



Article published on February 3rd 2012 | [Music](#)

There are a variety of breathing exercises that will help a student strengthen the muscles associated with breathing, and assist them in finding the coordination or synchronizations between the breath management system and their vibrators (larynxes). The best approach to these voice exercises is to build muscle strength gradually, increasing the difficulty and decreasing the amount of breaks or pauses taken between or during exercise.

Unfortunately, many voice teachers don't seem to understand the importance of "pacing" the rate of exercises or have their students use them in ways that will not benefit the student's breath management system or perhaps even cause muscular strain or place excessive force on the vocal folds during phonation. In addition, the student should always be provided a reason for any assigned exercises, and they should never be led to use them in an unnatural way.

While it is always preferable to have a VOCAL COACH present who can provide you with knowledge, feedback and expert guidance, there are a few basic breathing exercises that you can try on your own. These exercises are safe and will not violate any natural functions of the body.

It is essential that one work the abdominal muscles and back muscles outside of and before vocal training. Toning these muscles will help support the breathing mechanism and help the singer avoid problems with support as they progress. Pilate's style workouts are great for singers, as they target and strengthen the core of the body.

However, it is important to note that the muscle contractions created during these types of abdominal exercises are not the same as those created during breathing and singing. On the upside, having strong core muscles will provide the student with the necessary strength to learn how to use the muscles to support the tone. If the singer does not have a strong core, they will find it more difficult to learn how to use them in a demanding way.

You should understand there is an intricate balance between relaxation and antagonism between the various muscle groups that support the breath. Not achieving this balance may cause the singer to experience excessive tension in their bodies or have the feeling of forcing their breath out in unnatural ways. Since muscles are involved and are doing the work, there will be some muscular contraction especially in the back. However, if the singer has developed a strong enough core the feeling of muscle strain will be eliminated and the work of breathing and supporting the tone will be measurably easier.

Achieving good cardiovascular health is also beneficial when LEARNING TO SING. Therefore, participating in a good cardiovascular regimen is recommended to ensure the body is well oxygenated, which will increase lung capacity and enable the singer to breathe more clearly and effortlessly.

Always be aware that there are right ways and wrong ways to approach exercises to help the singer develop better breath management skills. We will discuss those in detail in an upcoming article.

Article Source:

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Article Keywords:

Vocal Coach, Learning To Sing, Vocal Singing London, Singing Training London

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