

SOULFUL SISTERHOOD CHOIR

THE SOULFUL SINGER'S CHEAT SHEET



Unlocking Your Voice & Your Vagus Nerve

Why do we do "weird" things with our faces before we sing? Because when life gets stressful, we lock tension in our jaws, throats, and the base of our skulls. This physical "armouring" traps our natural voice.

These exercises aren't just warm-ups; they are a signal to your nervous system (via the Vagus Nerve) that says: "It is safe to let go. It is safe to make noise."

1. THE HORSE LIPS (The Vagal Vibrator)

How to do it: take a deep, belly breath in. As you exhale, keep your lips loose and let the air "flutter" them, making a horse sound. (If you can't do it, try gently pressing your cheeks inward with your fingers to help). The "Nerdy" Why: This vibration stimulates the nerves in the lips and cheeks that connect directly to the calming part of your brain. It is physiologically impossible to hold tension while doing this!

2. THE JAW PENDULUM (The Masseter Release)

How to do it: Let your lower jaw hang completely slack. Don't pull it open; just let gravity have it. Very gently, let it swing slowly from side to side like an old grandfather clock. The "Nerdy" Why: The Masseter (your chewing muscle) is the strongest muscle in the body and the first place we lock stress. Swinging it tells the brain it's safe to drop your guard.

3. LION'S BREATH (The Throat Opener)

How to do it: Inhale deeply. As you exhale powerfully, open your mouth wide, stick your tongue out as far as it goes, and make a loud "HAAAA" sound from the back of your throat. The "Nerdy" Why: This stretches the deep muscles of the tongue root and throat, clearing stagnant energy and creating physical space for a soulful, resonant sound.

4. THE LOW CHEST HUM (The Vagal Workout)

How to do it: Close your lips gently. Hum a low, easy note. Don't push. Focus your attention on feeling the "buzz" in your chest first, then your throat, then your lips. The "Nerdy" Why: Low-frequency vibration gives the Vagus Nerve a direct massage right where it passes your vocal cords. It's the quickest way to shift into "Rest & Digest."

THE GOLDEN RULE:

Listen to your body. If an exercise feels uncomfortable, tight, or just "too much" today, do less of it. Or simply imagine doing it. Your nervous system knows what it needs.