

*The rest of this packet includes general information for the student. It is good to review this packet between each lesson. (Especially as a new student.) It is a lot of information, but it is helpful!*

*How to warm up:*

1. Make sure you are in a quiet (not distracting) space such as your room or a practice room.
2. Have water and a pencil with you.
3. Do a physical warm up. Stretch, move around, massage tense areas such as the jaw.
4. Work on breath exercises such as lip trills and breathing in and releasing on a “shh” sound.
5. Work on warm ups that are in the middle of your range (not too high, not too low)
6. As you are feeling warmed up, go to higher or lower parts of your range.
7. Make sure to work on all vowels.
8. This whole process should take 15 minutes depending on how warmed up you already are.
9. Once warmed up, you can work on your music.

*How to practice:*

1. Go over text and pronunciation. (Put International Phonetic Alphabet symbols (or IPA) and translations in if you are singing another language)
2. Go over the rhythms and speak and sing them.
3. Learn the melody (You can do this on a neutral vowel if you are still trying to get the text down.)
4. Put it all together.
5. When singing make sure you have the correct posture (it helps to sing when standing up or sitting at the edge of a chair not slouching or crossed legs)
6. Once you have the melody and rhythm down understand what you are saying. Who are you speaking to? What are you trying to tell people? How does what you are saying make you feel?
7. If this is from an opera or musical, who is your character? What is happening during this song? What happens after this song?
8. Do not just keep singing the song over and over. Go over the spots you are not comfortable on and have problems with.
9. If something feels strange in your voice ask yourself how you can fix it? (breath? Placement?)
10. You should practice every day for at least 30 minutes!
11. Take breaks and stay hydrated! Singing for a long time is not good for your voice and can hurt it.

*Feeling sick? Ways to practice when you can't use your voice!*

1. Go over text. What is your character saying? How are you trying to affect the person you are singing to? Break down your text into a monologue.
2. Tap or clap the rhythms.
3. Speak the text in rhythm ( if you can speak)
4. Pluck out the notes on the piano and audiate the music in your head.
5. Listen to multiple recordings of the piece from different reputable singers. (following along with your music) Note what you like about the performance and what you don't like.
6. Is your song from a musical or opera? Research/ watch the show and learn about the character!
7. Review and practice music theory, Websites like musictheory.net and emusictheory.com are good and free! There are multiple books and apps too!

*Vocal health:*

1. Don't smoke!! (Ever!!!)
2. Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water and tea.
3. Stay away from germs- Keep hand sanitizer with you and don't touch your face with dirty hands. Stay away from people who don't cover their mouth. Take medicine as soon as you feel sick.
4. Refrain from screaming! (Concerts included.)
5. Get a good night's sleep.
6. Don't drink too much alcohol (keep hydrated.)
7. Exercise and eat healthy.
8. Rest your voice if you are not feeling well.

*Steps to sight singing:*

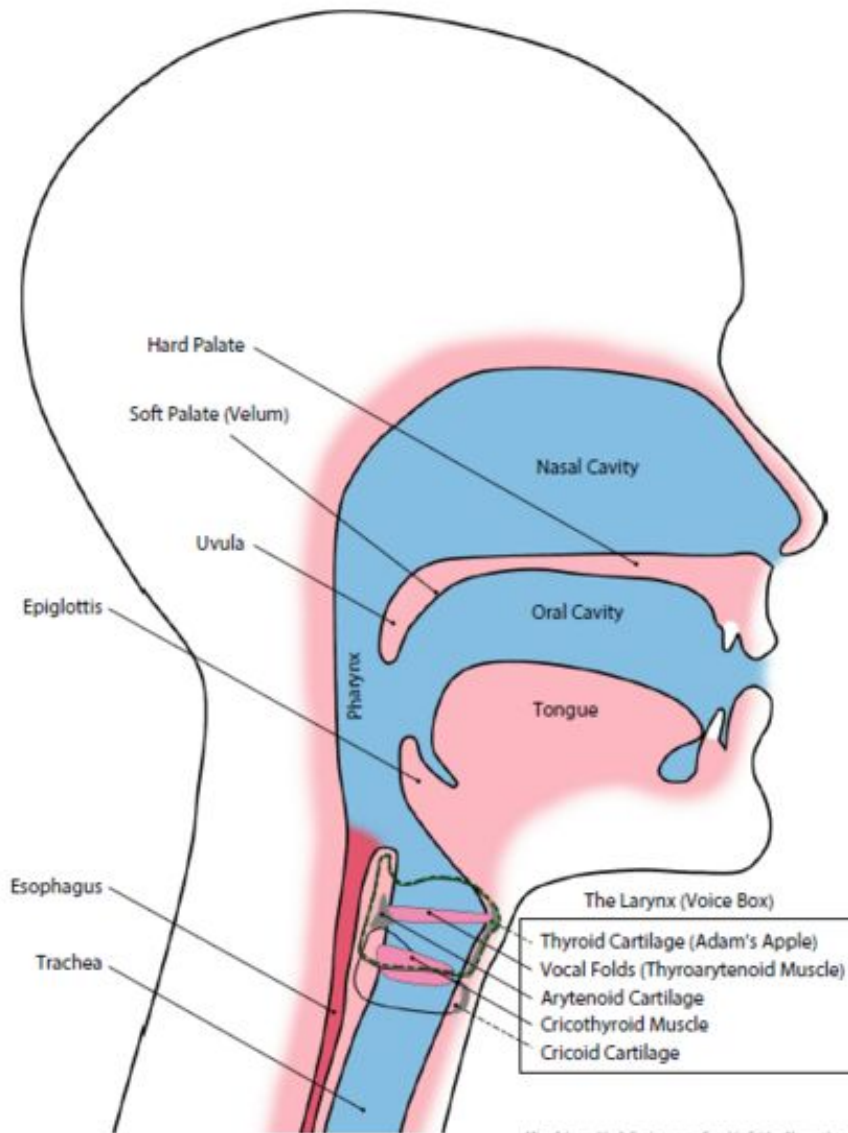
1. Check the key signature: Is it major or minor? What key?
2. Check the time signature: What is the pulse?
3. Note any leaps or skips. Figure out the intervals.
4. Check for any hard rhythmic parts.
5. Practice makes perfect!

*Sight Singing Packet Examples:*

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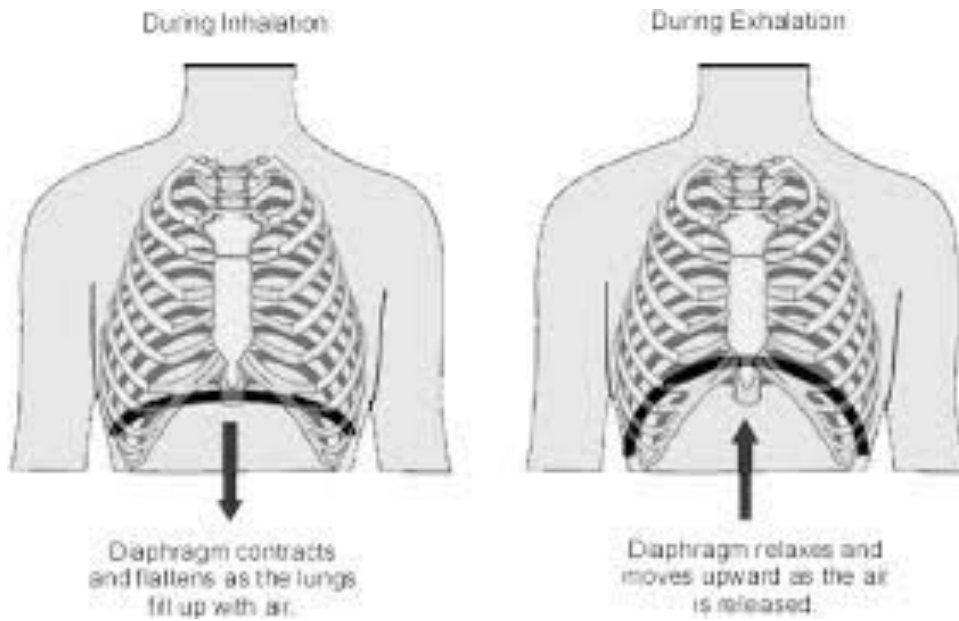
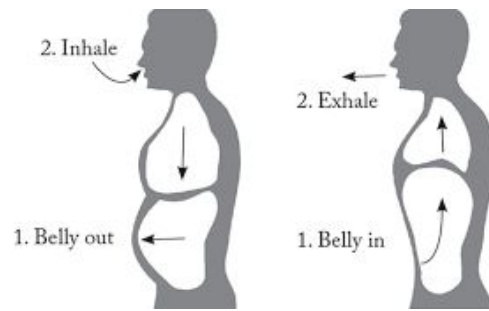
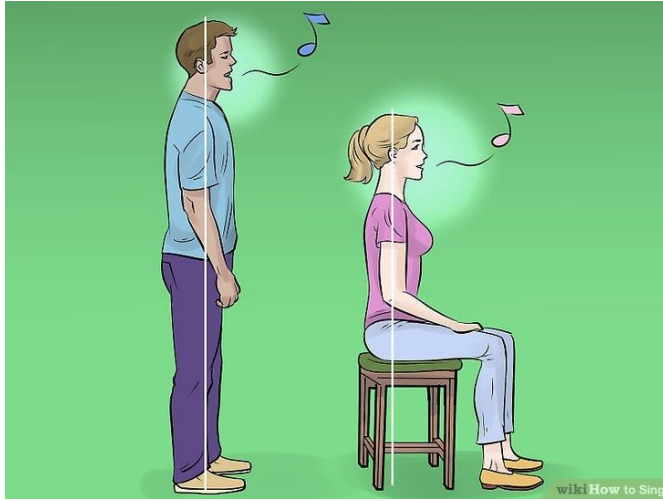
# THE VOCAL TRACT



Min Adams /theFullVoice.com - Freebie Friday November 2017

## *Breathing!*

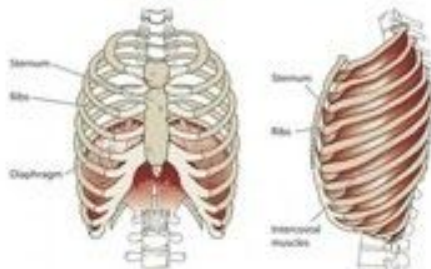
- Have proper alignment.
- Feel your rib cage, back, and lungs expanding.



## Breathing Basics for Singing

Normal breathing involves a shallow inhalation and an even exhalation followed by a pause before it all starts again. This type of breathing is ineffective for singing. When we sing, we need to inhale very quickly and then use a controlled exhale as we sing. This may sound simple; however, controlled breathing takes some time to get used to. Singers need to understand the primary muscle involved, become keenly aware of this unique sensation and try different exercises so that it eventually becomes ingrained in their vocal technique.

### The Diaphragm Muscle



The Primary muscle of respiration is the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a thin, parachute shaped layer of muscle and tendon that separates the abdominal cavity from the chest cavity. The Diaphragm is attached to the lower costals, high in the front of the rib cage at the sternum and lower in the back at the spine. The diaphragm flattens when we inhale. The ribcage is flexible and as the diaphragm moves down, air moves into the lungs the ribcage expands.

Here is a link to a very simple, yet informative video that demonstrates the diaphragm in motion.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hp-gCvWBPry>

### Discovering your singing breath

Watching the above video will help you to visualize the mechanics of breathing. Visualization and awareness of motion in the body is key when improving vocal technique as our instrument is hidden from us. Breathing exercises like the ones given in the vocal lesson can be done throughout the day, at work or at home when you have a minute or two to relax. Breathing exercises not only help your singing – they can help relieve stress and help you relax.

*Inhalation* refers to air moving into your body — breathing in. *Exhalation* is when you exhale or blow out the air. You exhale when you speak or sing.

#### Simple Breathing exercise:

Either standing, sitting or lying down

1. Take a slow inhale through the mouth. Let the shoulders be very heavy. Let all abdominal muscle relax. (Let it all hang out!) Explore the sensation of the ribcage expanding as the lungs fill with air.
2. Now exhale as if you are pushing the air through a straw. Make this a “sounded” breath. This is a controlled breath. You’re using the diaphragm to push the air out, but controlling it as in singing.
3. Try this exercise a couple of times. Make sure to keep the upper body soft and relaxed through this exercise. Shoulders and neck muscles are never involved.



Are you interested in singing lessons? Awesome! Singing lessons can be a fantastic opportunity to build your confidence and develop your skill.

[www.thefullvoice.com](http://www.thefullvoice.com)

# 10 Things your Voice Teacher wants you to know about Singing lessons

1. **Voice Teachers are not interested in changing your "sound"**. Every singer has a unique sound. We want to help you discover your entire voice, develop it and learn to care for it.
2. **Make a commitment**. If you want to see results, you need to commit to lessons for at least 6 months. Taking only a couple of lessons with any teacher will leave you confused and frustrated. Change and improvement take time. There are no shortcuts. (What benefit would going to 3 yoga classes be? Would your body change in only 3 sessions?)
3. **Perform**. Have an outlet to use and hone your new skills. Join a choir, sing at church or perform karaoke with friends. Without performance related goals you have absolutely no reason to practice. Your progress will be slow and you will soon quit lessons.
4. **Technique is never perfected**. Ever. Even for professional vocalists. There will always be small corrections to make which help you sing and perform better. Explore your sound and your vocal ability with an open mind.
5. **You want correction** (See #4) Correction does not mean you are a bad singer. If you are serious about being a great singer, you want your voice teacher to offer as much correction as possible. Do not leave your lesson without something new and challenging to work on. Explore your sound and your vocal ability with an open mind.
6. **We need to hear mistakes**. The notes you can't sing very well. The exercises that you struggle with. When we can identify the weaknesses, we can work on them effectively.
7. **You need to sing out without hesitation**. We need to hear all of your voice. This includes the bad notes and sounds that make you uncomfortable. When you can sing out without fearing mistakes, your vocal lessons will get interesting (and effective.)
8. **Challenge yourself**. Singing only songs you like is fun in the beginning. Try singing something completely out of your comfort zone. That is how you grow, improve and learn.
9. **Make Peace with Your Voice**. If you honestly "Hate the sound of your voice...", don't bother with lessons. We won't be able to help you. (See #4, #5, #6, #7)
10. **We want to work with you – not against you**. Trust that we are trying to help you as best we know how. Are you willing to work with us? Will you listen to us and apply the suggestions we are offering? Are you ready for singing lessons?



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*Mouth shape when singing: Forward but open (like biting an apple or yawning) Not spread!*



Round /u:/



Spread /i:/



Neutral /ɑ:/

Vowel Lip Postures: adapted from Jeremy Harmer

## *Bored?? Things to do as a singer...*

Sometimes you get bored and you don't have much to do. Sometimes it is just easier to watch a movie or go on social media for hours. Is that productive? I guess it could be a little, but mostly when you are done, you feel unproductive.

Here is a list of alternative things you can do to not only not be bored, but also improve on being a singer.

(This list is written especially for classical singers but can be adapted for any style of singing!)

1. Practice- This is always a good go to! Not only are you singing, but you are improving!
2. Play/ learn a musical instrument-This is a good skill to have and makes you a more versatile musician. (Definitely learn piano if you haven't learned it)
3. Brush up on music theory- Go to some websites and refresh that, try to sight read something!
4. Refresh languages- Use an app like duolingo to work on the language. Even better if you know someone who also speaks that language try having a conversation with them in the language.
5. Learn a new language- Learning multiple languages is fun and you can sing these languages! It also helps when travelling!
6. Watch/ listen to operas or musicals- There are hundreds of shows and it is always good to become familiar with these works! You can see them live, or go online to websites such as youtube and Met On Demand!
7. Read up on history and art that is related to the music you sing- It is interesting how closely related music, art and history are! Not only will this inform your performance, but you will learn more!
8. Exercise- Not only is this good for you in general, but your body is your instrument, so you must take care of it.
9. Organize your music- You might have a lot! Knowing where all your music is and having it accessible is good! You might find some songs you haven't done in years and would like to do again!
10. Learn about famous singers- It is interesting to see the careers of singers who are famous! Not only is it inspirational, but you might learn something new and get some good advice!
11. Look up new music- Take the time to go through your music books or the music from a local library! You can look through music and possibly find some music you want to learn.
12. Look at monologues-A major part of being a singer is conveying emotion! Monologues are used in auditions and are super helpful to work on acting!
13. Look at other singer blogs or forums- There are online groups for singers who are always posting about being singers. There is an abundance of information on these websites.
14. Keep yourself updated in the world of singing- Read singing magazines and go on classical music news websites!
15. Get new dress clothes- It is always important to have dresses and fancy clothes for auditions and performances.
16. Relax- It is hard to sing when you are tired. Relax and just take in the time you can have to yourself.
17. Go outside- Sometimes the best practice is when you go outside and experience life! As singers we relate to our experiences from life! Live, experience the world, and take in its beauty! Even if you sit outside in your backyard or a local park, you can take in the music of nature.