

A 2 Z Singing Tips

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By Vocal Coach Yvonne DeBandi

A = Airflow. Never hold your breath while singing. The airflow is what creates and carries your vocal tone, so keep it flowing. Avoid Clavicular Breathing and Belly Breathing -- instead, learn the proper way to breathe for singing, called diaphragmatic breathing. Fill the lower portion of your lungs as if you had an inner tube around your waist that you were evenly filling..

B = Breathing properly for singing requires the shoulders to remain down and relaxed, not rise with the breath intake. A singer will gain power to their voice by strengthening the muscles in their ribcage and back.

C = Communicate the music's message. During performance it is very important to communicate the message of the song. If you make a "mistake" don't point it out to your audience. It is most likely they did not even notice.

D = Diaphragmatic Support. Develop the strength and coordination of the diaphragm and become a pro at controlling the speed of the airflow released, the quantity of the airflow released and the consistency of the airflow released.

E = Elasticity of the Vocal Folds. The vocal tone is created as airflow bursts through the cleft of the vocal cords causing them to vibrate/oscillate. The vocal folds can lose elasticity due to misuse, lack of use and/or increase of age. Be sure to train your voice with vocal exercises on a regular basis to keep your voice in shape.

F = Free your natural voice. Don't be a slave to any music style -- even your favorite one. Learn to sing with your full and natural voice by developing your vocal strength and coordination. Then add stylistic nuances to achieve any singing style you desire.

G = Guessing Games. Never guess the pitch you are about to sing. Hear the note in your head before you open your mouth.

H = High notes require consistent and steady airflow. Many students tend to hold their breath as they sing higher. Let the air flow. Try increasing your airflow and gauge your result.

I = Increase your breathing capacity and control by doing breathing exercises every day. Be sure to avoid patterned breathing. Singers must negotiate phrase lengths of all different sizes, so it is important to be versatile.

J = Jumping Jacks. If you are having trouble getting your body completely involved with singing, try doing some cardiovascular activities, like jumping jacks, for a few minutes before getting started again. Sometimes your instrument simply needs an airflow wake-up call.

K = Know your limits. Don't sing too high or too low. Don't sing to the point of vocal fatigue. Never strain or push your voice. Doing so will not result in a higher or lower singing range, or a stronger voice, only a voice that has suffered undue stress.

L = Low notes are often sung with too much airflow. Try decreasing your airflow to achieve a more natural, more relaxed tone.

M = Mirror. Training in front of a mirror can help a singer discover many things about their instrument, as well as confirm that other actions are being done correctly. Be sure to rely on a mirror during vocal training, but be able to leave the mirror to face an audience.

N = Never sing if it hurts to swallow.

O = Open your mouth wider. Nine times out of ten this will help you achieve a stronger, more defined vocal tone.

P = Prepare your instrument before singing. Singers are very much like athletes. Take care of your body/instrument by stretching out the vocal muscles and relieving the body of unnecessary tension before singing.

Q = Quit smoking. Quit talking too loudly. Quit talking too much.

R = Raise the Soft Palate. Creating a larger space inside your mouth by raising the soft palate, or fleshy part of the back of our throat, helps achieve a deeper more well rounded singing tone.

S = Sing through the vocal breaks. If you do not teach the muscles the necessary actions to sing through the trouble spots, success will never be achieved. Sing through it, sing through it again, and again....

T = Tone Placement. Learning the facts about tone placement and resonance make a huge difference in the abilities of a singer. In simple terms, a singer has numerous body cavities (nasal cavity, chest cavity, etc.) and amplifiers (bones, ligaments, etc.) that act as resonators. Focusing the vocal tone through the proper resonating chamber with the proper support is important with regard to controlling and developing your personal sound.

U = Unique Voice Under Construction. Remember that your voice has its own unique fingerprint and is constantly changing with our actions, environment, health habits, etc. With this in mind, listen to your own voice often and use vocal training tools to keep your voice on the right track.

V = Vibrato. Vibrato is a natural or forced fluctuation of a singing tone. Do not concentrate on learning how to sing with vibrato. Instead, concentrate on the basic foundations of singing, breathing and support. When the proper coordination is achieved, vibrato will occur naturally.

W = Water. Water. Water. Drink room temperature water as often as you can to keep your voice organ hydrated. If you only have cold or hot water available, swish it around in your mouth for a moment. This action will keep your voice organ from being startled or stressed by different temperatures.

Y = You Can Sing with Impact! Exercise your voice daily with contemporary voice lesson products. Don't Just Sing when You Can Sing with Impact!

Z = Zzzzzzzz. Be sure to get your rest. If you are tired, your voice will show it. A tired body/instrument will not allow you to produce your best possible sound.

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