

## Tips On Warming Up Your Voice

### Quick Summary

To warm up your voice, try humming a tune so you don't strain your vocal cords. After that, start practicing your scales to extend your voice to its full range. Instead of drinking something cold, use hot tea or room temperature water to keep your vocal cords open. If you still feel tension, drop your jaw massage your cheeks in a circular motion.

### Keep good posture.

In order to have the best air flow and therefore the best sound, you need to have good posture. This goes for when you're both sitting and standing. Imagine a line at the top of your head, through your back, holding you up.

- If you're standing, keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart. Balance equally on both legs. Keep your head up and shoulders back. Every part of your body should be in the same line.
- If you're sitting, follow the same recommendations as you would for standing, but also keep your back off the chair, sitting towards the edge of your seat.

### Breath Deep:

**Most people have a bad habit of only using the top of their lungs. Doing this though doesn't employ the diaphragm and doesn't let you use your full power.**

- If you are tense at all while breathing, it will resound in the muscles of your vocal folds. Breathe normally, but be conscious of keeping your shoulders low and your chest relaxed. Concentrate on breathing lower staying loose throughout your core. If you need to, place a hand on your stomach to remind yourself that *that 's* the part that should be moving up and down -- not your chest and shoulders. Hold an "s" sound (like a hiss) when you exhale to control the amount of air that you can expel.

### Release Your Jaw

Any tension at all will keep you from your best sound. Your jaw is the instrument your voice comes out of -- you have to take care of it, too. The best place to sing from is your diaphragm, so stick it out to breath there.

- Massage your cheeks with the heel of each hand. Push in and down right below your cheekbone and rotate in a clockwise motion. Your jaw should open without you even thinking about it and be forced to relax. Do this several times.

### Drink Warm Liquids

Ice cold water will just clam up your vocal folds, very literally. It's also best to avoid caffeine and nicotine, too. All these things constrict your throat and keep you from sounding your best.

Warm teas or room temperature water are your best bets. You definitely want your vocal cords to stay lubed up, but you don't want to freeze or scorch them! If you do choose tea, make sure it's not scalding hot

**Do scales.** You wouldn't run 5 miles (8.0 km) out of the gate, so don't expect your voice box to be able to go up and down 3 octaves either. Doing scales slowly warms up your voice, extending it to its top and bottom ranges. And it's pretty easy to do, even alone.

- If you are breathing right and holding yourself correctly, it'll be easier to hit those notes in your high register. Be patient, though, and work gradually. You'll actually hurt your voice if you start off too low or too high, forcing it to do things it really doesn't want to do

**Work on lip and tongue trills.** Another common method to warming up apart from scales are trills. They relax the lip and tongue, engage breathing, and eliminate tension.

- For lip trills, simply create a raspberry sound by loosely placing your lips together. Experiment with different consonant sounds, like "h" and "b." Go slowly up and down your range, but don't do anything that's uncomfortable or hard to maintain.
- For tongue trills, think of the Spanish "r." Place your tongue behind your upper teeth and exhale strongly. Hold the sound and air steady, varying the pitch while trilling. Again, don't do anything your voice doesn't want you to do. You'll know

**Add in sirens and kazoos.** Some of the more fun warm ups are sirens and kazoos. When you do your siren (which should start low and go high), use your arm and toss it in a circular motion, going up and down with the pitch.

- Kazoos focus of the sound and stretch the vocal folds in a healthy, controlled way. Just pretend like you're sucking in spaghetti -- it's as simple as that. On an exhale, make the "woo" sound; it'll come out like a buzz. Holding the sound steady, go up and down to the extremities of your range. Do this several times.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Try some tongue twisters going up and down in tunes. This is preparing your voice for complexed songs. A good one is 'Seven salty sailors sailed the seven seas (repeat up in Do Re Me.)

**Hum.** Humming actually helps cool a voice down, too, which is an oft-forgotten, though important, technique. It warms up your voice without straining your voice like singing can.

- Release your jaw and relax your shoulders. Inhale normally and exhale on a "hum." Go from high to low, like a sighing half-siren. If you feel a tickling around your nose and lips, good job

**Gargling Water for Placement:** The gargling exercise required the participant to place a small amount of water in the mouth, recline the head, and gargle without voice 10 times for 5-6 seconds with breaks in between. Participants were instructed to relax the throat and gargle with enough airflow to make the bubbles pop up out of the mouth.