
How to Be the Perfect Roommate

An Exclusive Convention Guide for Women A Cappella Singers

By Lynda S. Christman and Winnie Arnn

Any resemblances to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales just might not be entirely coincidental, but no singer was intentionally harmed in the making of this article.

Let's assume that the "perfect" chorus contest competitor is focused, well rested, perfectly made up, coiffed, and in an impeccable costume. Right now you're asking yourself, "What does coiffed mean?" (It means "nice hair".) And now, you're asking yourself what does the aforementioned "perfect" chorus competitor have to do with being the perfect roommate?" Why, we're so glad you asked!

Think of it this way: you and your roommates are a mini-team whose purpose is to support the objective of the larger team, your chorus. Throughout this article, the authors will be examining ways that roommates can help each other succeed in this endeavor AND (with a little humor) take a look at roommate routines that one must try to AVOID AT ALL COSTS. Shall we begin?

CHAPTER 1: Finding That Perfect Roommate

Let's assume you have the freedom of choice in roommate selection, which may not always be the case. One has to wonder: "Does a perfect roommate exist?" We tend to think, "yes", as we are ourselves perfect paragons of roommately, a tight unit dedicated to the chorus team.

How does one begin this arduous yet important process of finding one or more of these specimens? We suggest a frank talk with your intended victims, I mean roomies. We'll even get you started.

Vital questions you may not be brave enough to ask, but we urge you to conquer your fears and demand answers!

1. Do you smoke? If so, WHY? You're a singer forgawdsake.
2. Do you snore? (And could you provide corroborated evidence that you don't?)
3. How much sleep do you require to function as a well rested, focused competitor?
4. If a rehearsal is scheduled for 9 am, ten floors down, and across the street, would you leave the room at:
 - a. 8:45
 - b. 8:55
 - c. 9:05
 - d. I'd still be sleeping

5. Where would you fail on the tidiness continuum line, which starts with OCD (neat freak) and ends with pig (hog, swine, sow)? (e.g. – is this dirty underwear yours?)
6. Where would you fall on the modesty continuum line that starts with prudishly changing clothes in a locked bathroom and ends with naked shimmying around the room? (e.g. – Are you a “parade” un-dresser who leaves a trail of discarded clothing that starts at the door?)
7. Could you estimate how many square feet of available bathroom countertop space you intend to monopolize?
8. True or False: The word “team” contains the letter “I”.
9. Add your own prospective roommate questions here: (please share these with others who might want to include them in their list of roommate questions.)

CHAPTER 1 THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- Probation: Is this the answer for a new roommate? When Lynda C first began rooming with Winnie A and Connie P, she was put on one year probationary status...this seems to have worked as you may reference the fact that we have achieved the nirvana called “perfect roommattery.” (Lynda was told to “achieve nirvana or ELSE!”)
- So you’re in a new quartet. Does this mean you must give up your current (perfect) roommates and sleep with this untried trio? The simple answer: NO. Room with the best “team” for you.
- Remember, the purpose of these questions is not to alienate you from others but to help you find that mini-group who will make you and your chorus the best that it can be.

CHAPTER 2: Entering the Sanctuary OR Rules of the Room

Let’s assume you have successfully formed a roommate team, located the hotel or retreat location, checked in, and are poised on the threshold. Now what? Here are some rules to ease your transition.

Rule #1 – Whoever arrives first, chooses first. This translates into bed choice and closet space. In the unlikely event of simultaneous arrival, go in alphabetical order, order of birthdates (age) order of weight, or order of beauty: your choice.

Rule #2 – No one is allowed to suffer from Only-Childitis. This means if you were born an only child, you still have to share: the dresser drawers are divided equally among roommates (as well as all other available space).

Rule #3 – Use this equation for choosing a sleep partner:

Add the total square footage of the beds to the amount of space displaced by each roommate. Divide by some number and go from there. You may use a calculator if absolutely necessary – Better yet, room with an accountant.

Rule #4 – Be mentally prepared to sleep on a different side of the bed than you do at home, no matter how many years you’ve been married.

Rule #5 – She of the smallest bladder should retain the right to travel the least distance to the bathroom.

Rule #6 and # 7 – And speaking of the bathroom, two of Lynda’s favorite rules:
You stink –ee, you light- ee, AND close the dang door! Enough said.

CHAPTER 2 THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- This is to be your safe haven for the duration of your time at convention or retreat. Create an atmosphere that promotes the team goals!
- Either flipping a coin or flipping a roommate can eliminate the need for Rules #1, 2, 3, and 4.

CHAPTER 3: The Possible Pitfalls of Eating Meals Together

Let’s assume you need to eat. Nowhere is it stated, either in the Standing Rules, International or chorus by –laws, that roommates must eat every meal together. Remember this: This article gives you permission to eat with whomever you please!

CHAPTER 3 PITFALLS TO PONDER

- Many friendships have foundered on the shoals of an un-split restaurant check. Find out beforehand whether the restaurant will split the check. If it won’t, walk away. If you simply must eat there, consume your victuals with an accountant.
- Not everyone’s table manners will measure up to your own Emily Post upbringing.
- Learn the difference between the Heimlich Maneuver and the Heineken Maneuver.
- Tipping: Refer to the Commandements.

CHAPTER 4: It’s Time for Bed, Or Turning Off the Lights

Let’s assume you’ve made it through Day One and you’re still speaking. This is a good thing. Now that it’s bedtime, here are some characters you may recognize.

1. The Party Animal – Comes in late or not at all. Reeking and retching are the most obvious signs of this roommate.
2. The Persnickety Sleeper – Requires total darkness, complete silence, and a stuffed animal. May we suggest eye mask, earplugs, and Paddington Bear?
3. The TV Addict – Must have television on even while sleeping...should NEVER room with The Persnickety Sleeper! In fact, should ONLY room with other TV Addicts or Party Animals.

4. The Pre-Dawn Riser – Is often an exercise enthusiast. A polite Pre-Dawn Riser will wisely place tomorrow's clothes in the bathroom the night before.
5. The Thrasher – Needs no explanation. MUST sleep alone to avoid injuries to others.
6. The Snorer – You didn't read Chapter One, forgot to ask, and now you must race her to sleep!
7. The Princess – Need we say more?

CHAPTER 4 THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- If you find one of the listed character definitions sounding a lot like you, 'fess up and beg for forgiveness. Maybe, just maybe, your roommates won't throw you out. (We make no guarantees.)
- What's more important than being well rested at contest or retreat? Not much! Your roommate team needs to plan for this and set a defined bedtime, especially the night before the actual contest. We're not kidding.
- Target sells White Noise machines. Buy one. NOW!

CHAPTER 5: It's Contest Day

Let's assume the Big Day has arrived. All of your teamwork has been pointed towards this day! Now what? Pre-contest preparation is paramount to producing singers who are radiant, ravishing, and ready-to-rock. Not singers who are sloppy, sniveling, and snarling. So, plan ahead.

1. Create a shower schedule in advance so there are no surprises or delays.
2. Share your mirror time and space like the Emily Post that you are. Bringing your own mirror can alleviate jangled nerves and shoulder shoving.
3. Post your chorus makeup chart and help one another achieve perfection!
4. Don't assume your roommates enjoy sharing makeup. EWWW! The bacteria!
5. Costume mix ups can create havoc. We suggest putting all of your personal costume pieces on your side of your bed.
6. Choose a relaxation technique, be it yoga, Tai Chi, Transcendental Meditation, or humming; just don't relax with a double martini.

Do you perceive our pithy pattern, and our apparent amateurish attempt at alliteration?

CHAPTER 5 THOUGHT TO PONDER

- This is the time to take care of one another. Kindness and consideration are the order of the day. What can you do to help your roommate team appear at the chorus meeting point poised, perfect and eager to perform? How MUCH would the chorus benefit if every room of mates arrived on time ready to rock and roll? (We only gave you one thought, so ponder it well.)

CHAPTER 6: The Post – Contest Celebration

Oh please. You people need no help in how to party. All bets are off – go wild!

CHAPTER 7: Ugh, The Hotel Bill

Let's assume you're wearing a big smile (in spite of that slight hangover) and are ready to check out. Our advice to you is always look over that bill before you leave the hotel. Believe it or not, computers and/ or desk clerks have been known to miscalculate. Roommates have been known to forget about long distance calls, refrigerator rentals, or room service meals. Gently remind them as you check that bill. Avoid the crush in the lobby and use the checkout service on your room TV.

CHAPTER 7 THOUGHTS TO PONDER

- It can be a confusing time, checking out. Be courteous of those who may not be leaving at the same time as you.
- Look around the room. There was a lot going on during your time here, and many of the items you packed were exactly the same items your roommates packed. Make sure nothing is left behind.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER OF ALL (the last)

Almost every problem can be avoided with the loving application of the Two H's:

- **HONESTY**
- **HUMOR**

We believe in these. We live by these. We are convinced this says it all. Remember, we know of what we speak. Perfect roommatery IS attainable – just look at us.

More hints for 'room-mating'...

- Dollar Store *foldable box* for your hair and makeup products and accessories to keep bathroom clutter-free;
- Over the *door hanger* for more hanging space;
- You might consider bringing an *extension cord* and a *power strip* for more plug ins;
- *Personal humidifier* or fill the bathtub with water to replace moisture in the dry air.
- Be sure to bring and review your *chorus contest booklet*. Keep it handy.
- We recommend *posting your personal/ chorus/ and or quartet schedule* on the wall by the closet for easy reference.
- When you arrive, place all your costume items together in "your space". It's best to label them with your name.
- You might want to check out all meeting rooms you'll need to visit during the weekend so you can save time later in the weekend when you're on a specific time schedule.

Breathing Exercise #1

This simple, introductory exercise can be performed standing, sitting, or lying down.

- Inhale deeply through the nose while slowly counting to three.
- Hold the top of the inhale while slowly counting to three.
- Exhale through the mouth while slowly counting to three.
- Hold the end of the exhale while slowly counting to three.
- Repeat the cycle at least three times.

Breathing Exercise #2

- Lie on the floor, arms at your side, feet on the ground and slightly apart (knees point to ceiling). Make sure your lower back is connecting with the floor.
- Inhale deeply, through the nose or mouth, slowly counting to four; imagine your back growing longer and wider on the floor.
- Exhale, through the nose or mouth, counting to four, maintaining the sense of expansion you achieved on your inhale.
- Repeat at least three times (maybe try three cycles of inhaling and exhaling through the nose, then three cycles of inhaling and exhaling through the mouth).

Breathing Exercise #3 – “Straw” breathing

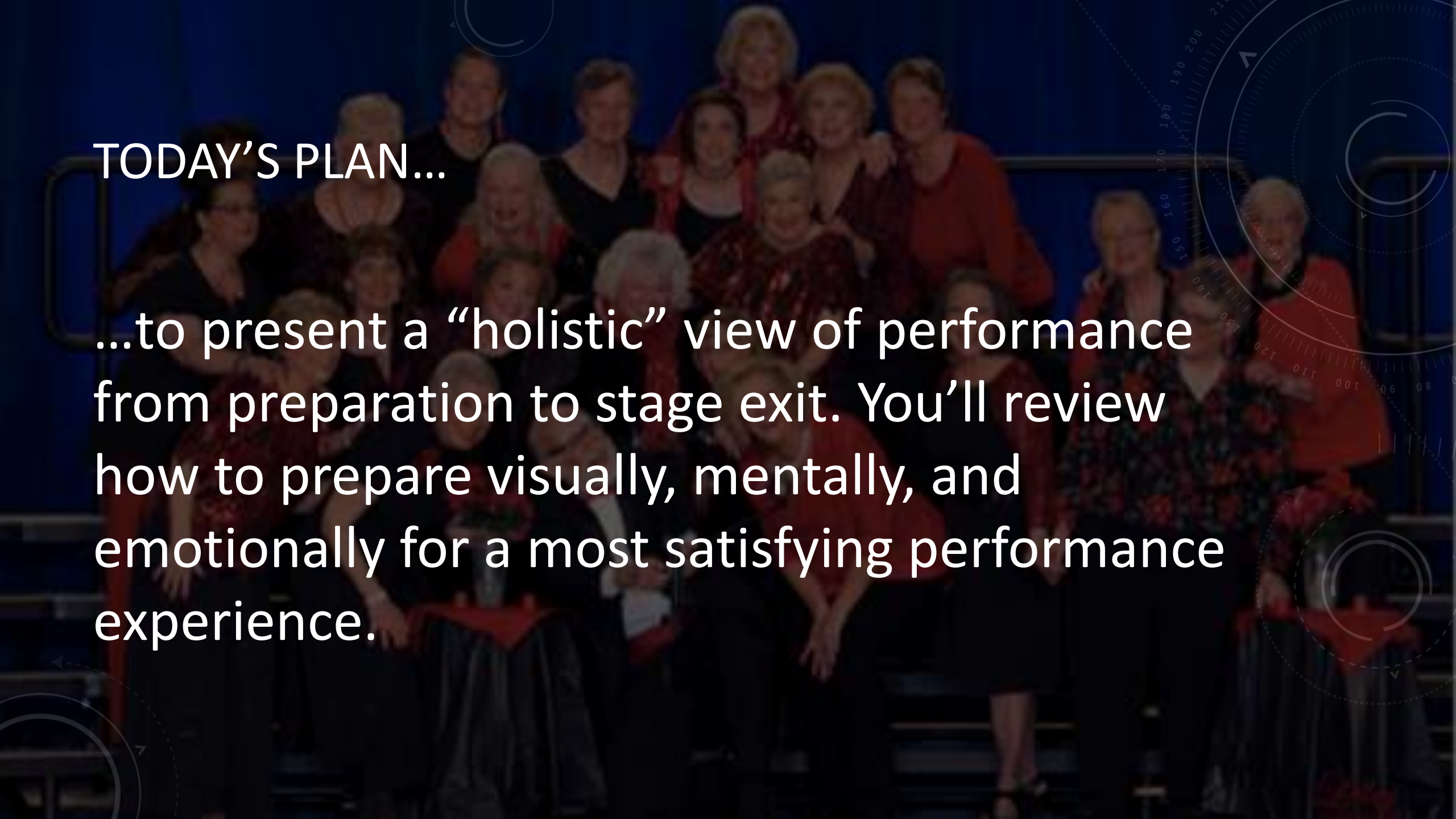
- Inhale through the mouth as if you were inhaling through a straw for four slow counts.
- Maintaining the same straw space with the mouth, immediately begin exhaling through your “straw” for four slow counts.
- Keep repeating the cycle for three cycles of four counts of inhale and four counts of exhale.
- Once this exercise feels comfortable, try gradually increasing the inhale and exhale counts from four to six, eight, ten, and twelve. Keep in mind with each increase of counts, the “straw” space in the mouth must become narrower. The constricted space works abdominal muscles gently while preventing the singer from taking in too much air at once.



The total performance

PRESENTED BY SUE BECK AND NANCY KURTH

Area School
September 12, 2020

A group of performers, mostly women, are posed on a stage. They are wearing various costumes, including red and black outfits. The background is dark blue. Overlaid on the image are several technical graphics: a large circular gauge with numbers 80, 90, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210 on the right side; a smaller circular gauge with numbers 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210 on the left side; and a circular gauge with numbers 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210 on the bottom right. The text 'TODAY'S PLAN...' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper left corner.

TODAY'S PLAN...

...to present a “holistic” view of performance from preparation to stage exit. You’ll review how to prepare visually, mentally, and emotionally for a most satisfying performance experience.

LET'S GET STARTED...

Nancy Kurth
Northwest Harmony Chorus
Pride of Portland Chorus



Sue Beck
Voices Northwest Chorus
Fourcast Quartet



JUST LET GO...

- Dancing Girl

NOW THAT WE HAVE YOUR ATTENTION...

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				Contest weekend!		

We'd like to take you through what we missed this year...

“Oh, my! It's the weekend we've been waiting for!”

YOU ARRIVE...

- You arrive in Spokane, hug everyone in the lobby!
- You check in hoping for the room you requested.
- You try to enter the already crowded elevator to go to your room.
- You're just SO EXCITED!!!





SHARING A ROOM WITH THREE OTHERS?

- Dollar Store *foldable box* for your hair and make up products and accessories to keep bathroom clutter-free;
- Over the *door hanger* for more hanging space;
- You might consider bringing an *extension cord* and a *power strip* for more plug ins;
- *Personal humidifier* or fill the bathtub with water to replace moisture in the dry air.
- There's always "Poopouri", too...😊

Oh, goody! Breakfast!



You begin your warmup routine...

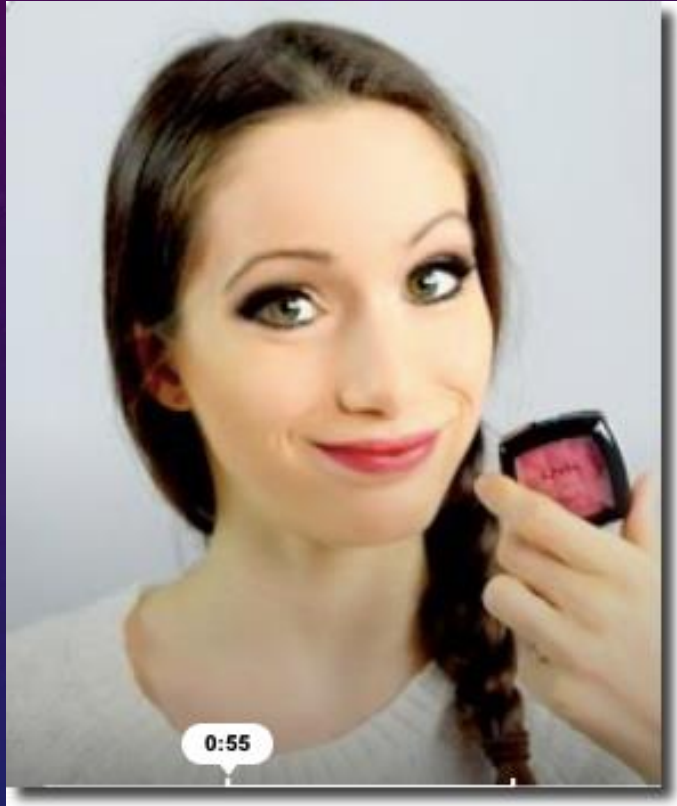


PLAN AHEAD...

- Create a shower schedule
- Costume mix ups can create havoc. We suggest putting all your personal costume pieces on your side of your bed.
- Choose a relaxation technique, be it yoga, Tai Chi, Transcendental Meditation, or humming



...THE DAY PROCEEDS...



Time for makeup application!

- Foundation, eye makeup, LASHES...
- What will I do with my hair?
- Time for makeup/hair check... passed – whew!

Keeping an eye on the clock to fit into the traffic pattern.

Before heading off to your makeup checker, take some time for one or more of these relaxation techniques.

Breathing Exercise #1 – Count to 3

This simple, introductory exercise can be performed standing, sitting, or lying down.



Breathing Exercise #2





Breathing Exercise #3 – “Straw” breathing



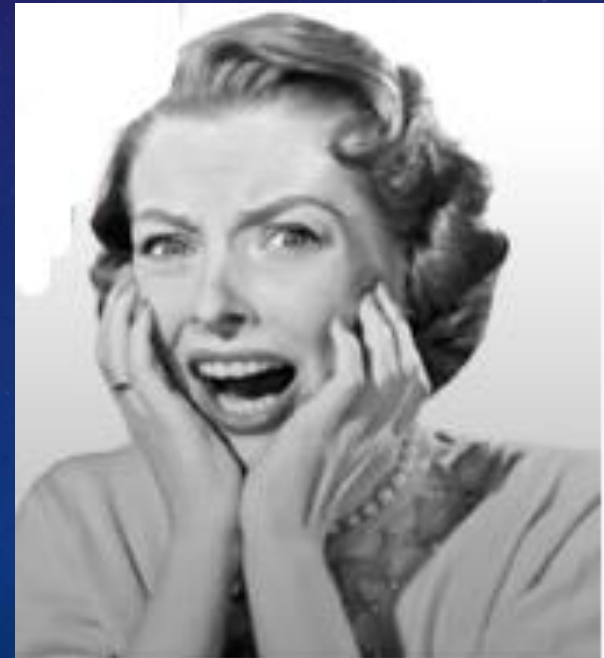
...TRANSITION BEGINS...



...HERE COMES THE EXCITEMENT...

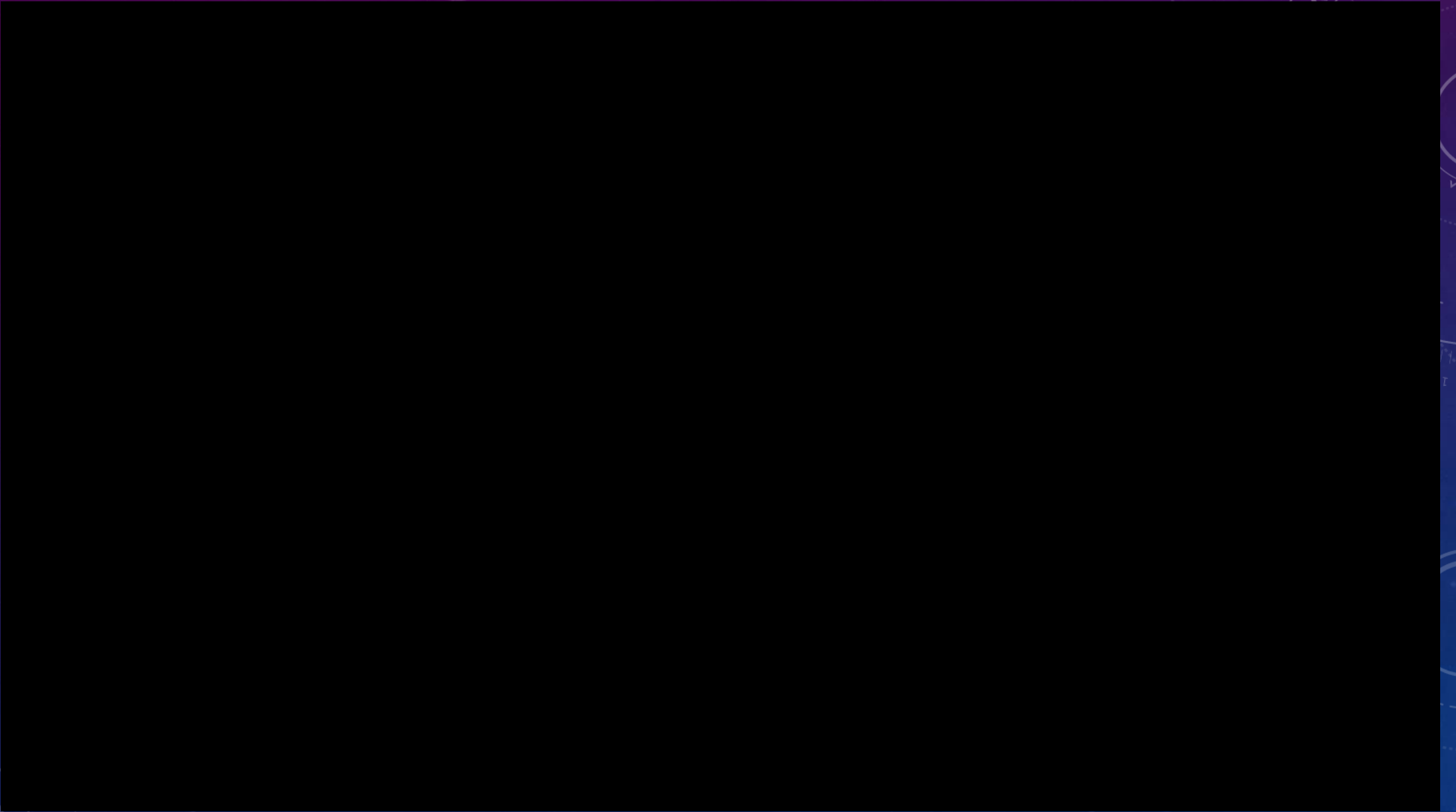
So what are the effects of adrenaline and when do they start? Are they good or not so good? How do you handle those nerves?

- Unfamiliar performance acoustics
- Your sense of tempo is partly hooked into your biorhythms
- Small dose of adrenaline
- Fight or flight



AND NOW...

- You're excited!
 - You're prepared!
 - You're on your way to the stage for the performance of a lifetime!



WHAT DID THE JUDGES SAY?

- Your performance is complete.
- You know you did your very best.
- You await the results with confidence...
- Let's take a look at the Showmanship Scoresheet...



DO YOU KNOW THE RULES?

Judge _____

Contestant's Name _____ Contestant # _____

Contest: Region # _____ Chorus Region # _____ Quartet Date _____

☐ Int'l Quartet Semifinals ☐ Int'l Chorus Semifinals ☐ Int'l Quartet Finals ☐ Int'l Chorus Finals ☐ Harmony Classic

JUDGING CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE (0-70 points)

COMMUNICATION OF THE VISUAL AND MUSICAL PRODUCT

Vocal Skills
Energy
Poise and Command
Entrance/break/exit
Characterization
Physical Expression
Choreography
Unity
Audience Rapport
Pitch pipe technique
Posture

PREPARATION (0-30 points)

VISUAL PLAN

Entrance/break/exit
Costume
Makeup/Grooming
Choreography
Creativity

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SONG #1 _____ SONG #2 _____

#1#2#3#4

Director _____

Judge _____

SCORING LEVELS
(for one song)
94 - 100 A+
86 - 93 A
80 - 85 A-
74 - 79 B+
66 - 73 B
60 - 65 B-
54 - 59 C+
46 - 53 C
40 - 45 C-
34 - 39 D+
26 - 33 D
20 - 25 D-
0 - 19 F

Bonus Points awarded for performance package, International Finals and Harmony Classic only.

BONUS POINTS

TOTAL SCORE

Performance 0–70 points

- Vocal skills
- Energy
- Poise and Command
- Entrance/Break/Exit
- Characterization
- Physical Expression
- Choreography
- Unity
- Audience Rapport
- Pitch pipe technique
- Posture

Preparation 0-30 points

- Entrance/Break/Exit
- Costume
- Makeup/Grooming
- Choreography
- Creativity

Judge _____

Contestant's Name _____

Contest: Region # _____ Chorus _____ Region # _____ Quartet _____

☐ Int'l Quartet Semifinals ☐ Int'l Chorus Semifinals ☐ Int'l Quartet Finals ☐ Int'l Chorus Finals ☐ Harmony Classic

SHOWMANSHIP

Contestant # _____

Date _____

JUDGING CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE (0-70 points)

COMMUNICATION OF THE VISUAL AND MUSICAL PRODUCT

Vocal Skills

Energy

Poise and Command

Entrance/break/exit

Characterization

Physical Expression

Choreography

Unity

Audience Rapport

Pitch pipe technique

Posture

PREPARATION (0-30 points)

VISUAL PLAN

Entrance/break/exit

Costume

Makeup/Grooming

Choreography

Creativity

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SONG #1 _____

SONG #2 _____

Director _____

Judge _____

score
song 1

score
song 2

BONUS POINTS

#1 #2 #3 #4

SCORING LEVELS
(for one song)

94 - 100 A+

86 - 93 A

80 - 85 A-

74 - 79 B+

66 - 73 B

60 - 65 B-

54 - 59 C+

48 - 53 C

40 - 45 C-

34 - 39 D+

26 - 33 D

20 - 25 D-

0 - 19 F

Bonus Points
awarded for
performance
package,
International Finals
and Harmony
Classic only.

TOTAL SCORE

JSS-1 Revised 01/08

SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL

Performance 0–70 points

- **Vocal skills**
- **Energy**
- Poise and Command
- Entrance/Break/Exit
- Characterization
- Physical Expression
- Choreography
- **Unity**
- Audience Rapport
- Pitch pipe technique
- Posture

Preparation 0-30 points

- Entrance/Break/Exit
- Costume
- Makeup/Grooming
- Choreography
- Creativity

DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS...THE TOP

SHOWMANSHIP

Judge _____

Contestant's Name _____ Contestant # _____

Contest: Region # _____ Chorus Region # _____ Quartet Date _____

☐ Int'l Quartet Semifinals ☐ Int'l Chorus Semifinals ☐ Int'l Quartet Finals ☐ Int'l Chorus Finals ☐ Harmony Classic

JUDGING CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE (0-70 points)
COMMUNICATION OF THE
VISUAL AND MUSICAL PRODUCT

- Vocal Skills
- Energy
- Poise and Command
- Entrance/break/exit
- Characterization
- Physical Expression
- Choreography
- Unity
- Audience Rapport
- Pitch pipe technique
- Posture

On every scoresheet

Only on showmanship
scoresheet

PREPARATION (0-30 points)
VISUAL PLAN

- Entrance/break/exit
- Costume
- Makeup/Grooming
- Choreography
- Creativity

All these elements should be researched, completed, and 'ready for prime time' well before the performance. An easy 'gimme'. ☺

DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS...MIDDLE

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SONG #1 _____ SONG #2 _____

This is the area where the judge comments on the performance as it proceeds. It's 'in the moment', not a comparison of anything.

She's attempting to tell you what you are doing that is successful and also giving feedback about where the performance is not working as well as it possibly could.

Generally speaking, she comments on the first song, then the second song, then gives an over all summary of the quality of the performance and ideas for you to improve your performance and raise it to the next level.

DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS...BOTTOM

#1

#2

#3

#4

Comments go here to specific quartet members.

Director

Comments go here to the director.

Judge

JSS-1 Revised 01/08

SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL

SCORING LEVELS
(for one song)

94 - 100	A+
86 - 93	A
80 - 85	A-
74 - 79	B+
66 - 73	B
60 - 65	B-
54 - 59	C+
46 - 53	C
40 - 45	C-
34 - 39	D+
26 - 33	D
20 - 25	D-
0 - 19	F

100 points possible for each song

100

score song 2

BONUS POINTS

BONUS POINTS

TOTAL SCORE

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE!!!



WHAT WE'VE COVERED TODAY...

- The onstage performance begins *at your rehearsals at home*.
- Perform as often as possible to hone your performance skills and gain confidence.
- Stay **hydrated**. Eat **smart**. **Rest**, even if you can't sleep.
- Understand how adrenaline affects you and what you can do to still give your best performance.
- Stay **positive** and share your love of this music with others.

TRANSLATING YOUR SCORES

Next time, let's talk Sound, Music, and Expression! But that's a class completely of its own!

Now it's time for your questions and comments.