

### Ideas for Vocal Exercises

Use your imagination! Start with simple exercises to ensure skills are established before increasing complexity.

#### Choose sounds/phonemes based on the following guidelines:

- **Semi-occluded vocal tract sounds:**
  1. Lip trills, tongue trills, raspberries, kazoo buzz, fricatives (“v,” “z,” etc.), straw phonation: Promote steady breath flow, breath connection, laryngeal relaxation, optimal vocal fold vibration, dynamic control. These sounds are particularly helpful in self-monitoring of breath flow—i.e., if breath is not flowing steadily, the sound will stop. When done at low intensity (soft dynamic level), these are excellent sounds to use to promote vocal healing in injured voices, as they allow vocal fold exercise while minimizing forceful collision at vocal fold edges, reducing trauma.
  2. Nasal consonants (“m,” “n,” “ng”): Promote frontal placement (vocal resonance), reduce pharyngeal muscle tension and “woofy” tone quality, can facilitate reduction of laryngeal muscle tension.
- **Syllables:** Facilitating consonants (see above) can be a helpful “step” in transitioning skills to improve vowel production (i.e. nasal consonant → vowel can promote improved resonance in vowels; “y” → vowel can reduce jaw tension; lip trill → vowel can promote smooth onset of voicing, etc). Also promote diction and flexible articulation.
- **Vowels:** Help optimize pharyngeal control, vocal tract configuration, purity of tone quality, diction, vocal flexibility and precision.

#### Choose pitch patterns based on the following guidelines:

- **One note at a time (also called adductory power exercises):** Promotes laryngeal control, vocal stability, breath support. A good way to start is to sing each note of a major scale, one at a time, in a comfortable range. Hold each note as long and softly as you can on one breath. For added skill and control, vary the loudness, starting softly, gradually getting louder, then gradually getting softer again (this is called “messa di voce” in classical singing, but is good for all singing styles).
- **Glides:** Promote smooth breath connection and breath control, promote vocal flexibility and strengthening, and allow self-monitoring of breath flow (i.e., the smoother the glide, the smoother the breath flow). Start with short intervals and gradually increase as skills increase (1—3—1; 1—5—1; 1—8—1).
- **Scales:** Promote vocal flexibility, agility and precision, and pitch accuracy. Alternating glides/scales can help promote breath control and optimal articulation. Start with short scales and gradually increase complexity as skills increase (1-2-3-2-1; 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1; 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1, etc.).
- **Arpeggios:** Promote smooth, connected breath support, vocal flexibility and agility, improve vocal range. As above, start with simple arpeggios and gradually increase complexity as skills increase; vary direction of pattern (1-3-5-3-1; 1-3-5-8-5-3-1; 1-5-3-8-5-3-1; 5-8-5-3-1, etc.).

#### Choose articulation based on the following guidelines:

- **Staccato:** Promotes pitch accuracy, vocal precision and quick mechanical adjustments in the larynx.
- **Legato:** Promotes vocal flexibility and agility and smooth mechanical adjustments in the larynx.

#### Vocal “cool down”:

1. Laryngeal massage
2. Glides from high to low, gradually decreasing range of glide
3. Speaking voice exercises (syllable, word, phrase.)