

Voice for the Actor - “Warming up the Voice”

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Classroom: Musical Theater Southwest

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1. Get the body ready (2–3 min)

Voice lives in the body, so don't skip this.

- **Neck rolls** – slow circles, both directions
 - **Shoulder rolls** – up, back, down
 - **Jaw release** – massage the hinge, then let your mouth hang open like you're bored in line
 - **Shake it out** – arms, hands, lips (yes, like a horse)
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2. Breath = power (3 min)

Actors don't “project” — they **support**.

- **Low breathing:** hand on belly, inhale through nose, feel it expand
 - **4–6 exhale:** inhale 4 counts, exhale on “sss” for 6–8
 - **Pulse it:** “ts-ts-ts-ts” from the belly (like controlled laughter)
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3. Wake up the voice (3–4 min)

Gentle first. No forcing.

- **Lip trills:** brrrrr (slide low → high → low)
- **Tongue trills:** rrrrr (same slides)
- **Humming:** “mmm” then “ng” (as in *sing*)
- **Sirens:** on “oo” or “ee,” glide through your full range

If it feels scratchy, you're pushing — back off.

4. Articulation drills (3–4 min)

Clear but relaxed.

- **Big mouth:** over-exaggerate vowels
 - “MAH MAY MEE MOH MOO”
 - **Consonant pops:**
 - “Buh-duh-guh”
 - “Puh-tuh-kuh”
 - **Tongue twisters** (slow → fast):
 - “Red leather, yellow leather”
 - “Unique New York”
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5. Actor-specific finish (2–3 min)

Now connect voice to intention.

- End with a line from your script / song **at 70% volume** — save the voice for later.
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Pro tips

If you're going onstage or on camera:

- ✓ warm up **down and forward**, not loud
- ✓ hydration > throat clearing
- ✓ hydration happens the day before and the day off
- ✓ if you lose your voice, stop — don't “push through”