

## Basic Fundamentals of Singing

Hi everybody, I'm going to teach you the correct way to sing using the **Basic Fundamentals of Singing : Breathing, Posture and Diction** . Once you've mastered these skills you will be able to sing any song, no matter what genre, using these techniques and sound like the professional singer you are, just waiting to be discovered.

### I. Proper Posture

We'll start with the first thing people see when you are singing: **your posture**. Your Mama always told you to stand up straight and Mama was right! Let me show you how to achieve it. First, stand up as tall as you can, feet flat on the floor, reaching your arms as high above your head as you can. Next, gently and slowly let your arms fall back to your sides leaving your back and chest where they are. **THIS** is proper posture.

### II. Breathing

You cannot breathe properly when you sing unless you use correct posture because your air has to move through all the channels of your torso, stomach, chest, back and neck, before it carries your words out of your mouth. Breathing and Posture work closely together. The correct way to breathe is from your Diaphragm, a muscle in your stomach area that powers your breathing as you sing. Singers like Celine Dion and Michael Bolton cannot sing the big, powerful notes they do without singing from the Diaphragm.

#### A. Breathing and Posture are Connected

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- B. In order to breathe from the Diaphragm, inhale slowly without heaving your chest up, then slowly exhale allowing your stomach to move inward. When you take in a breath, your stomach should move **OUTWARD** . When you let your breath out, your stomach should move **INWARD** . This will take some practice but it will soon become second nature to you. Now repeat the steps above, but as you exhale, sing, la, la, la, la, la. Repeat this Breathing Exercise until your la's become stronger, then practice this same technique as you sing lyrics to a song.

### III. Diction (articulation, pronunciation)

Using proper Diction, or properly pronouncing your words, is the foundation of a great vocal performance. Americans are said to have lazy tongues in speaking and this carries over into our singing a lot of times. We love to shorten our words. What good is a great performance if no one understands the lyrics? If you want to have a professional vocal performance, this is not the place to cut corners.

#### A. Here are some tips to achieving proper Diction:

1. **SLOW DOWN!** Most people talk too fast. Singers sometimes sing too fast as well. This is the number one reason words are not pronounced correctly.
2. When using proper Diction, your audience should hear the **FIRST LETTER** and the **LAST LETTER** of your words.
3. **Practice saying your lyrics** correctly, before you sing them.

## Use Good Vocal Technique

- I. Introduce vocal techniques that promote register unification and encourage effective breath management.
  1. Borrow from the bass line to unify registers
    - a. Helps singers achieve breath management required to navigate the passaggio or vocal breaks
    - b. Misconception - singers cannot control diaphragms in the inhalation process.  
Inhalation is an involuntary action.
- II. Activities that inspire Low Breath Inhalation
  1. "Hot mashed potato breath" - pretend to inhale air as if you are cooling hot food on your tongue.
  2. "Filling up a glass" - visualize the air filling the lungs from the bottom to the top.
  3. Build stamina and strengthen tone by singing sustained note encouraging breath management and not "control"
  4. Borrow from brass players who buzz the mouthpiece to practice breath management.
  5. Long tone exercises or messa di voce. singing on a single note while maintaining consistent resonance and vibrato while evenly increasing and decreasing volume.
- III. Start Each Rehearsal Strong
  1. Well-planned warm-ups which engage the voice and the ear and are focused on range and tone.
- IV. Exercises for Engaging the Ear
  1. Sing descending solfege scale
    - a. Encourages vowels unification - singing the vowel the same way
    - b. Helps improve la, fa, re - the AH and EH vowels tend to spread creating poor tone and flatness
    - c. Tackles the increase in weight of voice - encourage singers to not press or force the tone as they execute this exercise
  2. Sing ascending scale on solfege
    - a. Do, do-re, do-re-mi, do-re-mi-fa, etc. Encourages intervallic integrity. Singers will sing better in tune with themselves
- V. Improving Rhythmic Execution of Consonants
  1. Count sing
  2. Snap at the releases
  3. Speak the text dynamically and rhythmically and transfer the results into their singing
  4. Vowel unification (singers match vowels) and vowel modification (vowels more open in the higher range and slender or more closed in the lower range)