

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

BREATHING EXERCISES

Recommended Breathing and Vocal Warm-Up Resources

Sing Baby Sing

A Spring Board to Artistry

Darlene Rogers, Dale Syverson, Peggy Gram

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The Complete Choral Warm- Up Book

A Sourcebook for Choral Directors

Russel Robinson and Jay Althouse

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The Joy of Singing: Warm-Ups for Healthy Singing

Britt-Helene Bonnedahl

The Choral Warm-Up Collection

A Sourcebook of 167 Choral Warm-ups Contributed by 51 Choral Directors

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Vocal Coastin'

A program of exercises for enhanced vocal production

With Kathy Niswander

Mountain Laurel Chorus 1922

How To Train Singers

By Larra Browning Henderson

Parker Publishing Company Inc. 1988

The Structures and Movements of Breathing-A Primer for Choirs and Choruses

Barbara Conable

Foreword by James Jordan

ISBN; 1-57999-099-1, Copyright 2000 by GIA Publications

Singing For the Stars - A Complete Program for Training Your Voice

Compiled and Edited by John Dominick Carratello

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Vocal Technique -A Guide to Finding Your Real Voice

By Dene Murray

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The Contemporary Singer

Elements of Vocal Technique

Anne Peckham

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Lake Ontario Region 16

Fall Music School - Buffalo, NY

Round Table Discussion - Breathing

November 11, 2016

First Thing First: Alignment

Feet:	Shoulder Width Apart – Are your feet feeling the floor?
Knees:	Relaxed – Are your knees released and flexible?
Thigh:	Relaxed
Pelvis:	Slightly Tilted – Are you balanced at your hip joints
Spine:	Remember to optimize your spine – like an apple around a core – Are your backs free? Long and wide?
Chest:	High and Expanded
Arms:	Remember to balance your arms, Don't pull them back or slump them down
Chin:	Parallel to the Floor
Head:	Erect and relaxed
Ears:	Over your Shoulders
Mind:	Engaged
Face:	Smiling

Exercise #1 Optimal Body Alignment

1. Place your hands down in front, palms facing back, thumb toward your hip bones
2. Rotate your hands outside thumbs pointing away from your body. Bring them back a bit
3. Naturally lifted and opened your chest
You can feel the stretch in your chest and the lift gives your body good alignment
Try again.

1. Collapse forward, rotate your palms to the open position and stand up straight
2. You want your ears aligned with your shoulders
3. Your shoulders aligned over your hips
4. Your hips aligned over your feet, heels and toes on the ground, feeling flexible
5. Bend in the knees. Hips tucked in almost like you are going to sit
6. Hips squared with your shoulders with your weight equally distributed on your right and left, feet facing forward straight toes not pitched in or out. Avoid going on your toes or sitting back on your heels
7. Align yourself so the weight can go from one foot to the other chin... Parallel and loose
8. Lastly Align the holes in your ears with your shoulders

Exercise #2 Roll Down & Roll Up

Roll your spine down to a comfortable level. Some of you may only go a little way others can go right down. Do what is comfortable to you

Roll down to the count of 12, inhale and exhale 3 times slowly. Fourth time as you exhale roll up to a count of 12

You will feel an elongation in your spine and shoulders and neck release. It's a good way to eliminate tension from the day and prepare your body for good singing

1. To the count of 12 roll down leading with your head first. Inhale and go 1-12.
2. Inhale, exhale- feel the release in the lower back, inhale, exhale, one more time inhale, exhale
3. This time on the exhalation roll up to the count of 12 Inhale, exhale 1-12

You should feel taller and looser. You can do this before rehearsal, before a performance. It's a quick and easy way to release tension of the day or in your body as well as a good way to find your optimal alignment in your own body.

Exercise #3 Another image - to help you find optimal body alignment

1. Imagine a string that drops through the center of your head along your spine down to the floor between your feet. Anchor north and south
2. Now imagine another line that goes straight through your belly button to the middle of your back.
3. Where those two imaginary lines connect is your center. Good area for proper breath, inhalation and exhalation for proper singing.

Shake it out... On the count of four - find your optimal place for alignment

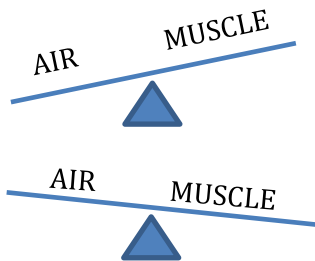
The following phrases will re-awaken your experiences: (From *"The Structures and Movement of Breathing"*)

- √ Sing with your whole body!
- √ Are you aware of your breathing?
- √ How are your ribs moving as you sing?
- √ As you sustain the phrase is your spine lengthening?
- √ Are you keeping your head independent and mobile?
- √ Are you thinking Up and Over?
- √ How is the joint of your head to your spine? Is it free? Can you sense it?

Balance equals support..... (From *"Singing For The Stars"*)



Imbalance equals effort and strain



Breathing for singing is a very relaxed process. If you maintain good posture when you sing and are careful not to let your chest "collapse" as you exhale, your diaphragm is able to move freely and be regulated by your abdominal muscles automatically. There is no need to consciously exert tension in those muscles. If you try to directly control your breathing muscles when you sing, the extra tension in your body will only cause your vocal chords to over tense – to jam up.

Very little air is required to produce a good tone.

You know you have proper breath support when there is a balance between air and muscle.

Martha's Favourite Breathing Exercises

- ★ To breathe properly for singing, you must breathe low into the bottom portion of the lungs, engaging the diaphragm. Your rib cage and back will expand. Your shoulders and upper chest will remain still and will not rise.

Try it yourself: Inhale deeply and exhale completely. Again inhale and exhale.

Now try it again, only this time inhale for four counts, hold your breath for four counts, exhale over four counts and then wait four counts before inhaling again. Let's do three complete sets of that counting exercise. Remember to inhale deeply and properly for singing.

Inhale 2 3 4, Hold 2 3 4 Exhale 2 3 4 and Wait 2 3 Again.

Inhale 2 3 4, Hold 2 3 4 Exhale 2 3 4 and Wait 2 3 Last Time.

Inhale 2 3 4, Hold 2 3 4 Exhale 2 3 4 and Wait 2 3 4.

This basic exercise is an easy one you can do every day. As you make progress, challenge yourself to increase the breathing count to 8, 12, 16 and more. For best results mix and match the numbers. The size of singing phrase is never the same, so practicing all different airflow situations is ideal. Breathing correctly needs to be a habit, meaning you need to do it correctly without thinking about it.

- ★ Inhale, then Sh out the air to the count of 15, 20, and then 25 (*From "Sing Baby Sing"*)

Sh15

Sh20

Sh25

- ★ Tone breathing muscles for management of air. (*Sing Baby Sing*)
Sip in 2 counts, Hiss out for 2 counts,
Then Sip in 3 counts, Hiss out for 3 counts.....Sip in 4 counts, Hiss out for 4 counts etc.
Activating the breathing mechanism.
Inhale to the count of 4 / Hold to the count of 4 / Exhale to the count of 4

- ★ Inhale and say Sh 7 times, breathing on the 8th beat (*From "Sing Baby Sing"*)

Sh Sh Sh Sh Sh Sh Sh ♪

- ★ Vvvvvvvv - like riding a motorcycle
Rrrrrrrr - rolling the tongue

- ★ Inhale and Hiss for 10 Counts (*From "Sing Baby Sing"*)
Inhale and Vvv for 10 counts
Repeat the Hiss and VV sequence to the count of 10/15/20
Hiss 1-----10/15/20
Vvv 1 -----10/15/20

- ★ Inhale slowly through the nose - like smelling a fragrant rose or freshly baked bread. Pull the air down deep to the bottom of your stomach. Blow air out by pulling in your abdominal muscles and "Blowing on a feather".
Once you are focused on the task at hand, it's time to start with a quiet hum on a single pitch, mid-range tone. Remember to have a loose jaw, tongue down in the bottom of the mouth and most important, listen yourself and to the ensemble.

- ★ *Lake Ontario Region 16
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Prepare: Exhale – then just let the air naturally come back
Engage the abs on a sh sound inhale
Sh sh sh sh shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh
Relax let the air flow back in and repeat the exercise.

★ SSSS...FFFF...CH.....
S as in “so” - pull your arm left to right
F as in “fine – pull your arm right to left
Ch as in “chicken” – gather the sound and push it forward with both arms – give the sound two beats
BREATH
Do this part of the exercise 5 times

Sh , Sh, Sh, Sh, Sh pushing the sound out each time – using your arms and gently raise your arms
with each SHHHHHHHHHHH
BREATH BETWEEN EACH “SH”

Once you reach the top double your time and bring your arms back down with every SH....
DO NOT BREATH BETWEEN EACH SH COMING DOWN
Use your abdominal muscles to push the sound out.

★ Remember your 2 P's when you are about to breath.....

- Pre Taste
- Pre Yawn
- Pre Sneeze.

★ Marking your music with the different types of breaths

- Catch Breath
- Ballad Breath
- Rhythm Breath
- Stop Breath
- Pregnant Pause