



Alignments, Directions and Energy Flow

1. Drop the 'tail' – extending the spine downwards. This pelvis release should be independent of the upper body and shoulders, and you should not tip your shoulders / torso backwards to achieve action 1.
2. Action 1 of dropping the tail rotates the front of the pelvis upwards (imagine a pivot through the hip where the small circle is on the diagram).
3. Actions 1 & 2 bring a feeling of engagement into the tummy / abdomen, below the tummy button.
4. The lower back will feel flatter, and you can feel yourself open up the spine vertically upwards at the same time as the pelvis adjustment. Think of actions 1-4 as a simultaneous, interconnected process.
5. Maintaining the directional flow of actions 1-4, extend the neck upwards.
6. Action 5 should not lead to the chin raised. On the contrary, the chin should draw gently downwards as you do action 5, so the chin ends up horizontal, and the head is level (not dipped downwards), and the eyes look out straight ahead (neither tipped upwards, nor dipped down to the floor.)
7. Actions 5 & 6 should lead naturally to the head, and front of neck drawing straight backwards (no shortening of the back of the neck or lifting the chin to achieve this!!). Think of actions 5-7 as a simultaneous, interconnected process.
8. Drop the *back* of the chin, as in a yawn. Make sure that this action doesn't reverse the directions of actions 5-7!

Remember, this process is always flowing, moving, dynamic. Nothing ever stops or becomes held or rigid. We move constantly through these points of alignment. The freedom, fluidity and integrity of this process helps considerably with efficiency of breath, freeing the vibratory mechanism, and maximising resonance areas in neck and mouth.

It is so effective, it is worth focussing on this sequence before thinking about any specific techniques for breathing or finding other ways to release tongue, jaw, lips, throat etc.. Link this process to inhalation / preparation for sound, and continue it during sounding.

(Diagram, without numbers, copied from Lucie Manen, Bel Canto, 1987)