

Vocalize!

**45 Accompanied Vocal Warm-Ups
that Teach Technique**

Composed and Arranged by Andy Beck



Come Now, Let Our Voices Ring

For many singers, the healthiest part of the voice is in the middle range. This exercise begins in that “sweet spot” (for most) and gently descends. Be cautious not to add extra weight as the notes go down, but rather float like a feather to the lower pitches.

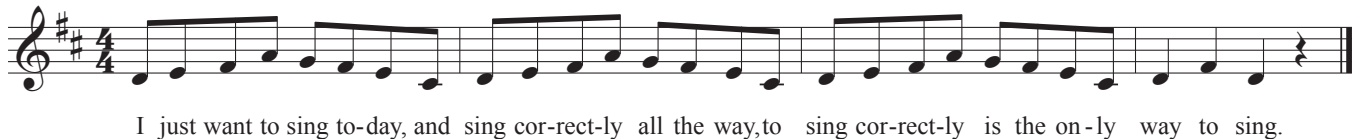
Optional: Sing only the vowel sounds of each word, drawing attention to mouth shape and space.



I Just Want to Sing

This simple exercise is a great way to capture the attention of singers at the start of rehearsal. It serves as a cue to “sing correctly” every time. Be mindful of everything you know about good vocal technique, and apply it throughout.

Optional: Try to perform the four-bar phrase in one breath.



Sing a Joyful Song

Without forcing the jaw or tongue, allow the mouth to be open both inside and out on words like “song,” “long,” “joy,” and “fa la la.” Avoid closing on consonants such as “ng” and “l.”

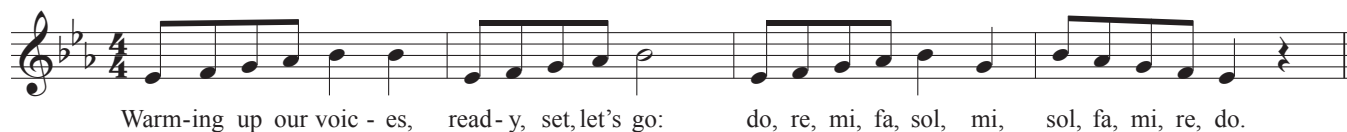
Optional: Massage the sides of your face and the muscles where the lower jaw attaches in back. Loosen everything up as you vocalize.



Warming Up Our Voices

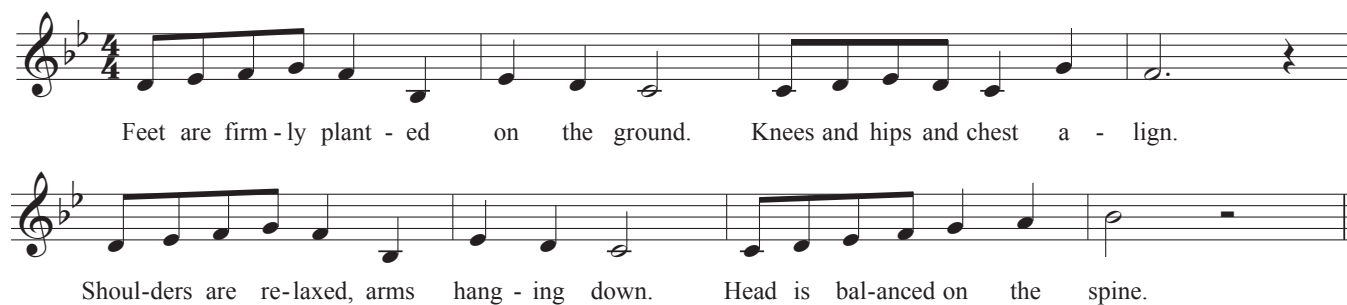
Sing four-bar phrases, breathing only at rests. Add Curwen hand signs when singing solfège syllables.
(See page 20.)

Alternate Lyrics: Now rehearsal's starting, ready for some fun: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.



Feet Are Firmly Planted

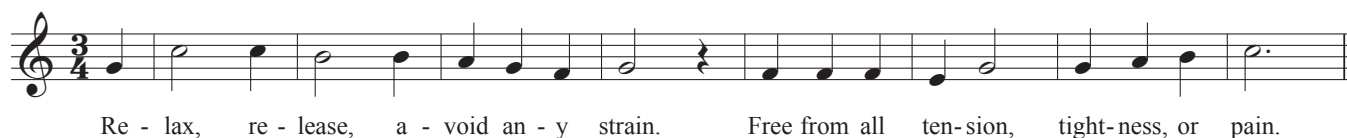
Good standing posture is absolutely essential for good singing. Follow the lyrics closely as instructions for proper alignment. Check yourself as each body part is mentioned, relaxing into position and avoiding tension.



Relax, Release

The popular gym workout phrase, “no pain, no gain,” has absolutely no truth for singers! Never allow strain or tightness in the body or throat. Instead, strive for comfort from head to toe.

Optional: Perform this exercise while swaying gently from side to side. Release your legs, knees, arms, elbows, shoulders, neck, and head.



Roll Your Shoulders

One of the first places that we hold physical tension is in our shoulders. Move slowly and with purpose while singing this exercise, circling the shoulders in each direction, releasing any tightness.

Roll your shoul - ders high and low, back and forth, and to and fro.

Roll your shoul - ders all a - round, then re - lease them back and down.

Though the Notes May Rise

Raising and lowering the chin while singing places unwanted pressure and strain on the neck and throat. So, it is important to maintain a level and balanced head throughout your full vocal range.

Optional: Balance a choir folder or book on your head while singing this exercise.

Though the notes may rise, and the notes may

fall, hold the chin lev - el with the head up tall.

Drop Your Jaw

Follow the lyrics closely and do as they say, creating vertical space inside the mouth and rounded lips. Be careful not to force the jaw or lips into position, but rather allow them to float easily from one shape to the next.

Drop your jaw, let it fall, shape your vow - els round.

O - pen mouth north and south for a fin - er sound.

My, Oh Me, Oh My

As written, this exercise presents mostly open vowels connected by the letter “m,” which helps to bring the voice forward. Feel free to change the consonants or vowels based on specific goals.

Suggestions: “Why, oh we, oh why” will add the roundness of “oo” at each “w.” A rolled “Rye, oh Rio, rye” will relax the tongue. “Fye, oh fee, oh fye” insures that breath is flowing at the onset of tone.



Nee, Neh, Nah, Noh, Noo

Sing with pure vowels while connecting each and every note to create a legato line. Allow the jaw to float easily into each new position, using relaxed lips to form round sounds.

Optional: The letter “n” helps to develop resonance, but the director may choose to call out other initial consonants (voiced or unvoiced) during each key change.



With a Joyful Tone

Keep the attitude of this exercise joyful and light while maintaining a quality sound. Even though the music is bright, strive for warm vowels by visualizing tall oval shapes at the core of every word.

Optional: Experiment with different volumes. No matter what the dynamic range, the integrity of vowels should be consistent.



Breath Support

Prior to singing, take a deep breath, allowing the abdomen and diaphragm to fully expand while the chest and shoulders remain relaxed. Support your voice by connecting to a controlled, firm exhalation. For this exercise, breathe only when you see a rest.

Optional: Place your hand on your abdomen to draw attention to breathing. As you sing, push lightly with that hand, creating a comfortable amount of resistance.

Breath sup - port, _____ it's all a - bout breath sup - port, _____ here we go.

Breath sup - port, _____ it's all a - bout breath sup - port, _____ let - ting it flow.

Flying, Sighing

Be sure to inhale completely on each rest, allowing the voice to ride firmly on the breath as you sing. Be aware that changing from one note to the next is best achieved when facilitated by the breath.

Optional: Experiment with sliding from pitch to pitch. This may help to create a true legato line supported by the breath.

Fly - ing, on the breath we ride. Sigh - ing, o - pen in - side.

Resist Caving In

As you inhale and fill with air, the front, sides, and back of the torso should fully expand. When you sing, carefully “budget” and “spend” the air—avoid deflating too quickly.

Special Challenge: Do not breathe after the word “phrase.”

Re - sist cav - ing in, to sing a long - er phrase. Re -

sist cav - ing in, one breath can last for days.

Take Time to Breathe

Inhalation should never occur through a constricted throat. Many times, the need to rush a breath creates an unwanted “gasp” for air. Try to allow ample time in your phrasing to refresh the air supply with ease.

Optional: Place one thumb under your chin near the throat to monitor the inhalation. Keep a relaxed throat as you breathe.

Take time to breathe, take time to breathe.

In - hale com - plete - ly, take time to breathe.

Don't Want to Be Throaty

There are many words used to describe vocal tone, both positive and negative. Some good ones include: warm, rich, and round. Some unflattering ones are: strident, forced, or nasal. This exercise mentions a few ideas to work toward, and others to avoid. Ultimately, singers should strive to develop a free and natural sound, one that is uniquely their own.

Don't want to be throat - y or stuck in the nose. Don't want to be

stri - dent or weak, I sup - pose. I want to sound love - ly, with beau - ti - ful

tone, fo - cused, with free - dom, u - nique - ly my own.

Just One Voice

Unify the registers of your voice with consistent support throughout the range. Avoid over-singing or under-supporting on any notes. A legato line and light approach may help to cover “breaks.”

Just one voice from high to low, do do ti sol la ti do.

Never Louder Than Lovely

Even at your fullest volume, never force the voice. Beauty is so much more important than volume. The lyrics of this exercise provide fundamental rules for singing at any dynamic level.

Nev - er loud - er than love - ly. _____ Nev - er strong - er than sweet. _____

Nev - er more vol - ume than beau - ty. _____ Sing - ing like this is a treat.

Project

For many developing singers, there is a fine line between a healthy projected tone and shouted over-singing. Visualize a point on the far wall of the rehearsal room. With firm breath support and an open resonating space in the mouth and throat, be sure that your voice carries to that point.

Pro - ject, pro - ject, you have to sing it out. Re - spect, re -

spect, be care - ful not to shout. Use a well - sup - port - ed tone, and you'll

find your voice has grown. Pro - ject, re - spect, pro - ject.

Consonants Are Planned

Place the final consonant crisply on the cutoff of each phrase.

Optional: Hold the palm of your hand in front of your mouth as you sing. Feel a light burst of air as each consonant is pronounced.

Ev-ry phrase we sing should be com-plete with a fi-nal cut-off that is neat. Each and

ev - 'ry con-so-nant is planned, so the au-di-ence can un-der-stand.

The Lips, the Tongue, the Tip of the Teeth

The title of this exercise reminds us that good diction is achieved by using these critical parts of the mouth. Enunciate clearly as you sing.

The lips, the tongue, the tip of the teeth, care-ful-ly sing-ing each word. E -

nun - ci - ate, e - nun - ci - ate, so that the lyr - ics are heard.

Seashells

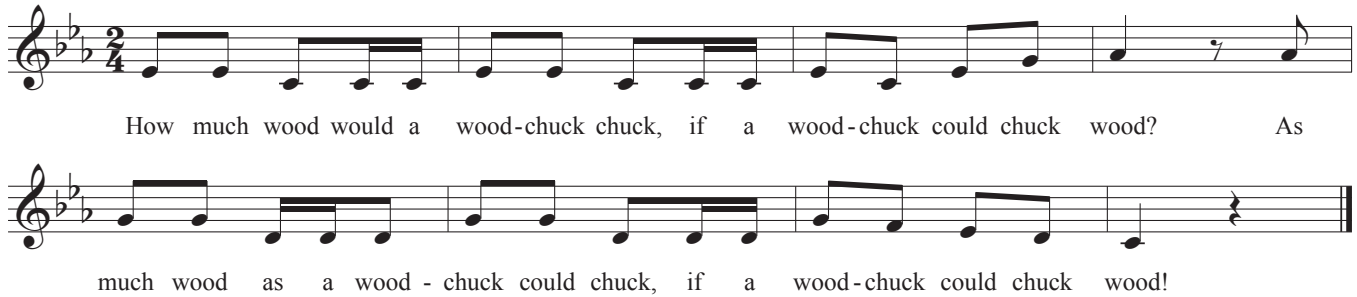
Sibilant consonants (those that create a hissing sound with the tongue on the roof of the mouth) can be problematic if overdone. Treat every "s" with care, extending the vowel of each syllable to its fullest length, avoiding a "leaky tire" effect.

She sells sea-shells down by the sea-shore. I'm sure she sells sea-shore shells.

Woodchuck

This favorite childhood tongue twister makes an excellent diction workout for singers. Strive to make every word understood, even at this fast tempo.

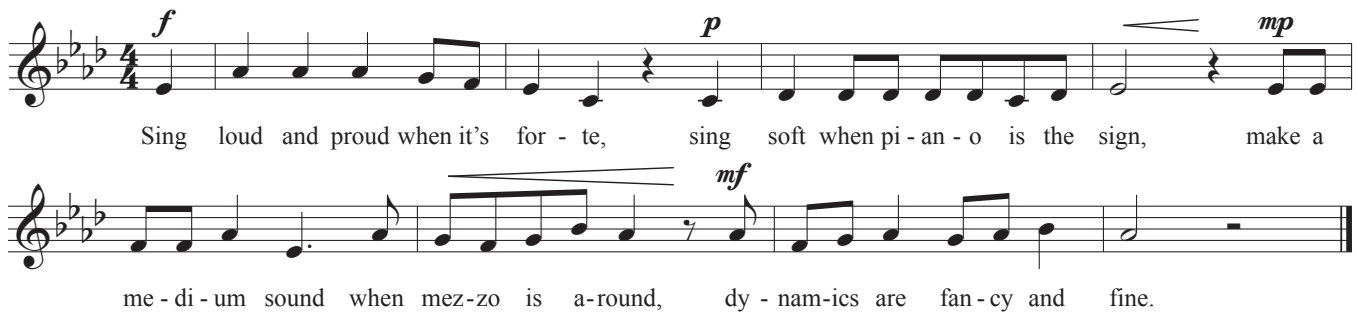
For Fun: Make it a brainteaser! Rest every time you have the word “wood.” Now, rest every time you have the word “chuck.” Or “could.” Or “much,” and so on!



How much wood would a wood-chuck chuck, if a wood-chuck could chuck wood? As
much wood as a wood - chuck could chuck, if a wood-chuck could chuck wood!

Dynamics Are Fancy and Fine

Observe the dynamic markings. Contrast is the key, but be careful not to over-sing when loud or under-support when soft. Perform with your very best tone quality, no matter what the dynamics are.



Sing loud and proud when it's for - te, sing soft when pi - an - o is the sign, make a
me - di - um sound when mez - zo is a - round, dy - nam - ics are fan - cy and fine.

Sing Legato, Sing Staccato

Practice a smoothly connected legato, versus a sharply detached staccato. Demonstrate the contrasting articulation with gestures: painting a smooth arc with your hand for legato, and tapping an index finger into the opposite palm for staccato.



Sing le - ga - to, fa la la la la. Sing stac - ca - to, ha ha ha ha ha.

Sing We Sforzando

Before performing this exercise, try to sustain the highest pitch at your fullest forte, then try it at your softest pianissimo. How quickly can you get from one to the other? Add a controlled crescendo after the initial attack and you're ready to go!

Note: Sforzando may be abbreviated *sf* or *sfz*. When followed immediately by *p*, the correct notation is *sfp*.



We Are Crescendoing

Follow the dynamics closely. Imagine seven numbers on the volume dial of a music player. Each measure you sing is one level louder or softer than the previous measure.

Optional: Count up or down on your fingers as you change dynamics.



A Diphthong Song

A diphthong is defined as “the sound created when two vowels combine in a single syllable.” When singing a diphthong, sustain the first (or “primary”) vowel sound for the majority of the note’s duration, gliding to the secondary vowel only at the very end.

Alternate Lyrics: Light rain, window pane. Outside, clouds divide. Go now, take a bow. Sing a diphthong song.

Night sky, lull - a - by. Day - break, no mis - take.

Snow White, shin - ing bright. Sing a diph - thong song.

Flexibility

Sing lightly with a gentle pulse from your diaphragm on each pitch. Practice this tune with the words “da-ba-da-ba-da” to improve accuracy.

Flex - i - bil - i - ty, sing-ing with pre-cise a - gil - i - ty.

Flex - i - bil - i - ty, what a ver - y fine a - bil - i - ty.

Listen and Blend

Listen carefully as you work to develop an ensemble blend. Match the volume, vowels, tone, and timbre of your voice to the others in the group.

Lis-ten to the sing-ing, lis-ten to the sound. Lis-ten to the beau-ty of mu-sic all a-round.

Lis-ten to each neigh-bor, lis-ten to each friend. Lis-ten to the voic-es and blend.

Syncopation

When a note falls on the offbeat, syncopation is achieved. A subtle accent on each syncopated note will add energy and clarity to the rhythm.

Syn - co - pa - tion! Can you feel the rhy -

- thm? An - tic - i - pa - tion! Can you feel the beat?

Do Is Like a Rock

This exercise describes the shape of the Curwen hand signs used when singing Kodaly's famous solfège syllables. Practice the signs as you sing. (See page 20.)

Optional: When you are confident with the signs, sustain the first note of each measure instead of singing every word.

Do is like a rock. Re is like a ramp. Mi is like a ta - ble. Fa, thumb's down.

Sol is like a wall. La is like a hook. Ti, one fin - ger. Do is like a rock.

Octaves and Sevenths

Larger intervals can be difficult to tune. Be sure to sing in the center of each pitch.

Optional: Selected singers may sustain a low "do" for three measures at the start of each phrase. Others should match these "home tone singers" each time they descend to the same note.

Oc-taves and sev-enths and sixths are my friends, so I'll sing it a - gain.

Oc-taves and sev-enths and sixths are my friends, sing this song to the end.

One, Five, Four, Five

This exercise will develop vocal agility, center of pitch, and an understanding of major scale tones and diatonic intervals. In addition to the numbers provided, consider singing on solfège syllables or note names.



Sing a Half Step

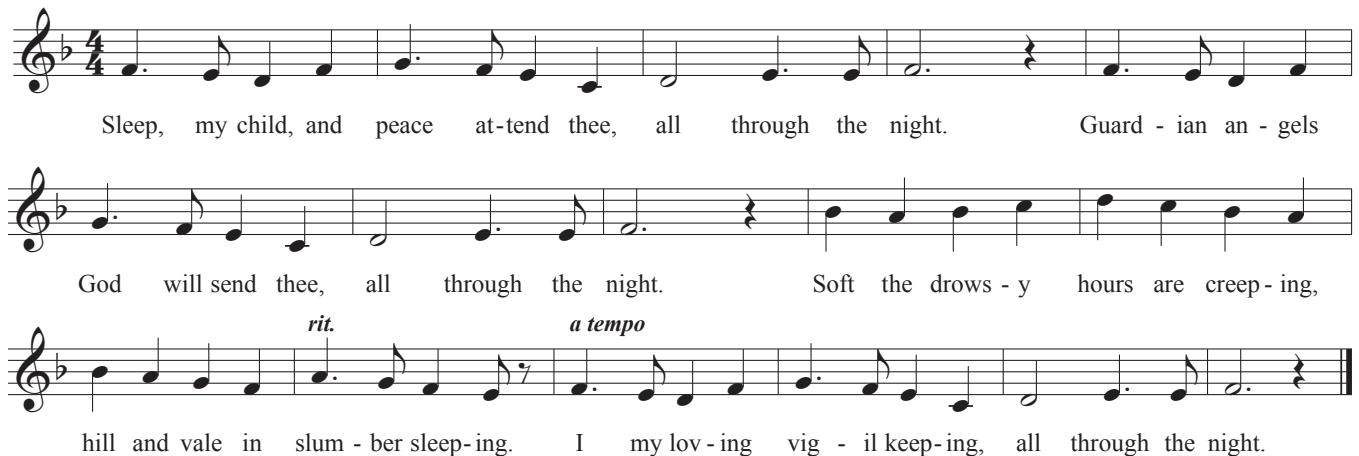
The subtle difference between a half and whole step can have a great impact on successful sight-singing, music learning, and overall tuning. Learn the sound of each interval as you carefully practice.

Note: This melody presents each interval both descending and ascending.



All Through the Night

Sing as softly as possible. This requires a great deal of intensity and support and is much more challenging than singing at full volume.



Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes

Many of the diphthongs in this song occur over two notes. Be sure to sustain the primary vowel sound, extending it even into the second pitch.

Drink to me on - ly with thine eyes, and I will pledge with mine,

or leave a kiss with - in the cup, and I'll not ask for wine.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise, doth ask a drink di - vine;

but might I of Jove's nec - tar sip, I would not change for thine.

Music in the Morning

This song features long phrases with short moments to breathe. Be sure to fill completely, but without tension, at each rest.

Mu-sic in the morn - ing, bring-ing in the day. Mu-sic in the

eve - ning, lull the night a - way. Mel - o - dies at mid - night,

har-mo-nies at dawn. Mu-sic all a - round me, play-ing on and on.

The Turtle Dove

This beautiful melody includes some large intervals and a wide vocal range. Strive for consistency of tone throughout.



Fare you well, my dear, I must be gone, and leave you for a while. If I roam a - way, I will come back a - gain, though I roam ten thou - sand miles, my dear, though I roam ten thou - sand miles.

Hey Ho

In unison, 2-part canon, and 3-part canon. Practice good vocal technique throughout.



Hey ho, no - bod - y home. Meat, nor drink, nor mon - ey have I none. Still I will be ver - y mer - ry. Hey ho, no - bod - y home.

I Can Sing My Part

This exercise is a pep talk to encourage confident part-singing. Two independent lines ensure success, with the biggest challenge coming at the conclusion of each phrase where the harmony is constructed in parallel thirds.

PART I

I can sing my part, I know it by heart. If you sing with me,

PART II

I can sing my part, I know it by heart. We can sing

per - fect har - mo - ny. Your notes are not mine,

per - fect har - mo - ny. Your notes are not

but when they com - bine with the part I sing, *rit.* har - mo - ny will ring.

mine, but when they com - bine with my part, har - mo - ny will ring.

Sing Alleluia, Allelu

Practice each part separately before putting them together. The contrasting rhythms and contrary melodic motion help to create vocal independence.

1st time - PART I only

2nd time - PART II only

3rd time - Both parts

PART I

Sing al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu. Sing al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu.

PART II

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu.

3rd time - rit. to end

Sing al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu. Sing al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Sing al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu.

'Twas on a Silent Winter Night

In unison, 2-part canon, 3-part canon, and 4-part canon. Practice good vocal technique throughout.

'Twas on a si - lent win - ter night, the stars a - glow with ra - diant light, when
from the sky to earth be - low, there came a gen - tle fall - ing snow.

Zing-a Zing-a Zah

This exercise outlines the tonic chord and the first five pitches of a major scale. Though rather simple, it will help to improve intonation, vowels, flexibility, diction, and other vocal skills.

PART I
Zing - a zing - a zah, zing - a zah, zing - a zah, zing - a zing - a zing - a zing - a zah.
PART II
Zing - a zing - a zah, zing - a zah, zing - a zing - a zing - a zing - a zah.

Curwen Hand Signs

