

Vocal Essentials - Let's Sing!

Warming up your voice is attributed to any athletic sport. Like a runner, muscles need care and nurturing. You would not have a person wake you up for a track-sprint at 2 in the morning. Beginning to sing without a proper warm up can result in a similar outcome.

Kinetics or muscle memory begins to learn and memorize which muscles to use and how they work. Exercises help relax the muscles that do not need to work as hard and condition the ones that are used regularly. Proper warm ups also prevent injuries as well as help you prepare/recover for the next day.

2 Types of Vocal Muscle Warm Ups: Static and Dynamic.

A. Static Warm Ups:

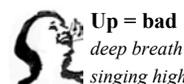
Work the involuntary muscles; movements that your body subconsciously controls such as: body posture, head alignment, breathing and the larynx position. These warm ups gradually relax and allow the body, muscles and breath support to wake up before singing without unnecessary pressure and force.

- 1. Body Alignment:** Stand Straight (back against the wall).
Hold belly with one hand - inhale deep and slowly exhale - feel the diaphragm rise (inhale) and fall (exhale).
Align all limbs parallel to each other in a good stance 1.5 to 2 feet apart. Keep your head leveled and flat.



Even = good
all breaths
all notes

- 2. Breathing Exercises:** Inhale Deep, Hold Breath and Slowly Exhale on Count.
Breathe in through the nose and out of the mouth.



Up = bad
deep breath
singing high



Down = bad
deep breath
singing low

- 3. Yawns:** Short and Heavy Inhales/Exhales. Siren Yawns: Relaxed Inhales and Long Exhales.

Insight: The chest will lift high as muscles push out; chest will fall as muscles relax (not collapse). Create a balance of air and muscle movement.

How Sound is produced: as air passes over the larynx (voicebox), vibrations are made within the fine membrane vocal cords. Very little air is needed to make the cords work. Like a violinist, very little muscle is used (in the larynx) to produce a note (hum, utterance or tone).

Danger! When you force both air and muscle you add extra tension in your body and larynx, which will cause your cords to jam-up. The tendency for most singers is to pull the larynx up on high notes or pull down on lower notes. Keep your head flat, imagining that your doing the same with your larynx. Sing through the note with the same amount of breath as if you were to speak with words.

B. Dynamic Warm Ups: work the voluntary muscles that you use regularly to initiate and control: deep breathing, passing of air through vocal chords, tongue, lips and facial muscles. Proper warm ups should explore the full range of the diaphragm, head voice and chest voice to increase range and mobility.

- 1. Hmmm's** - Produce the hum like you were to speak it. Relax your body and follow the notes up and down the scales. (Works Resonance)

60-100 bpm Ascending Scale: modulate by 1/2 steps. Descending Scale: modulate by 1/2 steps.

Sing Straight Tones (no vibrato); Keep head level and larynx in the middle. Connect all the notes in one line.

- 2. Nnnnn's** - Produce the 'n' sound behind the forehead and nose; place tongue behind the teeth.

Ascending Scale Descending Scale