

Mastering the Mix - Breathing

Correct posture when singing or breathing

As simple as this sounds, posture is an incredibly important component to breathing while singing, especially if you've been having problems with losing your breath in the middle of a phrase.

Stand with tall Posture with 5 easy steps:

1. Stand in front of a full length mirror and turn so you can see the full length of your body from the side.
2. Now, stand so that your head is even above your shoulders, not jutting forward or pulled back



3. Then make sure that your shoulders are comfortably positioned at your sides.

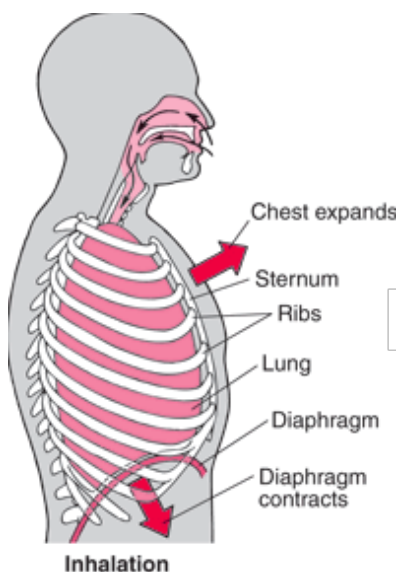


4. Using your shoulders as a guide, ensure your hips are evenly spaced and in line with your shoulders.

5. Finally, using your hips and shoulders as a guide, stand so that your feet are evenly spaced and in line with your hips.

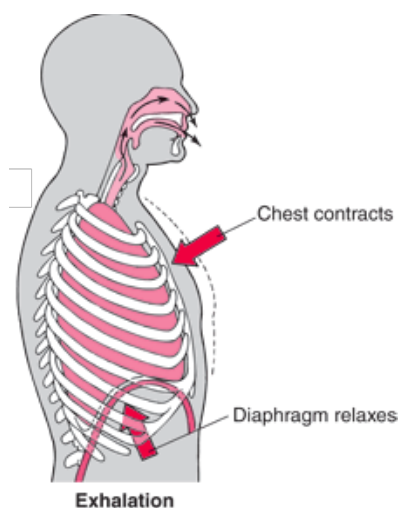
This is what happens when you breathe:

1. When you inhale, the diaphragm contracts from it's normal upside-down bowl shape into an almost flat muscle.



2. Since the diaphragm is connected to the lungs, it naturally pulls the lungs open as it contracts.

3. Nature hates a vacuum, so with the lungs open, air rushes in and we get the feeling of breathing in.



4. When you breathe out, the diaphragm relaxes, returning to a bowl shape and the lungs resume their normal shape which pushes air out:

Now that you know how we breathe from the diaphragm, let's talk about the end goal of breathing from the diaphragm.

The Goal...

For every vocal technique, there's a new way to learn to breathe for singing.

But here's something almost everyone agrees on:

The diaphragmatic breath is the most efficient one for singing.

That means the real goal is this:

Singing from the diaphragm means that you're breathing by moving the diaphragm, rather than involving the chest, shoulders or hips.

Sing from the Diaphragm in 5 Easy Steps

Now that you understand how the diaphragm is supposed to work when we breathe, here's how you use it in your singing.

1. Stand in front of a full length mirror and turn so you can see the full length of your body from the side.
2. Make sure that you're standing with tall posture like we discussed in the last section.
3. Place both of your hands around the bottom of your belly (like if you were pregnant and you were feeling the baby in your stomach).
4. With your hands in this position, breathe in so that your belly moves outward.



We want the belly to extend and push the hands out as you inhale.

Try to do this without raising your shoulders or chest. The idea is to keep all the movement in your body isolated to your stomach extending outwards.



5. Now, breathe out and allow your stomach to come back in. Your hands should follow your tummy as you breathe out.

That's it!

As you practice moving your breath to the much stronger diaphragmatic breathing, you'll see that you're able to take much larger breaths with a lot less effort.

What to Watch Out For:

If you get lost, repeat the steps again.

But above all else, make sure to avoid these three things:

1. Your shoulders and chest should NOT move as you inhale
2. Your arms should also be relaxed
3. Make sure that your stomach is expanding or moving out on the inhale, and contracting on the exhale.

Remember:

Moving from a basic level to an intermediate level of singing takes about six months to a year of consistent practice. As with other sports, the consistent repetition develops muscle memory. Basketball players execute drills every practice. They run laps to build stamina and practice all kinds of coordination drills.

Your singing practice session needs to include drills and exercises to develop your skill and coordination. Most beginners can expect about 50 percent of their technique to stay with them under pressure. You want to work on your technique until it's solid so that your percentage of skill under pressure reaches a higher level. Intermediate-level singers may achieve about 75 percent of their potential during a performance.

It's okay if you're really confused right now or feel short of breath. Feeling short of breath when you begin working through these exercises is normal. Be really patient, and you'll begin breathing efficiently. It takes a while to create a new habit in your body, and breathing for singing is definitely new. Your inhalation was perfect when you were a baby. If you watch an infant breathe, they know exactly what to do. As you age and your life becomes more complicated, stress affects your body. You start to carry unnecessary tension in various parts of your body, which can prevent you from breathing correctly. Your body gets stressed out.