

VOCAL EXERCISES

by Lindsay Price

Vocal warm up exercises are not just tongue twisters and funny noises; they strengthen this most important muscle. Use these exercises in your next warm up!



The voice is a powerful acting tool. But the power is lost if an actor mumbles their lines, can't be heard, or speaks in a monotone.

Breathing Exercises

When you control the breath, you control the voice.

- ❖ Inhale through the nose on a six count; exhale slowly with a closed mouth. Repeat four times.
- ❖ Inhale through the nose on a six count; exhale slowly with an open mouth. Repeat four times.
- ❖ Inhale through the nose on a six count; exhale slowly on a hum. Repeat four times.
- ❖ Inhale through the nose on a six count; exhale slowly on a hum into "Ahhhhhh." Repeat four times.

Progressive Breathing

Great for calming nerves. Focus only on the slow inhale and exhale.

- ❖ Inhale on a two count. Exhale on a two count.
- ❖ Repeat on a four count, then six count, then eight count, then ten count.

Relaxing the Jaw

A tight jaw works against you.

- ❖ Make as wide a face as possible (wide open mouth, wide eyes). Then scrunch as tightly as possible. Alternate four times.
- ❖ Yawn on a descending scale.
- ❖ Chew imaginary bubblegum.
- ❖ Yawn on a descending scale.
- ❖ Chew thick peanut butter.
- ❖ Yawn on a descending scale.
- ❖ Chew stale toffee.
- ❖ Stick the tongue all the way out, the tip pointing down.
- ❖ Stick the tongue all the way out, the tip pointing up.
- ❖ Stick the tongue all the way out, the tip pointing to the left.
- ❖ Stick the tongue all the way out, the tip pointing to the right.
- ❖ Make as big a circle as possible with the tongue.

Adding Sound

- ❖ Buzz the lips.
- ❖ Choose a song everyone knows and hum the melody through buzzed lips.

Continued Over...



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The Fine Print

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- ❖ Sing several times up and down the scale.
- ❖ Do it smoothly with each note blending into the other.
- ❖ Do it staccato with each note clearly separated.
- ❖ Work the vowels. Say the sounds quickly from left to right. Keep good tone and make sure each sound is different. Repeat 4 times.

MOO MOH MAW MAH MAY MEE
 BOO BOH BAW BAH BAY BEE
 TOO TOH TAW TAH TAY TEE
 DOO DOH DAW DAH DAY DEE
 NOO NOH NAW NAH NAY NEE

- ❖ Repeat these six times. Keep the sound short.

HA HA HA HEE
 KA KA KA KEE
 GA GA GA GEE
 YA YA YA YEE
 RA RA RA REE
 PA PA PA PEE
 TA TA TA TEE
 WA WA WA WEE
 ZA ZA ZA ZEE

Tongue Twisters

Say these ten times as quickly as possible.

Toy boat

An annoying noise annoys an oyster

The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick

Six thick thistle sticks

What gall to play ball in this small hall

A hotch-potch, moss-blotched, botched scotch block

Around the rough and rugged rock the ragged rascal ran

Sing Rounds

Not only do rounds warm up the voice, they also stimulate focus and concentration.

Vocal Drama Games

Combine vocal exercises with drama exercises.

» *Emotional Orchestra*

Divide into small groups. Each group is a section of an orchestra and represents a certain emotion. Each section will come up with a series of sounds to show the emotion. Everyone comes together and the orchestra is conducted. Focus on making the sounds clear and distinct so that it doesn't become a wall of noise.

» *Pitch/Volume/Tempo*

Using **ROW ROW ROW YOUR BOAT**, speak high/low, loud/soft, fast/slow. Change between each line.

» *Sounds like*

Using 'peas and carrots' as your dialogue, speak like a Queen, a monster, a witch, an old man, a comedian, your teacher, a doctor.

» *Tone*

Sound as gesture: Using the alphabet as dialogue, 'do' the following things with the voice:

bite

overturn a chair

push a piece of furniture across the floor

blow a feather

a pair of scissors

chop wood

sweep the floor

sneak up on someone

In pairs, have a conversation only using these sounds. What are we able to understand, just with sound?

Gibberish Commands

Done in pairs. The first person gives a command to the second person in gibberish. The second person has to figure out what the first person wants. 🎲