

SUCH A VOICE

Vocal Exercises

Just as body conditioning and warm-ups are important to athletes, voice conditioning through vocal exercises can improve strength, endurance, range and flexibility of the voice.

Breathing Exercises - Air forced out of the lungs provides the power for voice production. This is referred to as "breath support." Developing proper breath support is important for a voice-over artist. Exercises can help improve breath support.

Exercise #1:

1. Inhale with a silent breath through the nose.
2. Exhale on an "s", as in "Sam", until you run out of air.
3. Inhale fully.

Exercise #2:

1. Inhale with a silent breath through the nose.
2. Exhale on a lip trill, where lips are closed tight and air is blown out, creating a "rolled B" with your lips as if making the sound of a motor; if a "rolled B" lip trill is difficult, exhale on an "f".
3. Inhale fully.

Vocalizing Exercises - Vocalizing exercises help relax the throat muscles and vocal folds for optimal vocal fold vibration. They are designed to improve sound by improving vocal range and flexibility of voice.

Exercise #1

1. Begin with a silent breath through the nose.
2. On a comfortable pitch, hum on an "m", as in "mom", or on an "ng", as in "sing".
3. Slide to higher and lower pitches while humming, sounding like a siren.

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YOU'RE ON THE AIR

Exercise #2:

1. Begin with a silent breath through the nose.
2. Do a "lip trill" (or make a constant "f" sound) by placing the lips together and forcing air through them to make them vibrate.
4. Add a comfortable pitch to the trill (or change "f" to "v").
4. Slide to higher and lower pitches while lip-trilling (or singing "v").
5. Produce the lip trill (or "f").
6. Produce ascending and descending scales using the hum siren and lip trill.

Exercises #3:

1. Begin (once again) with a silent breath through the nose.
2. Repeat a consonant followed by each vowel sound as you exhale.
3. Repeat, exhaling with the next consonant sound, for example: Bay, Bee, Bah, Boe, Boo; Cay, Key, Cah, Coe, Coo; Day, Dee, Dah, Doe, Do, etc.

VO Warm-ups

Whenever you begin doing voice-over work, whether it's at home or at a recording studio, you want to be properly warmed up and relaxed in order to be able to deliver your "true voice". Consider these exercises as some quick "pre-game" warm-ups and stretches before a VO session.

A Big Yawn & A Big Sigh- Inhaling with a big yawn, stretch the muscles of your face and mouth as you tighten your shoulders and arms. Slowly exhale, relaxing your face, shoulders and arms, and vocalize a low-pitch sigh.

Shaking It Out - This exercise helps to get the blood flowing, relieve tension in the body, relax muscles and release inhibitions. It is often used by dancers and actors before going

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on stage. Start by standing still with your arms by your sides. Start shaking your hands. Gradually let the shaking move up your arms and to your shoulders. Let the shaking work down your body like a wet dog.

Head Rolls - With an erect posture, tip your head to your chest. Slowly rotate your head toward your left shoulder, your back and your right shoulder. Continue to roll your head a few times. This exercise helps relax the upper body. (If you experience any pain while doing this exercise, stop immediately and consult a doctor.)

Stretching the Mouth and Tongue - Open your mouth as wide as you can and then scrunch it up as small as you can. Stick your tongue out and roll it around toward your nose, chin and ears. (You might want to do this one when you are alone!)

Tongue Twisters - Run through a few tongue twisters to fine-tune pronunciation and enunciation. Here are a few to start with:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper
picked?

The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the
throne throughout Thursday.

There was a fisherman named Fisher
who fished for some fish in a fissure.
Till a fish with a grin,
pulled the fisherman in.
Now they're fishing the fissure for Fisher.

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Useful Websites

Associations & Organizations

www.aaaa.org - American Association of Advertising Agencies -- Find the Ad Agencies in your area here.

www.aftra.org - American Federation of Television & Recording Artists

www.agentassociation.com - Association of Talent Agencies -- A source to find agents who handle VO talent.

www.rfbd.org - Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic -- This site will lead you to local volunteer opportunities to read aloud and record. It is a great way to get solid practice and experience while doing some good!

www.sag.org - Screen Actors Guild

Production Offices, Guides and Other Leads

www.casting-call.us -- "The largest free on-line database" for casting calls in all categories including, most importantly, non-union VO talent.

www.craigslist.com -- A free resource for job postings in cities across the country and around the world.

www.filmcommissionhq.com -- Contact information for over 1,000 regional media support offices and other scoops on the industry.

www.mandy.com - International Film & TV Production Resource -- Tons of production scoops and a casting section for VO talent.

www.newenglandfilm.org - A great example of the many local, production resources, including a classifieds section.

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www.nypg.com - The New York Production Guide -- A good example of a regional production guide. Most state film boards will also include a production guide for that state.

www.productionhub.com - "The Production Search Engine" -- A good resource for all types of production related topics. Includes a classified and casting call section.

www.voicebank.net -- Good listings of union and non-union talent agencies, production companies, casting directors, etc.

The following websites are some of the many emerging sites that offer paid listings for VO talent:

www.voice123.com (Remember, you are getting a free trial subscription here as part of your program.)

www.voices.com

www.voicehunter.com

www.mktmania.com - "Voice Over Central"

www.opuzzvoice.com

General Interest

www.redbirdstudio.com/AWOL/acting2.html - Acting Workshop On-Line, "The place for beginning actors and actresses to learn about acting and the acting business."

http://jove.prohosting.com/jez/ - An Actor's Resource for Basic Technique

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html - The Tongue-Twister Database

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www.backstage.com - "The Actor's Resource"