

# FOOD & SINGING

## YOU ARE YOUR VOICE...TAKE CARE OF IT!

Your singing voice greatly depends on your body stamina. Stamina comes from energy. If you have no energy your voice is adversely affected. The foods you eat greatly influence your voice and singing performance. Your body and mind are your instrument. You must take care of your body like any other instrument.

### BAD FOOD



#### **Cigarettes: Dries out your vocal cords...**



Dry cords cause you to push excessively, which results in a strained and hoarse voice.

#### **Alcohol: Dries out your vocal cords...**



Dry cords from alcohol will cause you to push too hard on the larynx, which results in a strained voice

#### **Milk & Dairy: Create excessive phlegm...**



The singer constantly clears the throat, which slam the cords together, causing irritation and unnecessary strain and hoarseness.

#### **Large Meal: Rule of Thumb...**



Do not eat within one and a half hours of performance time. Digestion makes you sluggish and takes away energy. Eat protein for this meal.

#### **Grapes: Grapes cause water retention...**



Eating a lot of grapes before singing causes **bloating and abdominal cramping**

#### **Sweets: Sweets and sugar....**



Especially candy will give you a spurt of energy - this "rush" will last only about a half an hour and then drops suddenly leaving you extremely **low on energy**.

#### **Oranges: Eating an orange...**



Before you sing has the same affect as dairy foods. It **causes phlegm**. Orange juice does even more so.

#### **Junk Food: Yuck Food...**



Gives you a heavy feeling. You're full but you get immediately sleepy. There is no protein in junk food and you get no energy from it.

#### **Menthol: Cough drops...**

Will dry you out. Use cough drops or lozenges without menthol, like Ricola.

## GOOD FOOD



### **Protein: Almonds, eggs, tuna...**



These are all excellent types of protein. **Protein gives you *lasting* energy!**

### **Fruits & Vegetables: A good balance...**



of carbohydrates and protein will give a lasting burst of energy for a long gig or performance.

### **Water: Drink water regularly...**



Hydrate your body all the time. Drinking water just the day of performance will not keep your body and vocal chords hydrated. Water is good for your health.

### **Apples: Eat some...**



Apples have both fiber and pectin. Both are good for you. They help keep your mouth and throat moisturized. If you are tired, eat an apple for an instant burst of energy.

## **A Singing Myth**

### **Drinking tea with lemon**



right before you sing ***does not*** have any advantages. It is not good unless you have a cold. The tannic acid from the tea and the citric acid from the lemon will dry out the natural moisture in your throat.

If you do have a sore throat though, drinking herbal tea **without** lemon and *lots* of honey will coat your throat and take away some irritation of the throat. Or, simply have hot water with honey.



## **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

Positive attitude enhances a healthy singer. Practice saying these positive affirmations while looking in the mirror.

- I am a successful singer.
- My success is contagious, other chorus members like it, seek it, and respect it.
- My positive attitude attracts positive minded chorus members.
- Chorus members believe in me because I believe in myself.
- Chorus members believe in me because I believe in them.
- I sing in a winning chorus.
- I am a positive and valuable contributor to my chorus.
- I positively and accurately execute my musical part for consistent, successful performances.
- I am motivated to practice my music, physical warm-ups, and choreography.
- I nurture my chorus by expressing love, understanding, and compassion.

## **PHYSICALITY**

### **BUILDING ENERGY AND STAMINA - CORE MUSCLES**

#### **WHAT ARE THE CORE MUSCLES?**

The spine itself is just bones stacked on top of one another, and in between the bones—to cushion them—are small discs. The core of each disc has the texture of cheese, and it is surrounded by tough fibrous tissue. To make the spine more stable, the parts are all connected with layers of soft tissue such as cartilage and ligaments. They are also connected by muscles. If these muscles are strong and working in the proper order, you have a solid base for movement and for absorbing the impact of the ground through your body. You will have the ability to stand on the risers for long periods of time without getting tired. Your choreographic moves will be more convincing and solid. You will be able to increase your breath control and be able to hold phrases longer even while you are doing choreographic moves.

The main muscles involved in core stabilization are deep muscles such as the transverse abdominus, the multifidus, and the muscles of the pelvic floor. The transverse abdominus is like a corset around your abdomen. It's the muscle you work if you pull in your stomach. This is the muscle you feel when coughing. The multifidus is a muscle that lies along your spine from your neck to your pelvis, with short fibers connecting one bone (vertebra) of the spine to other vertebrae near it. The muscles of the pelvic floor are most noticeable when you squeeze to keep yourself from urinating.

Other core muscles include are the outer front, back, and hip muscles. When doing core-building exercises remember to also work the thighs and buttocks.

Every time we move, we depend on some muscles to hold us steady and other muscles to actually move us. Core stabilization is the general term for how the muscles of your trunk keep your spine and body stable. This helps you stay balanced when you move. If your core muscles are strong and they contract when they should:

- Your posture is better.
- Your body is balanced.
- Your movement is more efficient and powerful.
- You may be less likely to be injured.
- You have the stamina to sing and perform

Core stability benefits everyone, from older people to top professional athletes. Exercises for core stabilization can be part of every conditioning program, along with flexibility, strength, and aerobic training.

## **HOW CAN I INCREASE MY CORE STRENGTH AND STABILITY?**

Core stabilization exercises are easy to do. You don't need any equipment for these exercises, and you don't need much space. You can do them almost anywhere, several times each day, to start increasing your core stability. See Standing Core Exercises in next handout.

It's more important that you do core exercises well than that you do a lot of them. As you exercise, focus on the muscles you are using and tune in to your body and how it feels. Concentrate on using the right muscles and breathe normally while you do the exercises. Then he or she can help you learn more challenging core stabilization exercises.

## **BREATHING**

When you exercise, you should breathe mostly with your diaphragm, the large muscle that helps move air in and out of your lungs. To learn to breathe with your diaphragm, lie down on your back and put your hand on your stomach. When you breathe in and out, your hand should move up and down. Notice how it feels to breathe this way. When you start to exercise, try to get the same feeling of your chest and abdomen moving in and out as you breathe, rather than your chest and shoulders moving up toward your neck and back down. This not only works for exercising but also when you are singing.

## **ALIGNMENT – NEUTRAL SPINE**

- Keeping your pelvis in this neutral, forward position, stand tall with your ears and shoulders lined up over your hips.
- Practice finding neutral spine in three positions: standing, sitting, and lying on your back with your knees bent.
- When you can find neutral spine in each position, you can maintain good posture for daily activities, exercise, and singing.

## **EXERCISE**

Do some sort of moderate aerobic activity, like brisk walking, for at least 2½ hours each week. You can spread out these 150 minutes any way you like. For example, you could:

- Take two 11-minute walks every day or a single 22-minute walk every day.
- Take a half-hour walk 3 days a week, and on the other 4 days take a 15-minute walk.
- Take a 45-minute walk every other day.
- When you walk, add interval exercises like running for one – two blocks, jog or jump rope in place, or do push -ups on a park bench

## **PROMOTE HEALTH IN YOUR CHORUS**

- Share exercises that work for you with other members
- Share healthy recipes
- ALWAYS do physical warm-ups before singing
- Join a health club with your Sweet Adeline sisters

## STANDING CORE EXERCISES

- Stand with right foot pointed right and left foot pointed left.  
Squat down as low as you can go, sweeping arms above your head.  
As you come back to stand position bring arms down – Repeat at least 10 times.
- Clasp hands behind your head – pull stomach back to spine slowly – think about elongating your torso. Repeat 20 – 30 times.
- Raise your arms slowly – blow out as you pull your stomach in toward spine.  
Bring arms down as you take a breath – stomach goes out. Repeat 20 times.
- Lift your knee to meet your elbow doing a standing crunch – alternate right to left. Repeat 20 times.
- Lift your knee to meet your elbow on the right sideways then on left. Repeat 20 times each side.
- Squat – tuck elbows at waist and twist side–to-side. Do not move your hips, only twist your core. Repeat 20 times each side.
- Stand straight, push rib cage out in front. Repeat 20 times.
- Stand straight, push rib cage out to the right, then to the left. Repeat 20 times each side.
- Stand straight and lift rib cage around the world - front, side, back, side. Repeat 20 times.
- Squat with hands on thighs and roll up your spine. Repeat 20 times.
- Raise arms above your head, clasp hands and rotate in a full circle. Do not move the hips. Repeat 20 times.
- Grab an imaginary ball off the floor on your right and move it to the left on the floor. Repeat 20 times.
- Grab an imaginary ball off the floor on the right, place it on a high shelf in the middle and then pick up another imaginary ball on the left and place on a high shelf in the middle. Repeat 20 times each side.
- Squat and raise right arm over your head then to the left side. Alternate sides and repeat 20 times each side.
- Stand straight, raise up on the ball of your right foot, then left. Do it to the count of 1, 2, 3-hold squat to count of four.  
Repeat 20 times
- Stand straight, arms out to the side for balance. Swing your right leg 10 times, then your left leg 10 times. Do a set of 10 repetitions.
- End routine with original move.

Try to do this routine at least three times a week. You will notice a difference in your core, energy, and stamina. Always put on some of your favorite music to add to the FUN!!!

## TEN STEPS TOWARD VOCAL HEALTH

1. Drink lots of water
2. Get plenty of rest
3. Quit smoking
4. Nutrition – eat right
5. Exercise – be fit
6. Laugh – be merry
7. Take care of illnesses
8. Work through emotional conflicts
9. Use supported speaking voice
10. Balance voice use with voice recovery time