

How to Warm-Up Your Voice

Why Warm-Up

Speaking or singing is a full body experience. To do either requires that you warm-up your physical body as well as your voice so you can maximize your power and confidence. The following techniques are quick and simple to give your voice the warm-up boost it needs.

Body

Stretch the body in all directions, especially side to side along the ribcage so your lungs have more capacity to expand.

Punch and kick the air in all directions. Be erratic. Make it fun. This energizes the body and helps increase your vocal volume.

Perform a few cross crawls ie lift your right leg and touch it with your left hand, then lift your left leg and touch it with your right hand. Any combination of connecting your left side with your right side works. This helps to integrate your left and right brain and helps you focus your mind.

Grounding

This is a simple yet effective tool to help you project more powerfully and feel more comfortable in your body. It may seem a little odd at first, but try it out. It will make a big difference for you.

Begin by imagining your centre of gravity as an energy ball located somewhere along the middle line of your body. Now practice moving it up and down, like an elevator going to the top floor (near your head) to the basement (near your pelvis).

Now move your energy to a place low in your belly, into your pelvic core. This is your

power centre. Practice making this your regular way of being every day and you will notice greater confidence in yourself while others will pay more attention to what you say.

Posture

Good posture allows your sound to be free and prevents it from being cut off and breaking mid-sentence.

Place your feet hip distance apart.

Keep your knees soft not locked. (Test the difference this makes by first breathing with your knees locked then breathing with soft knees. What do you notice?)

Activate the quad muscles in your thighs by standing on your right leg with your knee slightly flexed. Use the toe of your left foot for balance. Hold this pose for a minute or so until you feel your leg start to wobble. Stand on two feet and notice the difference between the two legs. Most people report that the right leg feels more alive, warm, and their foot feels more rooted into the floor. Repeat for the left leg to balance your body.

Tuck your buttocks under slightly by clenching the muscles. Test this out by first untucking your muscles and singing or speaking a simple phrase a couple times. Then butt tuck and repeat. Most people notice feeling more powerful and having a richer sound to their voice.

Keep your spine straight and balanced like a stack of coins on the table. It takes no extra effort to support to the coins. If the coins are balanced, gravity keeps them in place. The same applies to your spine. It's perfectly balanced when straight and aligned. Now

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imagine a fine thread connected to the top of your head, lifting your spine up to the sky, stretching and expanding your vertebrae so you feel taller.

Practice walking with your hips leading your body instead of your nose or head. Many of us have the habit of walking with our nose leading our head which leads our body.

We're out of balance that way and project insecurity not confidence. Notice the confidence and peace of mind that inhabits you when you walk with your hips leading.

Roll your shoulders back and down, as though they were slightly weighted. This will lift your chest and help free your sound.

Keep your chin parallel to floor and your head directly over your spine for balance. Remember your head is like a 10-pound bowling ball balancing on a pool cue. If the ball is not balanced, your back muscles have to work to counterbalance that weight. When your head is balanced on your spine, your muscles don't have to work as hard and you can relax.

Have someone check your posture for you. Aim to have a straight line from your ears, to the middle of your shoulder, to your hip, knees to ankles. It may feel unfamiliar to stand this way, however you will feel more balanced.

Power

You already have lots of power in your body. The key is to wake it up and access it. When you engage the power of your body, your confidence increases. These activities will help you access the resources you already have.

Connect with your natural power by grunting from low in your belly. Sound like a sumo wrestler: Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

Aim to lift your sound from your pelvic floor, the core of your body. Your pelvic floor acts as the foundation for supporting your sound. Think of it like a swimming pool wall. When you come up to the wall, and turn around, you can use the wall to push off and glide, giving you momentum in the water. But what if the wall moved when you pushed against it with your feet? You would remain stationary and your momentum would be lost.

Practice keeping your energy low and your pelvic core engaged with these additional exercises.

Say each of these sounds with force noticing the way your belly works:

“ssh sshh sshh” (hold the sound for a second or two)

“ffuh ffuh ffuh” (with lips pursed)

“kuh! kuh! kuh!” (sharply)

“suh suh suh” (contracts higher in the diaphragm)

“zuh zuh zuh” (contracts lower in the abdomen)

Doing lip trills (sounds like a motor boat) or tongue trills (sounds like a cat purr) will also wake up and engage your power.

For more ideas on how to be more confident and powerful when you speak, contact Patty to arrange your personalized and private voice coaching session. (403) 229-9321

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