



## Warming up

This is not intended as a comprehensive, fail-safe recipe. Each singer ultimately has to take responsibility for the care of their voice and how they use it and prepare for singing. This checklist covers some important areas of warming up. There are some fundamental principles worth noting:

1. Warm your body up first – vocalising can wait until you've got things loosened up, and got the breath process switching on properly.
2. Every physical adjustment, stretch, movement and release can be associated with movement of breath, especially exhalation (which is what the sound will ultimately travel on).
3. Awareness is integral to the process of good singing, therefore of good warming up. A clear, settled mind can be established without having to vocalise – hence the centring exercise. You might want to do this before even the physical elements.
4. All physical processes after this can be conducted with the relaxed, expanded mind.

### PHYSICAL

#### Neck

1. Hands behind neck, underneath mastoid (bone) – breathe out [hands / mirror]
2. Retraction + soften jaw [mirror / chin level] – loosen groin and buttocks
3. Shake yourself out - Retract again then add Side pull – breathe out

#### Shoulders

4. Shoulder drop – ape man (relaxing pectoralis major) – ease in the knees - release air simultaneously
5. Add thumbs to shoulder muscles – feel for softness
6. Gradually come to upright - Everything slow and gentle and calm

#### Whole body process

7. Circle of breath – slow circles, relax buttocks and groin
8. Bending breath (or seated body yawn) – release groin and buttocks

#### Jaw, tongue, throat

9. Keeping the feel of everything done so far, add Massage cheeks (masseter) – breathe out
10. On the next steps, while focussing on upper muscles around throat etc, keep awareness of 'whole body' breathing
11. Finger pressure behind ear (stylo-glossus) – breathe out – keep back of neck long – remember the looseness of all the rest of the body
12. Slide to the diagonal underneath corner of the jaw (stylo-hyoid) – breathe out
13. slide underneath jawline near the back (mylo-hyoid) – quiet mind – long neck, loose body – jiggle pelvis side to side to stay loose on outbreath
14. more shoulder stuff – keep moving the breath

15. jaw pull – with the out breath – still a long neck - looking outwards in front of you, not down at floor
16. tongue swallow – tip, half, full – wave arms, or jiggle pelvis, can free up the swallowing
17. tongue stretch and move around at full extension – breathe out – keep playing with freedom of the body
18. tongue curl (breathe out), unvoiced tongue trill, tongue pull and waggle (breathe out)

#### Abdominal exhalation

19. Knee bend + pelvis tilts/turns – breathe out through gently pursed lips
20. straw (or pursed lips) – activates abdominals + widening sensation in throat [check mirror that shoulders and neck are restful on inhalation]

### **CENTRING**

21. Clearing breaths - thoughts, emotions, body – commit to let air go; thoughts – emotions – body; all emptied and released in one breath; the fundamental principle of quietening the self

### **PHYSICAL + CENTRED SELF**

22. The physical elements mentioned so far can now be repeated, and the out-breath can be done this time with the calming thought of letting go

### **SOUNDING + SINGING**

Note: These next steps are optional of course. You might decide instead to begin some sounds with the 'Centring' process – gently balancing this internal awareness of your calm self with the technical adjustments required to build air flow and release upper muscles.

23. Straw - + sounding – speechy first, then singing down straw in same mode – add Indian head wobble to get neck loose and open at the back and sides
24. Hoover (no straw) – no voice, pursed lips – feel abdominals + throat widen – with sound, velvety – speechy first – then singing in speechy feel
25. Long neck – **loosen tongue at back etc – fingers under jawline – remember the switchoff**
26. Plus quietness of mind
27. Run some long joined up lines on a vowel – bend legs deep, move around (spacewalking)

### **FINALLY**

28. Use instinct, intuition to consider what else might be needed at this point.
29. Try a few phrases of the song – but remember you might well not need to. Don't oversing in your pre-performance time.
30. Whatever happens in this whole sequence, or whatever goes on in your environment, don't let these events distract you from your awareness of a) your body b) your internal mental spaciousness.