

Start Your Engines!

Warmups for Mind, Body and Soul

Warmups tune our minds and bodies for the singing and communicating that each rehearsal requires. Often, we fail to recognize the importance of warmups until we realize our chorus isn't blending, tuning or performing, as they should. Warmups ARE vitally important. However, if they are not a regular part of each rehearsal or lack the connection to the remaining rehearsal or eventual performance, then they are undervalued by the singer and of little value.

So why are warmups important?

1. Warmups establish focus.
2. Warmups prepare the voice for singing.
3. Warmups can build a unit sound and listening.
4. Warmups establish physical readiness for singing.
5. Warmups establish proper body alignment and breathing habits.
6. Warmups develop individual and unit resonance.
7. Warmups achieve unification of vowels.
8. Warmups establish intonation melodically and harmonically.
9. Warmups establish a connection between vocal production technique and the music to be sung in the rehearsal.

Therefore, a plan is imperative!! “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail!”

Plan your warmups around what you wish to accomplish at that rehearsal. However, make sure you also give the singer adequate time on all major areas of vocal production so that they can produce their best sound, even though your focus may be vowels or energy or synchronization.

Priority/Order

Body Alignment

Breathing

Resonance

Energy

Body Alignment –

Arm Stretches

Reaches and Climb the Ladder

Puppet Posture

Reminders

Balanced at hips?

Knees flexible?

Spine lengthening?

Breathing –

Bubbling

Buzzing Bee on s,z,v

Dog Barks – big and little

Hiss a Song – ex. Yankee Doodle

Smell Warm Bread

F – Waves

ss-ff-chch or train chugs

FF with lots of air on a melody

On one note:

“I can control my breath and sustain it fully to the end of the phrase without any undue tension of any kind”

Resonance

Ree-oh-ee-oh-ee Yoh ee yoh
Momo Doo Bah round
Zing a mama Loo Lee
Yih – ye Thih – ah....
O Senora O Senora – 1353 1464 1353 1
Loo Lee breakaway
Scoobee do bee do bee do bee do 54321
Sing Each Note You Sing vocalise
Any vocalize can be used to reinforce resonant singing

Energy

Tongue Twisters
Sumba Chill
Sing, Sing, Sing,
Boom Chick-aRocka-Chicka Rocka Chicka Boom
Singin' is Good
Welcome
Follow, follow
Bravo (combines resonance and energy nicely)
Give me a break jingle

Vowels

Four part moving with vowel sequence
Four part moving with other words
Noh Neh Nee Noh Noo
Ah, then Ah Eh, then Ah Eh EE etc.
On 54321, 54321, 5678987654321

Miscellaneous

For ring in lower notes – Ning, ning... on 54321
For extending range lower – No (slide) Way 5-1
For extending upper range & Flexibility
– See Ah – 1878987654321
For flexibility – Flexibility vocalize
For flexibility – Mulligan, mulligan....
For relaxation – Double bubble, double bubble gum
554433221
Learning & reinforcing intervals – 187654321
When clean, leave out the 5th, then the 3rd, etc.
Fine Tuning 54321/54321/154535251545321
154535251545678 (use vowels)

Notable Vocalizing CD's to Use:

Sing, Baby, Sing I, II, and III by Darlene Rogers
with Dale Syverson, Peggy Gram, et al.
Getting Ready to Sing by Lila Mori
I'm Not Crazy, I'm Singercising! By Karen Oleson
Ultimate Choir Warmups 1 & 2
by Chris and Carole Beatty

References

“The Complete Choral Warmup Book”
Russell Robinson & Jay Althouse
“Vocal Techniques” by Linda Spevacek
“How to Train Singers”
by Larra Browning Henderson

Sound Away Menopausal Moodiness

A mind-body technique called toning can help bring back harmony if you're experiencing menopausal mood swings and other symptoms.

“The use of the voice is a built-in tool that releases emotional tension from your body,” says Don Campbell, a sound researcher and director of the Mozart Effect Resource Center in Boulder, Colorado. “A daily practice of toning, which is making a sound with an elongated vowel for an extended period, can improve your overall state of mind.”

“Toning is a great help for releasing and harmonizing your emotions because it moves your emotions through your body so that you don't feel pent-up, vulnerable or ready to explode,” he explains. When your body responds to the vibration you are creating, your hormone levels even out.

Here is a brief outline of Don Campbell's Five-Day Toning Class. Do each exercise for about 5 minutes, holding the tone continually with natural breaths in between. Repeat it whenever you need some relaxation or reviving.

Day 1 – HUM: Sit comfortably, close your eyes and hum – not a melody, but a pitch that feels comfortable. Relax your jaw and feel the energy of the hum warming up and energizing your entire body.

Day 2 – AH SOUND: The *ah* sound immediately evokes a relaxation response. Whenever you feel a great deal of stress and tension, relax your jaw and make a quiet *ah* sound. In your office or other places where toning may disturb others, you can simply close your eyes, breathe out and think the *ah*.

Day 3 – EE Sound: The *ee* sound can awaken your mind and body, functioning as a kind of sonic caffeine. When you feel drowsy while driving or are sluggish in the afternoon, making a high *ee* sound will stimulate your brain and keep you alert. The *ee* tone is also good for releasing tension. Just don't practice it if you have a headache as the increased activity in your brain may make it worse.

Day 4 – OH SOUND: The *oh* tone is a great tool for an instant tune-up. Your body responds to the *oh* by normalizing your skin temperature, breathing, and heart rate as well as releasing muscle tension and increasing brain waves.

Day 5 – EXPERIMENTAL SINGING: Start at the lowest part of your voice and let it glide upward, like a very slow elevator. Make vowel sounds that are relaxing and that arise effortlessly from your jaw or throat. Allow your voice to resonate throughout your body. Now explore ways in which you can “massage” parts of your skull, throat and chest with long vowel sounds.

Reproduced from Prevention Magazine's
Managing Menopause