

VOICE LESSON #2

Getting started: Exercises and Warm-ups

1) Physical Warm-ups (Do only those with which you are really comfortable. – Don't overdo it or strain)

- a) Begin with stretches. Reach for the ceiling. Then reach to the sides. Hold each stretch until you just can't anymore and then relax.
- b) Do some large slow shoulder rolls. Pretend you're slowly rowing a boat.
- c) Drop your chin to your chest then roll slowly to one shoulder, then to the back, then to the other shoulder. Repeat, and go the opposite direction.
- d) Drop (bend) over like a ragdoll and let the arms hang. Slowly "rebuild" your spine by rolling up very slowly.
- e) Finally, plant your feet and turn your torso to one side and then the other a few times.

2) Do a posture check. Refer to Lesson 1 for the principals of good singer's posture.

3) Take several deep, low passive breaths (drop the tummy). Feel yourself expand in the front, at the sides and in the back.

Then do the following Exercise from Lesson #1.

1. Begin with a standing singer's posture, holding the chest high and wide.
2. Inhale through the nose as you expand the rib cage and lungs to capacity.
3. Release any tension in the chest or shoulder area. Now exhale, using a hissing sound like air escaping from a tire, as you count slowly from one to eight.
4. Resist the inclination to allow the rib cage to collapse while exhaling.

Note that the danger in this exercise is tension and overexertion. It is easy to become tense about not allowing the rib cage to collapse. Remain conscious of keeping free of tension, constriction and tightness in the shoulders and chest.

Repeat a few times each day, gradually increasing the amount of time you hold the breath until you can **hold it for a full minute** without tension. You can do this exercise while driving, working, etc.

4) Begin the vocal warm-up with some gentle humming (on any kind of tune). Then try some of the following simple vocalizes:

a)



(Doh Mi So Mi Doh)

b)

See -----Ah ----- See ----- | See -----Ah ----- See ----- |

(So Fa Mi Re Doh)

The musical notation for exercise b) is on a single treble clef staff. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a dotted quarter note B4, and a quarter rest. The second measure contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a whole note C4. Dashed lines under the notes indicate the vocalization 'See' for the first measure and 'Ah' for the second measure.

c)

Loo ----- | Loo ----- |

(Doh Re Mi Fa So Fa Mi Re Doh So Doh)

The musical notation for exercise c) is on a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time. The first measure contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note C4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The second measure contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a whole note C4. Dashed lines under the notes indicate the vocalization 'Loo' for both measures.

With each: take a good preparatory breath. Exhale through the notes - up and out. Transpose up and down the scale. Feel free to change the vowels sounds (Ah, ay, ee, oh, oo, etc.).

5) Make up some vocalizes of your own, or sing a well-known song or chant from the liturgy.

Remember: Warm-up time is never wasted. Just like athletes who stretch and warm-up before sport, singers need to care for the voice by allowing it to stretch and warm-up before use.