

Three Foundations for Best Singing

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Singing means you're turning *your own body* into an instrument. Not just your throat or “talent” are involved: singing is extremely mechanical, and many skills involve simple mechanical corrections in your physiology.

There are some differences between singing and playing an instrument that's *outside* your body, like a piano or guitar, but actually all music work requires mind-body connection, neutral body and correct breathing. Read on!

1. **The Mind-Body connection.** Music requires us to put other thoughts out of our head. Ego not helpful; while singing, you can't be thinking of “do I sound good?” “Did I screw up?” Singing is a service: you are given a small gift (your vocal talent) and you give it away to the public to help make the world a more beautiful place to be. It's not about whether “you are the best singer” or have the “most beautiful voice”; there is always someone better & worse, and comparing one's self to others is frustrating and fruitless. Also, focusing on sharing/communicating is the fastest, easiest way to be successful technically and emotionally: you reach your audience better with this intention at the forefront. We practice the mind-body connection in class using my Tibetan bowl; if we haven't done this yet, don't worry; we will.
2. **The Singing Body:** alert, grounded to the earth, but not tense or not enough air gets in. Relaxed but alert allows an easy breath to get in down low, where it will last you longer. Singing is about conserving air; take in a lot in a relaxed breath, but let it out slowly by keeping your body alert.
3. **The Singing Breath:** lungs are shaped like inverted cones. Bigger at the bottom, so the singing breath should go down there. In order to do so, we need to relax the stomach muscles to allow air in, and visualize receiving your favourite smell. Breathing is involuntary, easy and free so we need to just get out of the way. Breath is our gas as a singer: whenever we have the opportunity, fill up.

Breathing Exercises to do at rest, eg, when watching TV or in bed. Do 10 of each.

1. Relaxed breath at your own pace where you visualize receiving your favorite smell (Lesson: relax to receive the breath, which is involuntary, free, easy; when inhaling “scent” the breath goes really deep and wide; this is what we want for singing. This is a deep singing breath).
2. Inhale for a count of 1, hold for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 8. (Lesson: practicing the relaxed breath in #1 but on a schedule. Important to keep it easy and relaxed. As soon as there is a lot of muscular work or tension, let it all out and try again).

Vocal Exercises – do at least 5 times per week. If I haven't given you all these yet, don't worry; we'll get there.

- 1) Ma up fifths
- 2) Scale
- 3) Repeated ma, down a fifth
- 4) Scooped fifth.