

## BREATHING EXERCISES

### Part One

- Interlace fingers and place hands on the base of the neck (elbows are opened out).
- Bring elbows into parallel (starting position). (The upper body should not be lifting – just a natural and simple opening and closing of the arms and elbows as you inhale and exhale.) Repeat four times or more if needed.
- Leave arms in parallel position henceforth. Tilt the chin down slightly to fully release head and neck. Bring the elbows closer together. Bend slightly from the waist.
- Inhale (feeling the breath in the back ribs). Exhale and let the weight of the arms stretch the neck and back as you drop gently over. Repeat three or four times until you are fully dropped over.
- Release the hands and arms and let them fall to a release.
- Inhale, then exhale and drop over one more time.
- Inhale and then exhale as you slowly roll up the spine one vertebrae at a time (smoothly).
- Inhale when you reach the top after your head floats up to center.

### Part Two

- Create a belt with hands under the rib cage. Drop the head as if it were a newborn baby's neck. Inhale. Bring the head up to center and then exhale.
- Do the same thing, but this time with the hands placed on the rear ribs.
- After the third or fourth time of the inhale, lift head, exhale, hands will return to the front of the ribs.
- Breathe in through the straw. Exhale on ssssssss (head is straight). Body is relaxed and knees are always soft (released). Repeat three times.
- On the last ssssssss exhale, allow the student to inhale normally through her/his mouth.

### Part Three

- Release jaw side to side
- Stretch facial muscles (all possible contortions of the face in all shapes).
- Wag tongue outside of mouth, side to side in the cheeks, then roll around the teeth one direction, reverse and back to the original direction. Then wag tongue up and down gently feeling the base of the tongue releasing.

**VOILA! YOUR STUDENTS AND YOU SHOULD FEEL RELAXED,  
YET ENERGIZED TO SING!!!**

### **WHAT A HEALTHY VOICE FEELS LIKE?--Dede Nibler**

1. Tones feel easy, open and free.
2. Vibrations are felt in the mask, nose pharynx, etc.
3. Lower tones vibrate in the chest area (sympathetic vibrations).
4. Posture feels buoyant and lifted.
5. Limbs feel energized and moveable.
6. Head floats directly above the spine.
7. Inhalations feel natural and not manufactured.
8. Exhalations feel resistant and steady.
9. Face feels mobile and elastic.
10. Practice recreating the feeling as often as possible.
11. A beautiful voice feels full and free.

### **REMEDIES FOR SORE THROAT: HOMEMADE & OTHERS**

#### **Sore Throat**

1. Some doctors will treat a sore throat with vitamins, a B-1 shot and/or intravenous dose of vitamin C.
2. Gargle with warm water and Epsom salts for five minutes, three times a day (two tablespoons in a glass of warm water).
3. Gargle with 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of soda in 8 ounces of warm water every few hours.
4. Put 1 ounce of hydrogen peroxide and 1 ounce of lemon juice with salt in warm water, and gargle three times daily.
5. Mix half and half liquid Benadryl (Children's Formula) and Pepto Bismol and take as indicated on Benadryl bottle.
6. My mother's answer to everything: gargle warm saltwater.

#### **Cold, Chest Congestion, Cough.**

1. Whenever you feel the cold beginning, crush a fresh garlic clove and swallow it with a vegetable juice, continuing take it 2 or 3 times a day until the symptoms are gone.
2. Chest congestion. Mix with hot water the juice of one lemon, a tablespoon of honey, and as much cayenne pepper as you can stand. Drink it.
3. The most intense remedy yet for chest congestion. From a book called *Fresh Vegetable and Fruit Juices*, by N.W.Walker: In a vegetable juicer, grind, don't press, 1/4 pint of horseradish. Discard the juice. When the pulp is ground to the consistency of a sauce, mix it with the juice of 1 lemon. Take 1/2 teaspoon twice a day between meals. This will dissolve mucus from your sinus cavities and other parts of your body.
4. If you have a serious cough, plain old sugar is a natural cough suppressant.
5. Some cough drops that worked for people I know.
  - a. Ricola
  - b. Fisherman's Friend
  - c. Janet Zand Herbal Lozenge
  - d. Halls
6. For stopping light sinus drainage, try TEI FU essential oil. It is for the skin but since it is an aromatic oil it dries the drainage without drying the throat.
7. Don't take an antihistamine and try to sing. If you must take something let it be a decongestant.

## **POSSIBLE CAUSES OF NODULES, POLYPS, AND CHRONIC LARYNGITIS**

### Non Singing Factors

- Shouting, screaming, and yelling, including cheerleading.
- Poor speaking habits.
- Repeated straining when lifting heavy objects.
- Talking over background noise at concerts and clubs, or in airplanes or cars.
- Reflux.
- Smoking.
- Excessive coughing and habitual throat clearing.
- Excessive dryness of the vocal mechanism caused by your environment, lack of adequate hydration, medications, or over-consumption of alcohol and/or caffeine.
- Singing Factors
- Not warming up
- Singing at the extremes of your range for long periods.
- Imitating other singers to the exclusion of developing your own voice.
- Singing without adequate amplification.
- Insufficient breath support.
- Pushing your voice when overtired or sick.
- Overusing your voice.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO THROAT CLEARING**

1. Dry swallow: swallowing closes the vocal folds and can help rid them of mucus. The action of swallowing can also relax the larynx, helping to alleviate the perceived need to clear the throat.
  2. Take small sips of water.
  3. Use a "silent cough".
  4. Pant lightly, and then swallow.
  5. Do a power pant.
  6. Hum lightly,
  7. Laugh gently or giggle lightly then swallow.
  8. Talk through the mucus.
  9. Vocalize lightly on five note scales in a comfortable range. Use the lip trill or hum.
  10. Thrust the tongue out of the mouth and wag it gently side to side, then swallow.
  11. Eat some apple.
-

**Bibliography:**

The Contemporary Singer, Elements of Vocal Technique, Anne Peckham, Berklee Press, Boston,

The Professional Singer's Handbook, Gloria Rusch, Hal Leonard, Milwaukee, WI

Sing Better As You Age, A Comprehensive Guide for Adult Choral Singers, Victoria Meredith, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Santa Barbara, California

Vocal Health and Pedagogy, Science and Assessment, Robert T. Sataloff, Plural Publishing Inc., San Diego

The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults, J. C. McKinney, Nashville: Genevox

Some Web Sites you might find interesting:

<http://www.runet.edu/~dcastong/ARTARCH/vocal>

<http://www.santosha.com/asanas/simha-print.html>

[http://www.vocalist.org.uk/vocal\\_health.html](http://www.vocalist.org.uk/vocal_health.html)

<http://www.singeruniverse.net/dvavocalremedies.htm>

## EXERCISES FOR ELEGANT CONSONANTS

**Exercise 1:** Speak consonants to the rhythm of Jingle Bells, London Bridge  
Deck the Halls, Yankee Doodle

**Exercise 2:** Diction – Russell Robinson & Jay Althouse “The Complete Choral  
Warm Up Book”



Exercise 2 consists of four staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are quarter notes. The consonants written below the notes are: B, D, F, L, M, N, P, T, V, V, V, V.

**Exercise 3: Diction— Russell Robinson & Jay Althouse “The Complete  
Choral Warm Up Book”**



Exercise 3 consists of a single staff of musical notation in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are quarter notes. The lyrics written below the notes are: See the swim-mer swim-ming in the deep blue sea. ↑

**Exercise 4: Text with alliteration—Peter Piper or What a to do.**

What a to do to die today at a minute or two to two  
A thing distinctly hard to say but harder still to do  
For they'll beat a tattoo at twenty to two  
With a Rat-a-ta-ta- Ta-ta-ta- Ta-ta-ta- Too  
And the dragon will come when he hears the drum  
At a minute or two to two today  
At a minute or two to two.

## Exercises for Elegant Vowels

### Exercise 1: Stage Whispering and Cheek Thumping

Use a stage whisper to produce vowels sequence ee, eh, ah, oh, oo. Next, whisper from ee to oo at various speeds to observe the changes in pitch. You can also experience this acoustical phenomenon by thumping on your cheeks with your index finger while shaping the articulators for each vowel, notice the pitch change.

**Exercise 2:** Place a clean finger on the central portion of the tongue and sing through the vowel sequence on a sustained comfortable pitch. Notice the tongue frontally arched for ee and gradually lowers and moves slightly backward as you sing toward oo. Be careful not to exaggerate lip or jaw movements.

### Exercise 3: The Cats "Meow"

Simply mimic the sound of a cat by slowly voicing "meow", first on a sustained pitch level and then using inflected pitch levels. Almost all Standard English vowels sounds appear to be incorporated in this exercise

### Exercise 4: Sing the Ten Basic Vowel Sounds on 1-3, 2-4, 3-5, 4-2 1

OO as in Moon	AH as in Father
OH as in Moan	Æ as in Sad
AW as in Lawn	EH as in Red
UH as in Mud	IH as in Did
ÖÖ as in Soot	EE as in Need

### Exercise 5: Sing IPA targets on a unison, octave, and then 4 parts

We	Hat	Go	Girl
Sit	High	Law	Moon
Let	Spot	Joy	Mute
Late	Love	Now	Look

## UNIT SOUND

### **Class Objectives:**

To identify the elements-aural and visual-of a unified performance.

To demonstrate techniques to achieve synchronization.

To highlight common synchronization problems and their causes and resolutions.

### **Unify Production of Resonance**

- Match Posture
- Inhalation and Resonance
- Match resonating space
- Intention of the sound

### **Unify Perception of Pitch-- Respect the Pitch pipe**

- Use section rehearsal time to reinforce good habits that make pitch a non-issue.
- Take the time to learn who is typically not in tune and work with them.
- Sing the words on Do.
- Sing with continuous Do
- Check Do often.
  
- Part relationships within the chord
  
- Pythagorean Tuning

### **Unify the Words**

- Match Vowel Sounds
- Match consonants
- Sing the ones you can and finesse the others.

### **Unify through Movement**

- Planned movement should reflect the music.
- There should be no interference with the singer's alignment for good singing.
- Natural movement—the body is 90% fluid.

### **Unify through Characterization**

- Make music, don't just sing notes.
- Sing the meaning of the words.

### **Exercise 1. Self-Talk**

Develop a list of encouraging statements that you would find helpful if you could come to believe them. Some examples are:

“When I sing before an audience, I have more than enough air. It feels as though my air goes on and on and on.”

“My heart rate shows down when I sing in front of a group.”

“I easily can relax my abdominal muscles and breathe deeply and slowly.”

“When I am in front of a group, more and more I am learning to simply let go and relax”.

### **MUSCLE RELAXATION TO HELP MANAGE PERFORMANCE ANXIETY**

#### **Exercise 2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

Tense for about five seconds and then relax for about ten seconds each part of the body listed below. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Repeat the procedure a second time. You can vary the muscle groups you wish to work on to suit your needs.

1. **Hands** - Make a fist with your hands, feeling the tension growing in the hands and arms and then let go of the tension completely by letting the fingers spread out. Repeat.
2. **Arms** - make a fist with your hands and bring the hands towards your shoulders, creating tension in the arms. Relax and then repeat.
3. **Shoulders** – shrug the shoulders up towards your ears to create tension. Relax and repeat.
4. **Face** – wrinkle up the face muscles to create tension. Relax and repeat.
5. **Jaws** – tighten the jaws to create tension. Relax and repeat.
6. **Neck** – press the head back against the surface it is resting on to create tension. Relax and repeat.
7. **Back** – arch the back by pushing out the stomach to create tension. Relax and repeat.
8. **Chest** – take in a deep breath and hold it for about 10 seconds to create tension. Relax and repeat.
9. **Stomach** – tighten the muscles of the stomach to create tension. Relax and repeat.
10. **Legs** – stretch out the legs and lift them up a little to create tension. Relax and repeat.

Now give your attention to your **whole body**, allowing it to become absorbed in the overall feeling of relaxation.

When you are ready, allow your attention to slowly return to the room and open your eyes.

## **USING IMAGERY OR MENTAL REHEARSAL**

### **Exercise 3. building Self-Confidence**

1. Remember a time when you performed really well and recall the circumstances of the occasion. Particularly remember how you felt emotionally and physically. Use the memory of this occasion to relive those feelings and sensations you experienced then. Practice bringing this image to mind before your practice and rehearsal sessions, and then try before a real performance.
2. You can also experiment by recalling different images that are appropriate to specific performances. It could be a visual image that reflects the mood of your song, or an image that gives you the physical sensations that help you reproduce the desired qualities in your performances.
3. Bring to mind the image of a favorite artist or someone you admire who exhibits qualities that you would like to achieve in your performance. "Fake it 'til you make it".

### **Exercise 4. Reducing Anxiety**

Mentally rehearse your next performance in a relaxed state. Remember make it go just the way you want it to. Mental rehearsal of your performance while in a relaxed state will go a long way to helping you achieve self-control.

### **Exercise 5. Increasing Skill**

Mentally rehearse specific aspects of your performance you want to make more consistent, such as a difficult passage. You can also rehearse your whole performance in stages if necessary. Remember to rehearse in real time, while imagining, as realistically as possible, that you are in the performance. The best time to do mental rehearsal is when you have some quiet time to yourself. This can be time you set aside during the day or it can be a time when you are not mentally occupied, such as on public transport or walking.

### **Exercise 6. Imagery for Relaxation**

Visualize something that represents loosening up or relaxing, for example, a balloon with a slow leak that gradually becomes softer...a stick of butter in a dish on a table next to a window where the warm sun is shining in and softening it...a bunched-up wad of kitchen plastic wrap placed on a counter and allowed to unfold. Let your body mirror the picture you hold in your mind.

Practice this strategy one or more times a day for at least 4 weeks. Regular practice will help develop a relaxation response with that you can access in those crucial moments when under pressure to perform well.

## HAKULA

The perfect “State” of Calm and Perspective  
in which to appear in front of Others.....

Hakula, sometimes called “The Presentation State” is the perfect state for appearing in front of others. It is the opposite of the tunnel-vision-fear state many have experienced, creating a feeling of calm, and enabling the greatest perspective and flexibility of behavior and response.

Pick a spot on the wall, somewhere higher than eye level, around the center of your field of vision. Now, as you focus on the spot, notice that in a matter of seconds, you can see things in your peripheral vision. If you take all your attention and focus totally on that spot on the wall, notice that you can actually see things in your peripheral vision.

You may find that you can now see a full 180 degrees. Staying focused on that spot, raise your hands in front of your face, then draw them round to the sides of your head and notice just how far you can see – you’ll find it is around 180 degrees from one side all the way around to the other.

Now notice that you can shift your attention down onto an object in front of you, and maintain your full peripheral awareness as you speak, present, perform.

This state of focus-with-peripheral-awareness is what we call “The Presentation State”, it was named ‘Hakula’ by the ancient people of Hawaii.

Hakula is perfect for presentations because it shifts the mind into a state where it is ‘contextually all-aware’. In this state, negative emotions such as fear are reduced or eliminated, because whatever we focus on is perceived in a broader context.

Typically we find that if clients think about a problem, and grade it at, say 4/10 importance, then shift into Hakula, the problem immediately seems trivial. Often the Fear of Presentations can be immediately reduced in this way, thus:

All yourself to go into Hakula by focusing on a spot on the wall, and allowing your awareness to spread to your peripheral vision. Feeling the intense calm of this state, squeeze your left fist for 10 seconds. (This is called an anchor.)

Now return to normal.

Squeeze your fist and think about singing in public, as you do so focus on a spot and go back into Hakula. You will find that now as you think about singing it feels a lot better. Stay in this state for 20 seconds or so.

Always go into Hakula before singing in front of others. When perfected it will allow you to maintain a calm state throughout your presentation, and meanwhile will provide relief from fear.

*A Song*

*I sang a song yesterday.  
I thought I sang it well.  
The notes were all in tune.  
The phrases smooth and uninterrupted by unconscious breaths.  
I varied the rhythms and spoke the words clearly.  
I anticipated each key change.  
My voice was warm and moved effortlessly through each rise and  
Fall of the melody.  
When I finished, I was sure I'd told the story well and communicated  
My interpretation.  
But I did not experience a feeling.  
My heart remained unchanged.  
I was unmoved.  
My soul still yearned for expression.  
Despite my efforts,  
I realized I had not sung at all.  
The music, it seemed, slept quietly beside me.  
Patiently waiting to be awakened.  
I decided to start again.  
This time I did not listen.  
I did not watch.  
I did not think,  
This time I willingly vanished.  
This time I became...  
A song.*

----Carolyn Sloan