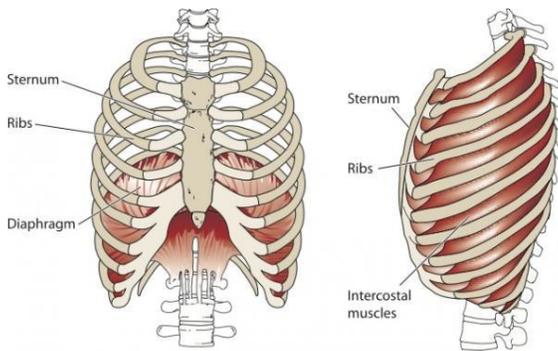


Breathing Basics for Singing

Normal breathing involves a shallow inhalation and an even exhalation followed by a pause before it all starts again. This type of breathing is ineffective for singing. When we sing, we need to inhale very quickly and then use a controlled exhale as we sing. This may sound simple; however, controlled breathing takes some time to get used to. Singers need to understand the primary muscle involved, become keenly aware of this unique sensation and try different exercises so that it eventually becomes ingrained in their vocal technique.

The Diaphragm Muscle



The Primary muscle of respiration is the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a thin, parachute shaped layer of muscle and tendon that separates the abdominal cavity from the chest cavity. The Diaphragm is attached to the lower costals, high in the front of the rib cage at the sternum and lower in the back at the spine. The diaphragm flattens when we inhale. The ribcage is flexible and as the diaphragm moves down, air moves into the lungs the ribcage expands.

Here is a link to a very simple, yet informative video that demonstrates the diaphragm in motion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hp-gCvW8PRY>

Discovering your singing breath

Watching the above video will help you to visualize the mechanics of breathing. Visualization and awareness of motion in the body is key when improving vocal technique as our instrument is hidden from us. Breathing exercises like the ones given in the vocal lesson can be done throughout the day, at work or at home when you have a minute or two to relax. Breathing exercises not only help your singing – they can help relieve stress and help you relax.

Inhalation refers to air moving into your body — breathing in. *Exhalation* is when you exhale or blow out the air. You exhale when you speak or sing.

Simple Breathing exercise:

Either standing, sitting or lying down

1. Take a slow inhale through the mouth. Let the shoulders be very heavy. Let all abdominal muscle relax. (Let it all hang out!) Explore the sensation of the ribcage expanding as the lungs fill with air.
2. Now exhale as if you are pushing the air through a straw. Make this a “sounded” breath. This is a controlled breath. You’re using the diaphragm to push the air out, but controlling it as in singing.
3. Try this exercise a couple of times. Make sure to keep the upper body soft and relaxed through this exercise. Shoulders and neck muscles are never involved.