



Grass Valley Male Voice Choir

Post Office Box 1698 • Grass Valley, CA 95945

www.GVMaleVoiceChoir.org

Tips for Practicing Your Music at Home

Congratulations! You've probably heard it a thousand times: *"Practice your music before the next rehearsal."* If you've ever thought, *"I don't play piano"* or *"I need someone to help me,"* this guide is for you. These simple steps will help you practice on your own and feel more confident at rehearsal.

Good news: Many of these steps can be done anywhere—no practice room required.

What You'll Need

- Your music
- A pencil
- Access to the GVMVC practice tracks

1. Start with the Text

Know what you're singing before you sing it.

- Read the lyrics carefully.
- If the text is in another language, find a translation.
 - Write a poetic translation above or below the lyrics.
 - For tricky words or repeated phrases, look up a word-for-word meaning.
- Ask yourself:
 - What does this text mean?
 - Who wrote it, and why?
 - Is there a historical or cultural context behind the piece?

Understanding the words will immediately improve musicality and confidence.

2. Listen to a Practice Track

Use the GVMVC resources available to you.

- Visit www.gvmalevoicechoir.org
- Go to Members Only → Practice Tracks
- Select:
 - The piece you're rehearsing
 - *Your* voice part

You may also find it helpful to listen to a full-choir recording (for example, on YouTube) to understand how all the parts fit together.



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3. Analyze the Music

Take a few minutes to understand how the piece is built.

- Is it organized in sections?
- Are there repeated parts?
- Does your part mirror another voice?
- Are there key changes, meter changes, or tempo shifts?
- Is there a repeat sign, first/second ending, or coda?

Try explaining the structure of the piece to someone who has never heard it. If you can explain it, you understand it.

4. Find Your Starting Pitches

For every entrance, know how you get your pitch.

- Does another voice sing it first?
- Is it in the accompaniment?
- What note of the chord are you singing (root, third, fifth, etc.)?

Avoid "sheep singing" (following the person next to you). Take responsibility for entering confidently and independently.

5. Don't Only Sing What You Already Know

That's the fastest way to waste practice time.

- Identify problem spots.
- Ask *why* they're difficult:
 - Rhythm?
 - Pitch?
 - Text?
 - Breath?

Target the trouble areas instead of running the whole piece over and over.



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6. Solve the Problem—Step by Step

Break the difficult section into something manageable.

- Isolate the rhythm first.
- Sing just the pitches—slowly.
- Use solfège if it helps.
- Add text only when the notes are solid.
- Repeat correctly (slow practice done right beats fast practice done wrong).

Final Thought

A little focused practice goes a long way. When each singer comes prepared, rehearsals are more enjoyable, more musical, and more rewarding—for you and for the choir.

Thank you for doing your part to make the Grass Valley Male Voice Choir sound its very best.