

Vocal Warm-Ups

Warming the voice for singing is vital for producing and maintaining a good, strong voice and a solid sound. The 3 main things to focus on are:

- 1) good posture
- 2) careful breathing
- 3) warming the vocal cords

Good posture

- Always try to stand when you're warming the voice.
- Start by shaking your arms and legs loose.
- Then imagine you have a piece of string attached to the top of your head that's gently pulling it upwards.
- Keeping your shoulders down and your arms relaxed, stand with your feet slightly apart so your body feels grounded.

Careful breathing

- Imagine that there is a balloon in your stomach (or diaphragm).
- Begin by taking a deep breath to fill up 'the balloon', ensuring that when you breathe you inhale all the way down to your stomach (the balloon), not just up in your chest.
- Then, slowly release the air using a 'ssss' sound. (Make sure this isn't a 'shhh' as this would release the air too quickly.)
- Remember to keep your body relaxed and your shoulders down and focus on letting the air out slowly.
- Next try some gentle humming, concentrating on taking a good breath before each hum, and humming slowly up, then down a 5-note scale.
- Begin with a lowish note and work your way up and down, concentrating on releasing the air carefully from 'the balloon' as you sing.

Warming the vocal cords

- Pull some funny faces, massage your cheeks and pout and stretch your lips.
- Laughter will also help your diaphragm wake up (laugh at yourself pulling faces!).
- Yawning is a great way to stretch out internally.
- Then, using an 'brrrr' lip roll sound, start from the very bottom of your vocal range to the very top, and back down again a few times - then add vowel sounds like ah, eh, ee, oh or oo.
- Finally, have a go at one or two of the vocal warm-up songs and exercises on this web page BEFORE singing your songs so that your voice will always get a good work out.
- Keep relaxed as tension can interfere with your voice. Let your voice guide you.
- Never sing higher or lower than you can freely and easily and if you're unsure whether you're straining ask about it at your next class.