

Advice for Vocalists:

Improve Your Singing: Valuable Advice for Vocalists

By Robyn Metko

The entire body is the instrument of the vocalist, not just the voice box or larynx. The study of yoga, chi yi and the Alexander Technique can be very beneficial to vocalists. All three have been shown to improve posture while expanding the chest and ribcage, increasing breath capacity and tone support.

Keep in mind that **singing is an aerobic activity**. Begin each rehearsal warming up the body with slow, easy movements and light stretching. Focus on stretching the torso area and releasing tension from the shoulders and neck area. Always remember to breathe from the diaphragm while stretching; never hold your breath.

A minimum of 10 minutes of vocal **rehearsal time** should be devoted to the study of vocalises (vocal exercises). Singing vocalises increases blood circulation, flexibility, and responsiveness. Always warm up the voice with a series of light vocalises before rehearsing music arrangements and cool down by singing additional light vocalises for three to five minutes.

If you are serious about singing, **do not smoke**. Smoking greatly decreases breath capacity, irritates vocal tract membranes and the throat, and increases the chance of developing nodes on the vocal cords. The only way to eliminate nodes from the vocal cords is to have them surgically removed; leaving scar tissue that cannot be repaired. The body cannot reproduce vocal cord tissue. Once it has been damaged, it can never be replaced.

