

Home Voice Training Material Articles Resources Gig Guide Interact

Acts n Bands
Carers n Jobs
Databases
Downloads
Equipment
Fun Stuff
Site Map

Are you in tune?
Perfect Pitch on a Key Chain - PocketTones.com



Breathing Exercises
Breathing for Singers at www.vocalist.org.uk

Breathing Intro
Breathing Exercises Online
Breathing Discussion
Breathing Exercise Links
Translate this Page



Exercises
Breathing Exercises
Ear Training
Fitness Exercises
Learning Lyrics
Posture Exercises
Practice Practice
Sight Reading
Vocal Exercises
Vocalists
Books for Singers
Voice Training Index
Diction
Languages
Techniques
Timbre & Rhythm
Tutorials
Teachers Listings
Times Corner
Vocal Health
Vocal Software
Workshops & Courses
Online Applications
BPM Counter
Practice Online
Spectrograms
Vocal Scales
Acts & Bands
Articles
Books & Audio Books
Careers & Jobs
Databases
Diagrams
Equipment
Fan & Freshies
Gifts & Goodies
Gig Guide
Interact
Material
Resources
Site Map
Home
Contact Us

These online breathing exercises for singers are aimed at the complete beginner and as "jargon" free as possible. For more extensive Free Lessons, Ear Training, Scales, Freeware Downloads and other Resources for all standards, check the links below and our music related links pages.

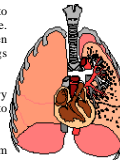


One of the cornerstones of learning to sing is knowing how to breathe correctly and learn to control your breathing so that it is used to optimum effect when you sing.

When we are born our breathing is naturally correct, babies can breathe, yell and scream with optimum effect because they use their lungs without conscious thought. As we grow older, some people become lazy in their habits only using the upper part of the lungs, taking a shallow breath instead of a normal one.

To understand how correct breathing and breath control works, first you need to understand the process that it uses to operate.

Surrounding your lungs is a muscle system called the diaphragm which is attached to the lower ribs on the sides, bottom and to the back acting as an inhalation device. When you breathe in the muscle lowers displacing the stomach and intestines. When you breathe out the diaphragm helps to manage the muscles around the lungs (abdominal muscles) control how quickly the breath is exhaled.



If you breathe out quickly, the diaphragm does nothing but when you breathe out very slowly the diaphragm resists the action of the abdominal muscles. A singer learns to use this muscle system to control the breath as it is being exhaled.

Hold a finger close to your lips and breathe out slowly, the breath should be warm and moist and you should notice the action of the diaphragm as you exhale. This is the correct amount of breath used when singing normally. A singer does not need to 'force' or 'push' air through the vocal chords to produce a good strong sound, doing so creates too much pressure against the chords, preventing them from operating correctly which can cause damage to the voice.

The stomach area should move naturally inward toward the end of the breath, the stomach should not be 'sucked in' as it prevents the diaphragm from working effectively. Instead the abdominal area should remain expanded to the level it was when you inhaled and allowed to gradually decrease naturally at the end of the breath.

This is where the 'control' comes into play - the singer expands the lungs by inhaling and 'controls' the amount of air expelled when singing a note by allowing the muscle support system to remain expanded - this doesn't mean the stomach is pushed out, rather that it is blown up like a balloon when the air goes in and the singer slows down the natural rate at which it goes down. In most people the breathing is shallow and only the top half of the lungs are used - breathing correctly uses the whole of the lungs so that more air is available, the singer then uses the natural action of the muscles (diaphragm and abdominals) surrounding the lungs to control the amount of air that is exhaled when singing a note.

Good breath support during singing and speech requires, good posture, abdominal breathing and breathing during natural pauses. Breathing and correct support does not require great physical strength - although having toned abdominal muscles helps, even a child can learn how to breathe and support their voice correctly. Remember...the diaphragm doesn't exhale for you - just helps to control the amount of air exhaled.

Click Here for a picture of the respiratory system showing the ribs, stemam and diaphragm. Click Here for a picture of the diaphragm and lungs with a section of bronchial tubes. Pictures courtesy of Merk Medicus who have rather excellent online tool that you can use to view various parts of the anatomy. Visit the site and click on 'Respiratory'. Once the page has loaded use the mouse to strip the picture down into layers or move it around to view images from different angles. Visible Productions who designed the software also have some great 3d movie type images on their site.

Although we have tried to the best of our ability to describe the breathing process above, there is no better demonstration than seeing how it works. Take a look at Optimal Breathing's Animated Diagram which demonstrates the correct method of breathing with a view through the ribcage of the diaphragm - practice breathing along to it or visit Carl Stough's site which has a great video of the diaphragm, lungs and ribcage in action which you can download free as a .zip file from his site (1.5mb download). (requires Winzip or similar to unzip and QuickTime free viewer to play)

Breathing Exercises

The following exercise may make you feel tired at first, do keep at it as you will begin to notice that it takes less effort to breath, less energy is used when breathing plus it helps you learn to co-ordinate the diaphragm and abdominal muscles when breathing.

To find out if you are breathing correctly, place a hand on your belly button. This area should expand first when you breathe in and then spread upwards until your chest is expanded (don't lift the shoulders or push the stomach out). If you feel you are not breathing properly, practice the following exercise.

Lay flat on your back.

Place your hands on your waist, fingers pointing towards your belly button.

Focus on filling up your stomach from the bottom to the top taking a slow deep breath. (The aim is not to fill yourself to bursting but to inhale enough air so that you can feel the difference between a shallow breath taken when breathing from the chest).

You should feel your stomach rise and your hands being raised gently up and outward until you feel your chest expanding. The expansion is not only at the front of the body but also to the sides and back as well.

Breathe out slowly to a count of 5

Repeat the exercise 10 times

Practice daily before you rise in the morning and prior to sleeping at night for 5 - 10 minutes gradually increasing this to 3 or 4 times a day.

Once you get it right, practice as often as possible, sitting, standing and whilst at work until you are breathing naturally from your abdomen.

Try the following exercise to help increase breath control - Count on one breath singing each number out loud, using one breath at any comfortable pitch. Start with a small number like 5 or 10 and increase this gradually until you can manage 25 or more without straining, tensing or running out of breath.

Breathing 101 for Singers & Vocalists
Tutorial by Yvonne DeBandi with advice and exercises for correct breathing.

Breathing Techniques
Article by Dennis Anderson provides information and exercises to improve your breathing.

Breath Control
Article by Lis Lewis on learning correct breathing.



Artist
Find it!

Email Login
Password
Login New users sign up

Vocalist & Chab Free Newsletter
Enter Email
Subscribe
Submit
Unsubscribe
Submit

- Associate Sites
AW Design
Christmas Crackers
Electric Blues Club
Gig a Freebie Guide
KrazyKats Karaoke
Singing Teachers
Valentines Dazing



[Exercises](#)

Aimed at improving and correctly focusing your breathing posted to the Vocalist.org discussion group by Feldenkrais Method teacher, John Link.

[Born To Sing](#)

by Ron Murdock is an interesting essay which explores and explains the mechanics of singing with diagrams of the throat, larynx and bodies musculature.

Don't despair if you cannot achieve this straight away - it can take months of practice, especially if you have developed bad breathing habits! The good news is that one day you will discover that you are automatically breathing correctly!!

We get a lot of queries on breathing ranging from 'Breathiness' to '[Screaming and Belting](#),' the solutions to these are often (but not always) related to using proper breath support which can increase loudness, reduce rate of speech and increase phrase length.

[I have a problem with 'breathiness - can you help?'](#)

[I have a problem with breathing and breath control -help!](#)

For Q & A on singing read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or browse the discussion links below.

We highly recommend you seek supervised tuition from a reliable source.

[Please Read Our DISCLAIMER.](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Discussions on Breathing

[At Vocalist.org Newsgroup](#)

There have been several extensive discussions at this USA site on breathing, which were initiated by queries regarding problems encountered with breathing correctly. Some of the answers contain insights, tips, advice or exercises so we have included the links below for you to browse, all of which open in a new window.

[Threshold Breath Pressure & Breathing](#)

Lloyd W. Hanson - two authoritative replies and insights into the mechanics of breathing includes diaphragm usage and

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/15749>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17373>

[Query - Amount of Air used in singing](#)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17173>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17175>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17241>

[Query - Breathing Problem](#)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17321>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17325>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17349>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17351>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17352>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17353>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17354>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17355>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17367>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17369>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17370>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17371>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17372>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17384>

[Breathing Exercise Results](#)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17404>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17407>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17408>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17410>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17416>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17417>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17420>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17432>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17432>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17442>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17444>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17451>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17452>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17453>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17460>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17465>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/17468>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/18704>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/18860>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/18862>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vocalist-temporary/message/18906>

For more discussions on singing, repertoire, vocal health and performance visit [Vocalist.org Newsgroup](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Breathing Exercise Links

These are just a small example of the extensive links to online exercises and lessons we have available in the [Vocal Health](#) and [Singers Articles](#) sections, which contain complete listings of lessons, exercises or articles available on each site with direct links to the page (when not a framed site) plus answers to pretty much everything a beginner, intermediate, advanced singer or teacher needs to know! (All links below open in a new window).

[About Breathing](#)

Everything you need to know about breathing all in one place. Includes Building Healthy Lungs, Naturally. Also includes difficult breathing problems and accelerating breathing development progress, an online test to evaluate if you are breathing correctly plus audio and text breathing lessons via the Breath Gym with a free exercise on belly breathing.

[Air & Phonation](#)

provides images, diagrams, video's and descriptions of the vocal tract and larynx with descriptions of the breathing process, voicelessness, breathy voice or murmur, creaky voice or creak and the position of the vocal chords in each case.

[Anthony Winter's Voice Studio](#)

is based in Sydney, Australia and has several online lessons including Breath Support, Opening the Throat, Articulation of clear vowels, Phrasing, Training the Ear, Comparison of music styles, Broadway Belt, Jazz Training, Microphone Technique, Developing Ring in the voice, Building a career etc..

[Anatomy 101](#)

Can you put your hand on your diaphragm? by Mark Baxter.

[Authentic Breathing](#)

by Dennis Lewis who writes well on this topic, includes a book called 'The Tao of Breathing' and you can subscribe to his free newsletter.

[Breath for Life](#)

article including breathing exercises from Cari Cole Voice Studio.

[Breath is Life](#)

article aimed at opening up a debate about breathing with the aim of leading to a deeper understanding, and a more fruitful application of breathing techniques. Includes an exercise for the reader to test if their breathing

correctly, information and advice on the effects of hyperventilating and various theories on breathing practices.

[Breath & Support](#)

Two separate and co-ordinated functions in singing by David L. Jones (also available in French).

[Breath Management in Singing](#)

by David L. Jones, (article also available in french).

[Breathing and Breath Control](#)

article from Jay Williams Choral Press aimed at choral directors and singers.

[Breathing Exercises](#)

Three free exercises supplied by singing teacher to the stars 'Tona de Brett'.

[Breathing for Singers](#)

Why is it so difficult to learn (or to teach) by Shirlee Emmons

[Breathing Techniques](#)

hints for stress reduction, tension relieving and better health from the West Campus Advising and Counseling Center at Valencia Community College

[Breathing warm up and exercises](#)

Exercises with descriptions and audio / video examples from Juliet Russell of [Vocaltech](#), available at the BBC Radio One website.

[Carl Stough \(Dr. Breath\)](#)

has a great video of the diaphragm and skeleton in action and there is a breathing lesson based on the ideas of Carl Stough (Dr. Breath) posted to the [Vocalist.org newsgroup](#) by John Link.

[EGG & Voice Quality](#)

is a study aimed at validating the thesis that the electroglottography conveys essential information about glottal activity. Click on Initiation for an article on Initiation of speech containing an animated picture of heavy breathing and diagram showing lung volume relative to mid-respiration.

[Gas Exchange in Humans](#)

excellent article on the process of breathing complete with colour diagrams.

[Journey of the Voice](#)

(Site in process of moving.. some sections may not be available). Provides information on the process of speech and singing complete with diagrams which include respiration, Support system for the voice (framework) with diagrams of spine, ribs, sternum, and pelvis, phonation, resonance, articulation and care of the voice by Eric Armstrong.

[Dr. Breath's \(Carl Stough\) Breathing Approach](#)

explains the breathing approach to therapy and contains exercises in breathing co-ordination. Article at Web Therapy Teaching

[Health & Fitness Center - Sportsbreather](#)

Breathing trainer for asthmatics, athletes, or anyone needing to increase lung endurance. The Sports Breather is a device for breathing training and to help increase breathing and lung endurance.

[International Breath Institute](#)

Transform Breathing, evaluate your breathing and find more breathing exercises. (site currently being redesigned so exercises unavailable).

[L'Atelier du Chanteur](#)

French/English site, aided by animated & audio exercises with articles and lessons for singers & teachers including the following articles in english, Breathing and appoggio by Lloyd W. Hanson, Breathing and the diaphragm by Lloyd W. Hanson, Breathiness in young debutants by John Nix

[Mini relaxation exercises](#)

Relaxation exercises based on focused breathing techniques to help reduce anxiety and tension from the Mind/Body Medical Institute.

[MusiciansNews](#)

Singing Section (access to articles is by free signup only) lessons include breath control technique exercises.

[Personal Convictions about Breath Management](#)

by Voice Coach Shirlee Emmons

[Quiet Breathing](#)

explains what happens during quiet breathing and examines the breathing cycle. Part of the Interactive Respiratory Physiology by Wilmot C. Ball Jr., MD at John Hopkins School of Medicine

[Saskatchewan Lung Association](#)

information on the lungs and the process of breathing with advice for those who wish to quit smoking.

[Static Elastic Properties of the Lung and Chest Wall](#)

explains the relationship between the static pressure volume curves of the lung and relaxed chest wall and their recoil pressures Part of the Interactive Respiratory Physiology by Wilmot C. Ball Jr., MD at John Hopkins School of Medicine

[Learning to Increase Your Breath Support](#)

for Better Speech through Respiration Training by Wendy White and Meghan Gill, article at Web Therapy Teaching

[The Art of Bluegrass Vocals](#)

An introduction to reflexive breathing by Dede Wyland at iBluegrass.com

[The Scottish Respiratory Site](#)

Contains an 'Ask the Consultant' clinicians forum and links to a variety of related resources.

[The Sing Thing](#)

site includes the exercises available on the CD including breathing exercises and examples in realaudio from the creator of the BRIT Schools BTEC vocal course.

[Vocal Splendor](#)

online singing articles includes tips for improvement, description of the diaphragm, singing terminology, fach, character study, jazz singing and more!!

[Voice Speech Breathing Exercises](#)

1989 Thinking Publications Vocal Re-Education Therapy by Peter B. Mueller, Ph.D.

[What Is "Support?"](#)

Article on breathing and support for singers by Kristina Seleshanko.

[Youngs Medical](#)

contains pursed lip and diaphragm breathing exercises with explanations on how and why they work.

[Back to Top](#)

InterTran



[Disclaimer & Privacy Policy](#)

Best viewed 800x600 IE 5 with Javascript Enabled
© 2001-2007 (Vocalist.org.uk) All rights Reserved.

[Dropdown Menu by Brotherak](#)

Clipart from

[Music Graphics Galore](#), [Red Graphics](#), [Lisabeths Music Images](#)

[Goldclipsart - Gifart - Animation Factory](#)