

# **Free to Sing**

## **Vocal Warm-ups & Exercises for Young Men**



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## Free to Sing

Singing has been identified as an integral part of all cultures, no matter how advanced or primitive. Adults sing infants to sleep. Song is used to teach basic concepts to children. Vocal music can carry a much deeper emotional message than spoken words alone.

Can anyone learn to sing?

Yes! Any person with a normal speaking voice that can "carry a tune" (or can to learn to do so) can learn to sing well. Many believe singing is strictly an inborn talent. It is actually a skill that can be learned from a qualified teacher, improved by practicing and reinforced with positive performance experiences.

How does someone learn to sing?

Singing is both a mental and physical process. Intellectual learning and muscular training are necessary. Students must gain awareness of the vocal instrument and then use daily practice to form good habits and eliminate harmful habits. Setting goals builds success and therefore, confidence.

## International Phonetic Alphabet Symbols Used in this Book

The International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA, for short, has come into universal usage over the last decade by singers, teachers of voice, and teachers of language. It is a system of great simplicity and clarity. Working through the exercises in this book will acquaint you with many IPA symbols. A list of the symbols used follows as well as a key to their pronunciation.

### Pure Vowels:

#### Neutrals

[a] = father  
[ə] = above  
[ʌ] = love  
[ɒ] = hot

#### Brights

[i] = eat  
[ɪ] = it  
[e] = cheaos  
[ɛ] = met  
[æ] = mad

#### Darks

[u] = boo  
[ɔ] = nook  
[o] = hoope  
[ɔ] = awe

#### Mixed

[y] = [i] + [u]  
[ɻ] = [ɪ] + [ə]  
[ø] = [e] + [o]  
[œ] = [ɛ] + [ɔ]

#### Nasals

[ã] = [a] with a dropped soft palate, creating a nasal quality  
[ɔ̃] = [o] with a dropped soft palate, creating a nasal quality

#### Consonants

The consonants in the book are pronounced orthographically, e.g. the way they are spelled. There are three exceptions:

[ŋ] = sing  
[ð] = this  
[j] = a glide, and in Alleluja

# Breath Exercises

## Onset

Adagio

1

*mp*

(tu hu hu hu hu)

### Instructions

1. Before you begin, note your posture and correct it if necessary. Say the Alexander mantra - "I release my neck and shoulders to allow my head to float gently upward."
2. As you inhale, notice the expansion through the ribs.
3. Use a delicate contraction of the abdominal muscles to make the [h].
4. Round the lips softly with a small aperture, as if you were going to kiss something.
5. Continue to energize the vowel sound with a gentle muscular contraction. Push the button, e.g. find the solar plexus and make sure the abdominal muscles over it are in engaged.
6. Keep the ribs out; don't let them collapse, even when you are running short of air.
7. Renew the breath by taking small, gentle breaths between notes.

## BREATH EXERCISES

### Onset

Moderato

2

[hi hi hi hi hi]

#### Instructions:

1. Follow instructions 1-3 on the previous page.
2. Sing this exercise *slightly faster*, with a bright, clear [i] vowel.
3. Use the *abdominals in a somewhat more energetic manner*. Feel the muscles flex at the beginning, or onset, of each note.
4. Push the button; keep the ribs out and the chest high.
5. Continue to renew the breath between each note.

Allegro

3

[ha ha ha ha ha]

#### Instructions:

1. As on the first two exercises, think of posture and of releasing the neck, shoulders, and jaw as you inhale. Notice the sense of expansion through the ribs as you inhale.
2. Sing this exercise rapidly, using rather large, energetic contractions of the abdominals. Propel the air with intensity.
3. Push the button and keep the ribs from collapsing.
4. *This time, don't take breaths between the notes, but do make a little space between notes.* Observe the fermata.

## *Lip and Tongue Trills*

4. & 5. Lip Trills  
6. & 7. Tongue Trills



Instructions:

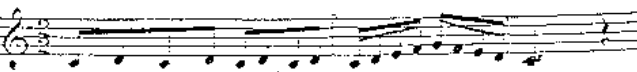
1. Lip Trills are also referred to as "bubbles" or "bubble slides"
2. Gently close lips and blow enough air to make the lips vibrate, like blowing bubbles under water or making motor noises.
3. Some people find it necessary to push up on the corners of the mouth with the fingers to create this sound.
4. This exercise produces steady breath control while eliminating tension.
5. Tongue trills may be substituted for lip trills.
6. Perform Exercises 4 and 5 with lip trills.

Instructions:

1. Tongue trills are "rolled r's" on pitch.
2. It is helpful to use a "d" or "th" mouth position.
3. This exercise produces steady breath control while reducing tension.
4. Lip trills may be substituted for tongue trills.
5. Perform exercises 4 and 5 with tongue trills.

## Vowel Placement Exercises

12.   
hm mee (etc.)  
[h:m] [æ:i]

13.   
num num num num (etc.)  
[n:ʌ:n]

Instructions:

1. Remember to hum with space between the teeth and keep the tongue forward.

14.   
ee oh ah oo ay (etc.)  
[i:] [o:] [ɑ:] [u:] [ɛ:]

Instructions:

1. Strive for as little movement between vowels as possible.

# Vowel Exercises

## Bright Vowels



15.	ai	ai	ai	ai	ai
16.	zi	zi	zi	zi	zi
17.	ne	ne	ne	ne	ne
18.	ma	ma	ma	ma	ma

### Instructions:

1. On bright vowels, the muscles of the mouth are relaxed and in a neutral position, not smiling nor pulled down nor rounded. The tip of the tongue gently touches the lower teeth ridge; the tongue is slightly rounded and elevated just behind the tip. Ideally it is the tongue position which gives the bright vowels their characteristic brilliance, not a smiling mouth position.
2. As you progress through the exercise, the vowels progress from close to more open, so the jaw should drop slightly. The high "fronted" tongue also drops a bit as the vowels progress from close to open.
3. Energize the initial consonant with the breath. This consonant helps to focus the sound and to keep it more forward.
4. Sing this exercise *legato*. Don't put an [h] sound on the second note of the two-note groups.

# Vowel Exercises

## Dark Vowels



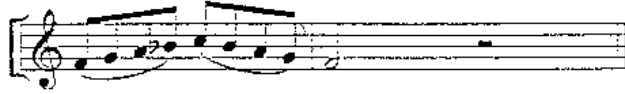
19. [zu — zu — zu — zu — zu]  
20. [nu — nu — nu — nu — nu]  
21. [mo — mo — mo — mo — mo]  
22. [vo — vo — vo — vo — vo]

### Instructions:

1. Dark vowels must be energetically rounded. Although it may seem alien to do so at first, a singer who hopes to be understood must become comfortable with these "kissy" mouth positions.
2. Again energize the consonant. Become aware of its buzzy sensation; it will help you find the placement for the vowel sound.
3. Sing slowly and *legato*.

# Vowel Exercises

## Dark/bright crossovers



23. [zi — zu — zi]  
24. [vi — vu — vi]  
25. [me — mo — me]  
26. [næ — no — næ]

### Instructions:

1. Sing these exercises before a mirror! Be sure that the brights have a neutral mouth position and that the darks are well rounded.
2. Energize the consonants, then let the energy continue to flow through the vowels.



27. [zi — zu — zi — zu — zi]  
28. [ni — no — ne — no — ni]  
29. [ve — vo — ve — vo — ve]  
30. [læ — lo — læ — lo — læ]



31. [ni — no — ni — no — ni]  
32. [vu — ve — vu — ve — vu]  
33. [zi — zo — zi — zo — zi]  
34. [næ — no — næ — no — næ]

# Vowel Exercises

## Mixed Vowels

35.	[u	y	u	y	u]
36.	[o	y	o	y	o]
37.	[o	ø	o	ø	o]
38.	[o	œ	o	œ	o]

### Instructions:

Mixed vowels are common occurrences in French and German. They do not occur in English. However the practice of mixed vowels has value to the singer in that they can enhance the sensations of "forward" tone quality.

1. Round the first pure vowel adequately.
2. Keep the initial mouth position and add the appropriate vowel, e.g. [y] is [u] + [i],  
 [ɣ] is [o] + [i],  
 [ø] is [o] + [ø],  
 [œ] is [o] + [œ].

## Vowel Modification

39.	[i	ε	æ	æ	ε	i	i
	[u	o	o	o	o	o	u
	[y	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	y
	[o	o	o	o	o	o	u

### Instructions:

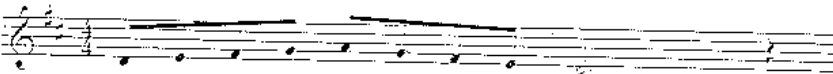
For comfort and for beauty of sound, close vowels must open, or modify, as they rise in pitch.

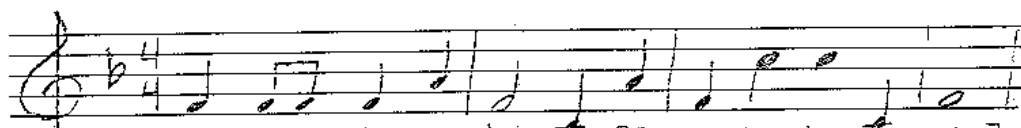
1. Make the first vowel sound very pure and close.
2. Open to the top pitches by smoothly, gently allowing the mouth to open.
3. Watch the mirror! Be sure that the opening of the mouth is smooth, not robotic.

## Articulation Exercises

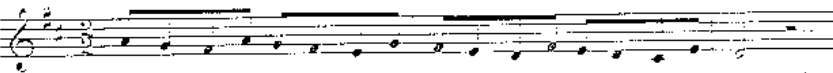
Instructions:


1. Articulation exercises...need I say more?

40.   
[sleu bi du bi du bi du bi du] (etc.)

41.   
[zing big a ring a lo ha ai je ku ku ai je]

42.   
A cup of prop-er cof-fee in a cop-per cof-fee cup. (etc.)

43.   
Yel-low leath-er yel-low leath-er yel-low leath-er yel-low leath-er yay (etc.)

44.   
[po tu la pe do mi ni po tu la pe do mi ni po tu]

# Resonance Exercises

## Developing Awareness of Ring

45.

### Instructions:

1. The [ŋ] sound is like a hum with the mouth open. Instead of closed lips, this sound is closed at the back of the throat - the swallow spot.
2. Let plenty of breath energy flood the [ŋ]. You will feel a sensation of buzz and ring in the head and/or facial area.
3. When you open to the vowel, remember the feeling of the "Happy Gasp" ( ), and also flood the vowel with breath energy.



# Vowel Exercises

## Coffin Exercises for the Vowel Register


48. 

[o	u	u	o	u	u	o	u	u	u]
[c	i	i	e	i	i	e	i	i	i]
[æ	ø	y	æ	ø	y	æ	ø	y	y]
[ɔ	o	u	ɔ	o	o	ɔ	o	u	u]
[æ	e	i	æ	e	i	æ	e	i	i]
[a	æ	ø	a	æ	ø	a	æ	ø	ø]
[ɒ	ʌ	u	ɒ	ʌ	u	ɒ	ʌ	u	u]

Berton Coffin created a series of vocal exercises based upon a system called *Favorable Vowels*. By placing a vowel in the region of the voice where it acoustically gets maximum resonance, a singer experiences the sensations of "ring" in each vowel. These sensations can then be transferred to other music.

Instructions:

1. As the exercise moves up in pitch, use the next set of vowel sounds.
2. Mezzo-sopranos (altos) and bass/baritones should start with the second set of vowel sounds.

49. 

[e]	[e]	[o]	[e]
[e]	[o]	[e]	[o]
[o]	[o]	[o]	[o]
[o]	[u]	[u]	[o]

## Registration Exercises for Men

50.

[na ne na ne na]  
[mo me mo me mo]

51.

[m] [a] [m] [a]  
[m] [e] [m] [e]

52.

I <sup>3</sup>	I <sup>3</sup>
u <sup>4</sup>	u <sup>4</sup>
ø <sup>5</sup>	ø <sup>5</sup>
v <sup>6</sup>	v <sup>6</sup>
e <sup>7</sup>	e <sup>7</sup>
ɜ <sup>8</sup>	ɜ <sup>8</sup>
(ɔ) <sup>9</sup>	(ɔ) <sup>9</sup>
œ <sup>10</sup>	œ <sup>10</sup>
ɔ <sup>11</sup>	ɔ <sup>11</sup>

Yodel the same vowel.

Find the right vibration on the first note--then sing the following notes with the same space.

Increased air flow reduces the breath pressure on the upper notes. It should feel like they "fly off."

## Registration Exercises for Men

53.



ə <sup>3</sup>	ɪ <sup>3</sup>	ə <sup>3</sup>	ɪ <sup>3</sup>	ə <sup>3</sup>	ɪ <sup>3</sup>	ə <sup>3</sup>
ɪ <sup>4</sup>	ɹ <sup>4</sup>					
ʊ <sup>5</sup>	e <sup>5</sup>					
ʊ <sup>6</sup>	ø <sup>6</sup>					
o <sup>7</sup>	e <sup>7</sup>					
ɛ <sup>8</sup>	æ <sup>8</sup>					
(^) <sup>9</sup>	ɛ <sup>9</sup>					
æ <sup>10</sup>	(^) <sup>10</sup>					
^ <sup>11</sup>	ɛ <sup>11</sup>					

Alternate the vowels while the degree of opening remains the same.  
Let the voice stay "up." There is a feeling of lift.

54.



h	^	r <sup>4</sup>	^ <sup>13</sup>	r	^ <sup>13</sup>	
h	^	e <sup>5</sup>	æ <sup>14</sup>	e	æ <sup>14</sup>	
h	^	o <sup>6</sup>	v <sup>15</sup>	o	v <sup>15</sup>	
h	^	ø <sup>7</sup>	a <sup>16</sup>	ø	a <sup>16</sup>	
h	^	(^) <sup>8</sup>	^ <sup>12</sup> (^)	(^) <sup>8</sup>	^ <sup>12</sup>	
h	^	æ <sup>9</sup>	æ <sup>13</sup>	æ	æ <sup>13</sup>	