

## GVMVC

### Tips for practicing your music at home.

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Congratulations! You've now been told for the millionth time to practice your music for your next choir rehearsal. But if you are someone who hears that and thinks, "I don't play piano. I can't do this without someone helping me," here are some ways you can practice on your own and improve your singing.

Grab your music and a pencil. Many of these steps can be done in a public place. No need to head to the practice room (you can stop using that as an excuse).

- 1. Start with the text.** Make sure you know what you are singing. Think about the text. Find a translation if it is in another language. Write the poetic translation above/below the lyrics. If you want to go deeper, use a translation site to translate word for word (especially if there's a word that you sing over and over again. You should know what that specific word means). Do you know who wrote the lyrics and why? Can you put the piece into historical context?
- 2. Listen to a practice track.** You will find these tracks on the website, [www.gvmalevoicechoir.org](http://www.gvmalevoicechoir.org) under the tab Members Only. Click on Practice Tracks, select the song you want to rehearse and select your voice part. It may be also helpful to listen to a YouTube version to hear all the voices.
- 3. Analyze your music.** How is the piece organized? Does it have sections? Are there repeated parts? Does your part occur in another voice part? Are there key changes or meter changes? Is there a repeat sign/first and second ending/coda? How would you describe the organization of this piece to someone who has never heard it?
- 4. Find your starting pitches.** For every entrance you have, figure out how you are going to find the starting pitch. Maybe another voice part just sang the note. Maybe it was just in the accompaniment. Do you know what note of the chord it is (e.g. I'm singing the root of this chord)? There is nothing worse than "sheep singing" (blindly following what the person next to you is singing). Take responsibility for being able to enter on your own.
- 5. Don't just sing through the parts you already know.** You'll be wasting your practice time. Identify problem areas, analyze why you're having a problem with that spot, figure out ways to solve the problem area.
- 6. Solve the problem area.** Break it down to something you CAN do. Then add something to it. Practice with repetition, but only if you're sure you're doing it right! Start with just the pitches slowly (dare I say on solfege syllables?).