

SING

T H E C O U R S E

SING with a Microphone

You have two choices: to sing with a microphone or to not sing with a microphone. Most professional singers sing with one, unless they're on Broadway or singing Opera.

A microphone should be an extension of your arm and your voice, providing amplification of the natural richness, pitch accuracy and vocal technique you're using.

However, you still need to know *HOW* to use a microphone correctly.

Get Comfortable with Your Microphone:

Many new singers are uncomfortable and nervous with a microphone for the first time. This is why you should practice at home, or at least ask for a rehearsal if time allows. If you feel uncomfortable and nervous, it will show in your performance. I often have my singers stand and sing with a prop, such as a hairbrush, that can substitute for a microphone.

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Make sure you sing directly into the microphone. The mic needs to be almost touching your lips at all times, even when you turn your head, the mic needs to follow. Most microphones have a radius around them that will detect noise, it's important to hit this radius with every note you sing. Sing with the microphone too far away from your mouth and you won't allow the tones, dynamics & power of your vocals to be fully captured.

Sing into the microphone the way you would naturally sing. Many times, singers have a song perfected and when they pick up the mic they get quieter. This is because they aren't used to hearing their voice amplified. Sing the song just like when you practice without one.

Most microphones are hooked to a sound engineer, who will set the levels and make you sound great. If you're on stage, you might also have in ear or stage monitors directed at you, so you can hear your voice. Unfortunately, this sound sent back to you can be muffled with other players in the band or distorted. You need to learn to sing like you practice, so you don't get tripped up by the monitor mix. It really comes down to knowing how the song feels in your body, so you don't need to heavily rely on the monitor to let you know how you sound.

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AVOID Feedback

Feedback is that awful sound the microphone gives out and causes everyone to wince. One of the most common ways for a microphone to affect your performance is with feedback from the speakers or monitors. Take time to check where they're situated on the stage & simply avoid getting too close. And do not point your microphone at them.

Avoid Distortion

Distortion occurs for a couple of reasons, one of them being a singer holding the microphone too close or too far from their mouth. The distance from your mouth to the microphone is essential as it can make your vocals sound muffled and distant. The other reason a singer might notice distortion is when the volume is too high on their microphone. Keep the volume low enough to allow yourself to project.

Belting Notes

When you sing a high, loud or belting note, you need to pull the microphone away from your face. But it needs to be done with planned timing so that when you pull it away, you're still giving the note its full impact. Avoid pulling the mic away too quickly. Timing is critical in this technique and you'll need to bring it back for the next phrase. Once again, practice this with your hairbrush!

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Breath Control

The microphone is going to pick up your breathing, so you need to have good breath control. You don't want to suck in a breath, through either your nose or your mouth and have your audience hear it. This becomes critical when you're in the recording studio. Professional recording studio mics are extra sensitive to the smallest inflections and breaths.

Practice Makes Perfect

There are several different types of microphones on the market. You will want to go to a nearby music store and practice singing with them. This will help you hear yourself and determine if you like the way it makes you sound. I highly recommend you take a friend along, so they can give you honest feedback.

CAROL FRAZIER