deep, warm, rich, thick sounds.

Head voice (women) and **falsetto** (men) involve shortening of the vocal cords. Both are associated with light, hollow singing tones that are higher in pitch and resonate within the upper sinus cavities.

Your “**break**” refers to the point at which you switch from using your chest voice to your head voice as you sing higher notes.

A **diphthong** refers to any word that is comprised of two or more vowel sounds. For example, the word “wide” requires you to sing both an “ah” sound and an “ee” sound – ‘wah-eed’.

Diction tips

Singing vowel sounds correctly

When singing “a” sounds (eg. praise, day), sing “air” then “ee” and drop your jaw slightly.

When singing “e” sounds (eg. free, be), smile slightly for a brighter tone.

When singing “i” sounds (eg. die, why), sing “ah” then “ee” and drop your jaw so your mouth is wide.

When singing “o” sounds (eg. holy), sing “au” or “or” followed by “oo” with slightly forward lips.

When singing “oo” sounds (eg. who), sing with your lips pushed far forward. This will result in a much warmer tone.