

Sydney Vocal Project - Tips for Better Singing

1. Open your mouth when you're singing! Singers who keep their mouths mostly closed are likely tense in the tongue and are far from achieving maximum quality of tone. I like the two finger rule. If you can fit two fingers between your teeth while singing (especially on open vowels like "ah" and "oh"), then you're good. If not, open your mouth more.
2. Relax the tongue. Many vocal problems involve tension in the tongue. The worst part is most people aren't even aware of it. Look in a mirror while singing. If the tip of your tongue isn't dominantly resting on your bottom front teeth then you've got a 'tight tongue'. Relaxing the tongue more forward in the mouth will help. Practicing with the tongue hanging out can also help relax the tongue.
3. Don't try to take in too much air. If you breathe in too much air, then you create pressure under the folds that can easily hinder your ability to sing freely. It can prevent you from singing high notes and it almost always causes tension in your neck. To fix it, become aware of just how little is involved in regular breathing and try to mimic that sensation when singing, the breath is just taken from a deeper place.
4. Keep the larynx steady. If you don't know what the larynx is, it's where your Adam's apple is (or where it would be ladies). If this area of your neck is raising or lowering while singing, then you're throwing off your whole vocal mechanism leading to many different complications. Rest your hand on your larynx while singing and make sure it stays in a steady position.
5. Lift and relax the back of the mouth. This is equally as important as allowing the front of the mouth to be open, if not more. If the back of the mouth is closed off, then the quality of the sound is shot (and I guarantee you're tense). To get a feel for it, hold the "ng" sound of hung and feel how closed that is. Now say "ah" like you're in a doctor's office... that's more open. Leaving the back of the mouth open like the "ah" sound can help create a beautiful resonance in the voice.
6. Sing with ENERGY. I can't express this enough. Singing is a very physical activity. You must be energised and excited about what you're doing, or else it lacks passion (and it's flat!). Singing with energy helps you hit higher notes and helps keep the sound out of the throat. Allow yourself to get excited before singing, walk around a bit before getting started and realise just how much it helps.
7. Believe what you're singing. I once read a quote that has stuck with me for years. It was something along the lines of, "that which comes closest to expressing the inexpressible is music." Music is a form of expression. It's alive and has a great ability to influence listeners, but that's only true when you believe what you're singing. Try to connect to the song through some personal life experience and see how alive the music you're singing becomes.
8. Get out of your own way. Singing should feel like speaking. There should be no pressing, tension, straining, reaching, or grabbing when vocally active. These sensations usually happen when we try to force the sound out of us. If you're not able to sing something, try to bring it back to speech first.

We hope this helps give you greater confidence to sing better

The SVP Team

