

SING

T H E C O U R S E

Connect to Your Breath

You need to be able to breathe with ease from your diaphragm to be able to support a strong voice and maintain a relaxed body.

Diaphragmatic Breathing involves expanding your belly during the inhale and contracting or zipping up your belly upon the exhale.

The diaphragm is the most efficient muscle for breathing. It's a large, dome shaped muscle located at the base of the lungs. Your abdominal muscles, with your upper costal and lower costal muscles are used to move the diaphragm and give you more power to empty your lungs. This allows your chest and neck muscles to remain relaxed in an open and unrestricted sound while singing and speaking.

Diaphragmatic Breathing has been scientifically proven to provide health benefits such as; reducing blood pressure, provides cognitive abilities including memory and helps you relax and rejuvenate.

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Lay down on your back with your knees bent to protect your back. Relax your shoulders back; and keep your upper body relaxed, melting into the ground. Feel your lower back melt into the ground, while engaging your core stomach muscles. Take a long slow breath and expand your lower costal and upper costal muscles, allowing your belly to expand. This lowers and relaxes the diaphragm. Now, exhale slowly and completely, allowing the belly to drop and pull your costal muscles back and up. Like zipping up a pair of tight jeans. Engage your core from front to back.

Repeat this slowly with one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Be aware of your breathing, checking to ensure your chest rises and falls. Your chest and shoulders should remain completely relaxed and not move up and down. All the work is done with your core and abdominal muscles.

Start with inhaling and exhaling in and out through your nose to enable a relaxed state. After about two to three minutes of nose breathing, switch to inhaling through the nose, and exhaling through the mouth. Add a slight and gentle lip trill on your exhale.

You can now pick up your rhythm by inhaling fully and quickly through your nose, with a slow lip trill out, exhaling fully.

Practice this for about 2 minutes.

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Next, change your breathing to an inhale and exhale through your mouth, allowing for a faster pace. Remember, when singing and speaking you have different lengths of phrasing, so you need to practice getting a full exhale every time. This will ensure the inhale is natural, allowing gravity to pull into the lungs without force or exertion.

Now sit up and do the same breathing deep into your belly with the inhale down and back, like a “J” while zipping up your core. This is great exercise for my musicians that are sitting with their instrument such as piano and guitar players that sit. Feel your pelvic floor expand into the ground with your inhale.

This is very important connecting your breath to the floor or seat. It gives you a solid place of grounding, centering and strength while supporting your core to sit up straight.

Inhale and exhale through your nose for two minutes.

Then, inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth for two minutes.

Lastly, inhale through your mouth and nose quickly for two minutes.

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Now stand up and continue this same breathing exercise, with one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest.

Be very aware if you start to chest or doctor breathe by expanding your chest and shoulders. If this happens, exhale all your air, relax and start over slowly with your nose breathing to ensure that your inhale is “going into your belly”, even though we know it’s not... Imagine air going deep into your core vs. into your chest.

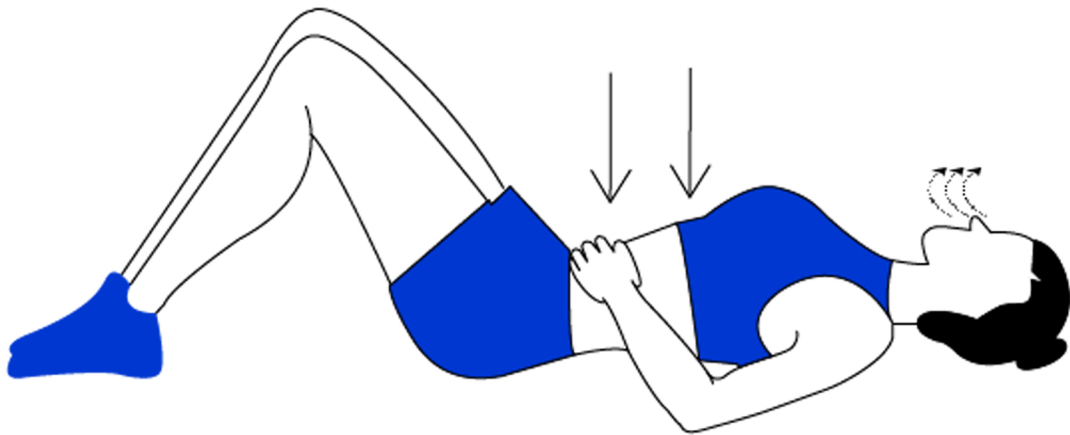
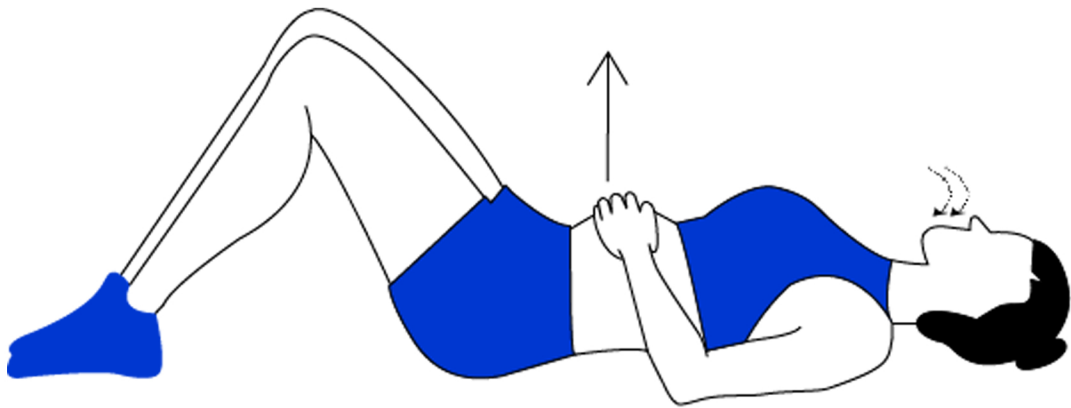
With this next exercise, connecting to your breath before warming up your vocals will relax your body. It will also ground you and allow you to bring a strong, supported sound to your singing and speaking.

CAROL FRAZIER

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DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING



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