
THOUGHTS FOR SINGING

*Student Handbook and Techniques for a better
understanding of your voice*

**Prepared for Students of
Chris Dudley**

To access your student page, click on your name at:

www.dudleyvocalstudio.com/students.html

(in lower case, enter your username <first name> and password <last name>)

Last Updated 10/01/2008

© Chris Dudley 2005

CONTENTS

Title	Page(s)
Studio Policies & Fees 2008	3-6
Goals	7
Notes/Thoughts/Ideas	8
Who am I?	9
Singing techniques	10
Set-up	11
Posture	11-12
Breathing/Inhalation	13-15
Support	16
Mouth & Throat	17-18
Vocalizes	
Warm-Up Exercises	19-20
Support/Diaphragm Exercises	21-23
Placement Exercises	24-25
Breathing Exercises	26

The Code to Get Into the Church is 1750*

Studio Lesson Policies

Philosophy

(Detailed philosophy online)

I believe we are all blessed with an ability to sing. To actually sing well - that is the true challenge!

I've been singing professionally since I was a boy chorister at St. George's Windsor Castle in England. I received my musical training beginning at the young age of 7, which included music theory, diction, sight-reading, vocal technique and general musicianship. I have sung for most of my life and have also heard and worked with many a fine singer. When I started teaching in England in 1998, I discovered students with raw talent that became something much more; singers who enjoyed "singing in the shower" or "with the radio" - average people who lacked confidence to sing in public, to be heard, afraid of the sound of their own voices. I found myself wanting to teach more and more with every student that improved under my tutelage. I believe teaching voice is far more than just a career choice. It's a chance to explore the voice - take it to its limits. Each student has that 'potential voice' within; it just takes work. A major point - work!

Singing well is not something which can be achieved over night. It takes hard work, dedication and practice. You've got to want to be so much more and show it in how you sing, perform and vocalize.

When you take your lessons with me, you'll go home having learnt something new. At home, you'll re-learn it and improve your own technique, then you'll come back to me and we'll move further and make a singer out of you yet!

Contact

There are two possible ways to get into contact with me:

Cell Phone: (202) 297-3047

Email: lessons@dudleyvocalstudio.com

Cancellations

I require AT LEAST 24 hours notice for a cancellation. If you fail to give notice of cancellation, you will be charged for the full hour lesson. Failure to do so results in a full charged lesson.

You must call my cell and send me an email.

Fees

Payment accepted in Cash or Check.

Detailed Fees are found on pages 5 & 6.

There is a \$35 *returned check fee*.

Age Range

Adolescents are welcome, but their voices must be settled from puberty (it can take a year or so after puberty for the voice to settle into its new natural voice). Generally, I'll start the younger voice at age 15/16 for men, and 14 for girls, but these children must be dedicated and be willing to practice. Adults of any age and experience are welcome. I also teach choristers, or children who use their singing voices regularly in Choral Programs.

Expectations

The student is expected to turn up to lessons ON TIME, prepared and ready to work. Although unforeseen circumstances (like traffic) may make a student late, the lesson will still have to finish within the allotted time, although there may some flexibility about this. If you are given music and technical

exercises to do away from the lesson, you are expected to come to the next lesson prepared so that we can move forward.

Materials

Bring a tape recorder or Digital Sound device to record your lessons (if you desire).

Bring the booklet "Thoughts for Singing".

Bring Water - you don't want to dry up.

If you have a cold *sugar free lozenges* only. I don't recommend any sugar drops.

Practice

Please Practice. You'll not only benefit your own progress, but it will be more of a pleasure to teach you!

I can tell when you're not practicing. I've also heard every excuse in the book because I also used to have a teacher, and I used all the same ones. WE KNOW! If I assign you work to do for the week, you will be expected to warm up your voice with the selected vocalizes and come prepared to the next lesson with the piece of music and assigned passage(s) learned and ready to present. If you don't practice, you're wasting not only my time, but yours too. Singing well involves practice too. We can't all be blessed with perfect voices - most of us have to work at that, and practicing our voices is the start!

Sickness/Vocal Health

Everybody gets sick, and that's OK. As singers, getting sick is the last thing we want to have happen.

You can take care of yourself though. Don't put yourself in situations where you are perceptible to colds.

Be sure that you nurse your illnesses with rest. Be sure to take all your vitamins. **IF YOU ARE SICK** - do not come to your lesson. Please cancel - we will reschedule. I'd rather you heal before trying to practice your voice again.

Recitals/Concerts

Every year in June or July, the studio gets together to have a Student Recital. This is a great opportunity to show off what you have learnt in your lessons to an understanding, yet appreciative audience of friends and family. Although I do not *force* you perform in the concert, I strongly encourage you to do so. If part of your goals is to gain self-confidence, one of the best ways is to perform in front of a warm-welcoming, receptive audience. Not only do you gain a great sense of accomplishment out of performing, but it will also allow us to continuously move on to better things, more repertoire and new goals.

For concerts, dress smart casual. No Jeans! You are not only representing yourself, but the entire studio as well.

Seminars

December and April, students will perform 1-2 pieces that they have been working on during the semester. They will also prepare a presentation and hand-out for the other singers detailing the song they are singing, with translations and words, and a history behind the music. in the seminar. This is a closed event, open only to students. Students must positively criticize their peers and be prepared to be criticized when they sing. This will also be the time we learn some duets, trios, quartet and choral works (dependant of course upon the available forces). This is Mandetory to Classical Singers.

MAKE UP LESSONS

If I miss one of your lessons, I will make it up as soon as our schedules work. If you miss a lesson, I will allow only ONE make-up per singing semester (September-December / January-April / May-August). If you wish to reschedule, you must contact me 24 HOURS PRIOR to your lesson. I will try to fit you in. Cancellations with less than 24 hours notice result in NO SHOW fee charge for the entire lesson.

FEES 2008/2009

Cantare Vocal Studio

OPTION 1

SEMESTER

(Taking an additional \$10 off)

(16 lessons, with 1 per week)

ADULTS

16 (1 hour) lessons (1 weekly) - paid in advance @ \$870 (\$90 saving)

CHILDREN

16 (45 minute) lessons (1 weekly) - paid in advance @ \$650 (\$70 saving)

16 (30 minute) lessons (1 weekly) - paid in advance @ \$430 (\$50 saving)

***THIS is only open to weekly lessons, not bi-weekly students.**

OPTION 2

MONTHLY

Additional Monthly Discounts

Per hour - \$55.00

Per $\frac{3}{4}$ hour - \$41.25

Per $\frac{1}{2}$ hour - \$27.50

ADULTS (& Children)

4 (1 hour) Lessons (1 weekly) - paid one-month in advance @ \$220 (\$20 saving)

CHILDREN

4 (45 minute) Lessons (1 weekly) - paid one-month in advance @ \$165 (\$15 saving)

4 (30 minute) Lessons (1 weekly) - paid one-month in advance @ \$110 (\$10 saving)

***THIS is only open to weekly lessons, not bi-weekly Students.**

OPTION 3

INDIVIDUAL

1 Lesson @ \$60 / hr paid each visit (Adults & Children)

1 Lesson @ \$45 / 45 minutes paid each visit (Children)

1 Lesson @ \$30 / 30 minutes paid each visit (Children)

ADDITIONAL FEES

\$25 per semester per student

Payment accepted in Cash or Personal Check.

Additional Information

There is a fee of \$25 per Student per Semester. Students pay this even if they are paying monthly or individual lessons.

The fee includes:

(adults only) DVDs of Select Lessons (only if requested)
(& time spent making/editing them)

Audio CDs for Learning Songs (If Available)
(& time spent making/editing them)

WATCHING YOURSELF on a DVD is a valuable learning tool.

Photocopies

Transposition of music in Sibelius

References and Articles

Thoughts for singing - a vocal reference booklet

There are three semesters as follows:

September-December

January-April

May-August

PIANO FOR BEGINNERS!! (Mainly for singers)

SINGERS, Learn how to find the right pitch and how to read music!

Become a better musician!

Be able to compose your OWN melodies and harmonies!

Add a 30 minute piano lesson for JUST \$20!!

(Advance Payment) 4 Lessons (1 per week only) \$70 (\$10 saving)

(Theory, Scales, Music, Aural, and Sight-reading all take place in the 30mins)

Add a 45 minute piano lesson for JUST \$30!!

(Advance Payment) 4 Lessons (1 per week only) \$100 (\$20 saving)

(30 minutes piano = scales, aural, sight-reading and 15 minutes theory)

Add a 60 minute piano lesson for JUST \$40!!

(Advance Payment) 4 Lessons (1 per week only) \$130 (\$30 saving)

(45 minutes piano = aural, sight-reading and scales with 15 minutes theory)

Discounts are only available to students that take lessons every week. All other students are subject to Full prices for the allotted minutes, i.e., two 1-hour lessons per month would cost \$80, two 45-minute lessons per month would cost \$60, and two 30-minute lessons per month would cost \$40.

GOALS

September - December:

Repertoire:

Theory:

Sight-Singing & Ear-Training:

January – June:

Repertoire:

Theory:

Sight-Singing & Ear-Training:

Who am I?

Chris Dudley (countertenor), a native of Great Britain came to the US in 2001 after attaining a



BA in Music from the University of East Anglia. A graduate of the Masters of Music, Performance & Pedagogy Program of the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins, Chris has been in great demand as a chorus and solo singer in the Washington area. He is currently a Lay Clerk in the Washington National Cathedral Choir and St. Paul's K street Evensong Choir.

Mr. Dudley has sung in New York with the Ensemble for Early Music, and as a soloist for the weekly Bach cantata that takes place at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. In Washington DC, he is a regular soloist with the Washington Bach Consort. He has sung with the Choirs of Norwich Cathedral in England, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle as a choirboy in the Queens chapel, and has sung at many Royal Occasions under Christopher Robinson. He has featured with these choirs and others for concerts and recordings in England, Europe, Australia and America.

In 2006, he was a finalist in the Philadelphia Bach Competition and the Lead in the Peabody Chamber Opera production of "Acteon". Recent solo engagements in 2007 included *Cantata BWV 23* with the Washington Bach Consort, Handel's *Ode to Queen Anne HWV 42* with the Handel Choir, and the Alto Solos within Bach's *Magnificat* with the Washington National Cathedral. In 2008, he gave a Masterclass/Workshop at Georgetown University on "English Church Music", and then performed with the Georgetown Concert Choir, the Bernstein "Missa Brevis". Engagements in 2009, find Chris singing with the Washington Choral Arts Society and the Norfolk Chamber Consort.

When Chris is not singing, he volunteers as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad and has a full-time teaching studio. Within his studio, he has numerous private students, but is also the vocal coach/voice teacher for the boy and girl choristers of St. Paul's K Street Choir in Washington DC. To find out more about Mr. Dudley, visit his professional website, found at www.dudleyalto.com .

BASIC SINGING TECHNIQUES

1. Set-up (p.11)

- Stretch
- Relax
- Breathe

2. Posture (p.11/12)

- Stand straight, legs slightly apart
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Chest out, up and open, with head behind chest
- Chin in/head in neutral position with eyes straight ahead (balloon effect)
- Stomach firm, not stuck out, not pulled in

3. Breathing/Inhalation (p.13)

- DO NOT LIFT SHOULDERS & RIBCAGE WHEN BREATHING
- Focus breathing into six locations
- Expand lower ribcage – keep it stretched and expanded while you sing
- Exercise: Lie on the floor; breathe normally; place a book on your stomach and only lift the tummy
- Breathe in with a relaxed, open mouth
- Prepare your first vowel with your breath

4. Support (p.16)

- Use correct breathing technique
- Breathe into the stomach and sustain the breath. Use that stretch as your support
- Hold your hand against your belly button and push in – do not push out with your stomach – instead, keep it firm from your upper abdominals, attached to the ribs, to the lower abdominals, attached to the coccyx
- Breathe, and expand your ribs – keep lower ribs expanded
- Keep your stomach firm and contracting while singing
- Stomach firm, not stuck out, and not pulled in

5. Mouth and Throat (p.17)

- Open your mouth – for all vowels
- Open your throat by
 - a) Yawning
 - b) Smiling and yawning (think Aah Haa? – bright idea)
 - c) Raising eyebrows
- DO NOT STICK UP YOUR CHIN and DO NOT PUSH
- Bring your lips forward when initiating forward placement
- Keep tongue flat, behind lower teeth
- Keep your jaw relaxed – use vibrato to help relieve tension

1. Set-up

- Stretch
- Relax
- Breathe

Relaxation is a vital part of singing. Unnecessary tension is hazardous to the singer. When the muscles are relaxed, the body is free to accomplish what it needs to do. Tension in the arms, legs, neck, face, etc. will eventually create tension at the larynx, where the sound is produced, and the sound will suffer.

Relaxation will put the audience at ease, and they will be able to concentrate on listening rather than watching a clenched fist or shaking legs.

Here are some relaxation techniques to try. They are most helpful at the beginning of the practice session, but can also be useful at any time. If you find that while practicing you begin to feel tension, take a break and try some of these exercises. You may also find them helpful to alleviate performance anxiety. Please also keep your physical health in mind. Gentle stretching is good; anything that causes pain should be stopped immediately. Do not strain yourself.

1. Place your hands above your head and stretch, standing on your toes. Bend over slowly, vertebrae by vertebrae, allowing your hands to hang in front of you. This will stretch your calves and hamstrings. It also offers a gentle stretch for your back.
2. Clasp your hands behind your back. Gently bring your clasped hands up behind your back. Don't strain. You can accomplish the same thing by trying to touch your backbones together and then relaxing. The back is a large source of tension that can affect the intake of air. Tension here can affect your posture!
3. Roll your shoulders forward, backward and in alternate directions.
4. Hang your arms to your sides and shake them.
5. Move your head gently towards your right shoulder, then your left, then towards your chest. Repeat this in the places of the most tension.
6. Move your lower jaw up and down. Don't allow the lower jaw to jut forward on the downward movement. Try gently massaging your jaw.
7. Massage the back of your neck.

When you have stretched, focus a bit on breathing:

1. Take a large breath and slowly let the air out, **on a ZZZ**.
2. Take another long breath – let the air out **on an FFF** – MAKE SURE you are supporting your air every time you do this exercises. For more information on Support, go to **page 16** in this booklet.

2. Posture

- Chin in/head in neutral position with eyes slightly looking down
- Chest out, up and open, with head behind
- Stand straight, legs slightly apart
- Shoulders down and relaxed
- Stomach firm, not stuck out, not pulled in (for more info, see section on *Support*)

Imagine that there is a *balloon* floating above your head and a string coming out of it. That string is hanging loosely and going straight down through your body. In order for it to remain straight, your body must remain upright, head looking slightly down, shoulders down, chest up and open, legs slightly apart and relaxed. We'll call this the perfect singing position. *For more detail on this, research the 'Alexander Technique'.*

Now, in more detail; your head is looking ahead, with a slight angle downwards; your shoulders should be relaxed (try thinking of them down and back); your sternum (chest) must stay up and open for the duration of your singing – and supported by your diaphragm – after all, this is where your lungs are, and correct posture and support allow for better breath control. Your feet should be shoulder width apart. They can be parallel, or one foot can be slightly in front of the other.

Think of the Chest being UP and OPEN. When I say UP, I mean that the Sternum is up. When I say OPEN, I mean that the chest is relaxed but open so that you can take a full breath into the lungs.

Exercise 1

Position yourself against a flat wall. Make sure your back is flat against the wall. Push up your shoulder blades against the wall with no space between you and the wall. Lift your sternum, keep your chest high and open. When you feel you are in this position, move away from the wall as if you are a wax model...or a penguin – do not move anything – in this position, relax your body but keep your chest up and open; flop out your shoulders and arms. This is the position you must maintain while singing.

Don't try to straighten the back as if in a military posture. This creates tension because it is an unnatural position. The muscles in the back must be tensed to create such a position. Remember, unnecessary tension anywhere ends up creating tension at the laryngeal level.

- Keep your eyes looking forward and slightly down. Find a point in front of you and focus on it. Do not raise or lower your chin. This changes the shape of your instrument. Looking upwards makes the sound shrill and squealy, while hugging downwards with your chin closes down the sound.
- Keep the shoulders relaxed. Don't allow them to move up. This is a large source of tension.
- Don't allow your buttocks to stick out. This changes your posture. Tuck the pelvis under you. Don't push it forward.
- Don't lock your knees. This is another source of tension. This is a main cause of shaking legs.

The appoggio position:

Your effort should be focused on finding a high sternum (chest) position, without relying on inhalation for help. If you discover that lifting your sternum without inhaling is difficult for you, then try this:

Exercise 2

*Lift both arms above your head, pointing to the sky; then, careful to leave your chest where the high arms have put it, lower your arms. You will find your chest much higher than it was originally with your ribs expanded farther than they were originally, and you will be highly conscious of your back muscles. This high-chest, ribs-expanded, shoulders-relaxed position is the one you want to maintain **at all times**.*

3. Breathing/Inhalation

- DO NOT LIFT SHOULDERS & RIBCAGE WHEN BREATHING
- Focus breathing into six locations
- Expand lower ribcage – keep it stretched and expanded while you sing
- Exercise: Lie on the floor; breathe normally; place a book on your stomach and only lift the tummy
- How should one inhale? Breathe in with a relaxed, open mouth – preparing (for more info, see section on *Mouth & Throat*)
- Prepare your first vowel with your breath
- High Breath vs. Low Breath

The chest/sternum must remain UP and OPEN – this will allow for the lungs to fully expand into the walls of the ribcage. Up and Open does not mean Stiff. Your sternum is up, and relaxed.

Often, when I start the lesson, we'll talk about breathing into all the areas of the body. For now, we'll start with 6 locations where we'll focus the breath:

1. Into either the head voice (see placement exercises) - *THINK* † ↔ Breathe into your head-voice. => When singing any note *THINK up* into the head registers by raising the soft palate and smiling, and *down* by dropping your jaw. or;
2. Into the Upper Chest (BUT NOT LIFTING UP THE CHEST), obviously, breathing into your lungs. Your Sternum should be up so your lungs can fully expand.
3. Into the Abdomen (Belly, Tummy).
4. SIDEWAYS – into your Sides (connecting the front with the back, while also expanding the lower ribcage with each breath.
5. Into the Back – Expand a full breath into the back (this is what we call a deep breath).
6. Breathe into your outer fat person. Imagine you are 500lbs – or more...and breathe fully into that space.

Exercise 3

Lie on the floor; breathe normally; place a book on your stomach (a hymn book will do) and only lift the tummy. Do this a few times so you get used to using only your tummy to breathe. In this position, your chest will not move (much) because it is in the upward position already. The only movement in the chest will come from the lower, more flexible ribs, moving and expanding with the breath.

Believe it or not, when you were a child, you actually only breathed with your tummy only. Why - because your chest and lungs were not yet fully developed. Breathing into the tummy was, at one time, natural for you. You have learned this *see-saw* breathing over time as a bad habit.

How should one inhale?

Before inhaling, raise the sternum without breathing in. Then, stop thinking about how *low* the breath must be. Stop thinking about how *much* air you must take in. Stop thinking about whether or not you want your abdomen to *bulge* out or *tuck* in. All of these things will automatically take place in the proper manner providing that you can manage *not to move your chest up and down* and providing that you *inhale to the six locations*.

Breathe in the shape of the vowel you are going to sing! Simply put – you need to take your normal breath for singing, and if you are singing an OOH or an AAH, then shape your mouth thus.

Lastly, I'm often asking you to breathe high or breath low. What is the difference? Often I use the following symbols: $\updownarrow \leftrightarrow$ what do they mean? *THINK* $\updownarrow \leftrightarrow$ Breathe into your head-voice. => When singing any note *THINK up* into the head registers by raising the soft palate and smiling, and *down* by dropping your jaw. *THINK* $\updownarrow \leftrightarrow$ *Left and right*, by stretching the line, thinking of the phrase as a whole.

The differences between High and Low Breathing

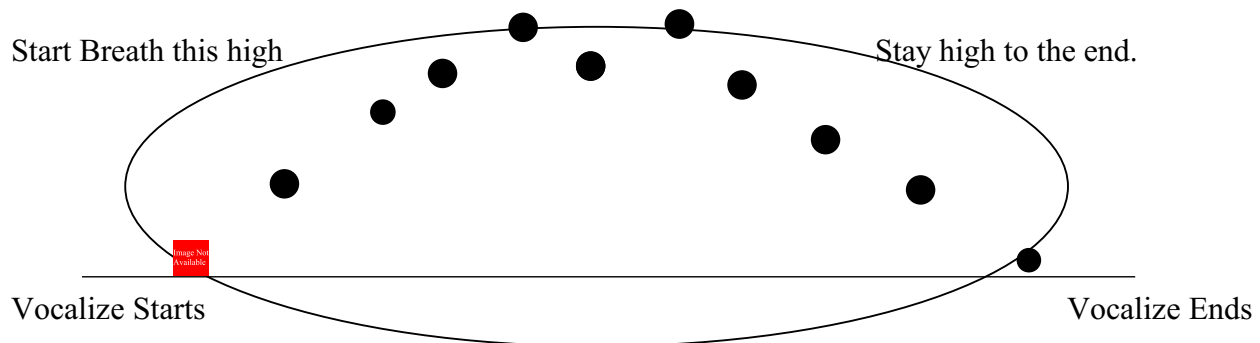
A High Breath is achieved best by trying the following:

- THINK High
- Breathe High
- Raise your Soft Palate Higher by
 - Smiling
 - Opening the mouth and yawning
 - Feeling/looking excited
 - Use this feeling: “You just bought me a new car...a Lamborghini?” WOW!

Look at exercise # 38 in the “Breathing Section” of Vocalizes on page 26. It starts LOW and goes up a tenth (10th), then back down to the Low note again. Here is an example of a High Breath, based on this exercise:

Example 1

Maintain a stretch and a slide by connecting the sound with support
(The Oval Shape represents the connective-ness).



The question you ask is: *Should I take a High Breath, or a Low Breath?* The simple answer is HIGH. Why? You should breathe towards the highest note in the phrase. If that ends up being the 10th above, then that's where you should aim. Just because the vocalize starts on a LOW note, doesn't mean that you should too. Breathing High will also make the high note easier to sing. Why again? Because, you are already there on the high note...with your breath. You don't need to climb up there, you've prepared the high note...with your breath. You don't need to climb up there, you've prepared the high note, by opening, by smiling, by doing what is needed to get that high note (see above description).

A *Low Breath* is achieved by:

- THINK Low
- Breathe into the Chest
- Raise your Soft Palate Lower by
 - Yawning
- Drop your Jaw

(See also **Diagram 1 & 2** below for definition of $\updownarrow \leftrightarrow$)

Here is a diagram of a high breath vs. a low breath, and what you should do while vocalizing to make each work correctly.

Diagram 1

UP-DOWN Arrow:

THINK High
Breathe High
Raise your Soft Palate Higher by
Smiling
Opening the mouth
Feeling/looking excited
Use this feeling: “You just bought me a new car...a Lamborghini?” WOW!

THINK Low
Breathe into the Chest
Raise your Soft Palate Lower by
Yawning & Sighing
Drop your Jaw
Breathe down into your abdomen, and other 5 places.



Diagram 2

LEFT-RIGHT Arrow:

THINK of the Stretch.
THINK of the Line.
THINK of the phrase – beginning to end. No stopping in the middle.
CONNECT.



4. Support

- Use correct breathing technique
- Breathe into the stomach and hold the breath in. Use that stretch as your support
- Hold your hand against your belly button and push in – do not push out with your stomach – instead, keep it firm from your upper abdominals, attached to the ribs, to the lower abdominals, attached to the coccyx
- Breathe, and expand your ribs – keep lower ribs expanded
- Keep your stomach firm and contracting while singing
- Stomach firm, not stuck out, and not pulled in

Using the correct breathing technique is vital to maintaining correct support. They both go hand-in-hand

I tend to use examples with all of my students that seem to make sense when it comes to supporting. Breathe into the tummy by expanding the lower ribcage, and stretch into the back. After this, hold your support. Don't hold your air...don't stop moving air...still allow the air to escape, but control it.

Example 2

Imagine a Cliff Wall, and at the top of the cliff, think of a bustling resort. This cliff wall, for some reason, is made out of sand. It is eroded away by the elements, but mainly the wind and the sea. So, what happens when the cliff is eroded away? Simple, the resort crumbles – the wall underneath it has been removed – leaving empty space...it falls away...it collapses.

Now – change the image from a cliff wall – to your belly, and the resort – to that of your chest and lungs. Here is the new example:

You take a big breath into the 6 breathing locations. Slowly, you let the air out on a ZZZ. Keeping your hand on your abdomen (belly, or tummy), as you run out of air, your belly begins to go inwards. As you run out of air in this instance, not only do you collapse your support, but also your ribcage starts to fall. All this, caused by your belly going in when you run out of air.

THE SOLUTION – and also the correct way to support:

Hold your tummy – don't push (as if constipated), and don't pull in (as if lifting heavy weights). These methods both cause a lot of tension...and as we know, tension is not good! Take your breath into your belly by breathing outwards...and pull in (or tug inwards) ever so slightly – we'll call this your initial support. After tugging in, hold your belly still. You'll then be able to support your breath, your diaphragm, your chest, your lungs and your sound. Important!

Think also about “tugging in” the stomach. Breathe into your stomach, then tug in, tighten, and hold the stomach. Support your ribcage by holding the stomach firm with the abdominal muscles.

Support relies on correct breathing. It requires the correct posture to maintain support. Some teachers ask their students to “stick out” their stomachs/belly – this incorrect technique – pushing out the belly causes the rib cage to collapse, in turn, restricting inhalation into the lungs. Therefore, what one must try to achieve when supporting, is to keep a firm stomach – not pushing out, not pulling in, but keeping firm.

5. Mouth and Throat

Most singers will have some form of tension in the facial mask. Why? We distort our vowels, our facial features, we lock out jaws, raise the larynx, etc.

We can eliminate tension if we're a little more relaxed. A relaxed posture, followed by the correct support structure and a tension-free breath will certainly help improve the voice. Here are a few tips to relax the throat, mouth, jaw and face:

- Open your mouth – for all vowels. **Breathe into the shape of the vowel you are about to sing.**
- Get more space in your throat by
 - a) Yawning
 - b) Smiling and yawning (think Aah? – *light-bulb* bright idea)
 - c) Raising eyebrows
- DO NOT STICK OUT YOUR CHIN and DO NOT PUSH FROM YOUR THROAT
- Bring your lips forward when initiating forward placement (but don't tense the mouth area, keep it relaxed)
- Keep tongue down toward lower teeth (it still changes shape for the vowels)
- Keep your jaw relaxed – use vibrato if possible to help relieve tension

I always say it, often two or more times so it sinks in. Breathe in the shape of the vowel you are about to sing! Aah for an Aah vowel (like A-Men), Ooh for an Ooh vowel (like Shoot), Eeh for an Eeh vowel (like Get), Iih for an Iih vowel (like feast), and Auh for an Auh vowel (like four). TRUST ME – it will help with the note if you breathe in the same vowel. You also have to breathe in either a High or a Low Breath to help with *Placement* of the note. See section on *Breathing* for more info.

Here are some more thoughts to think about when preparing a note to sing:

- If you are singing “A-Men”, then breathe in the shape of the vowel – a nice open AAh?
- When I mention AAh? – I do not mean a yawny tired open aah – I mean a bright aah with an inner smile. For example – think aaa-haa? – Like you've just thought of a great idea! Yawning raises the soft palate – smiling while yawning gives you A LOT more space.
- Before you sing a note, breathe into the sound – so not a glottal attack, but a smooth transitioned approach to singing the note.
- Support – which you are always actively thinking about – should come about the time you breathe in some air.
- Drop your jaw for an Aah (**park**) vowel, and Ehh (**let**) vowel, and ooh (**pole**) vowel. For a brighter iih (**see**) vowel, do not spread the vowel sideways – try to place it forward – USE the lips! The same goes for an ooo (**cool**) vowel.
- I've often told people to place a **thumb** inside your mouth pointing upwards to the hard palate – if you sing *towards that sound*, it is a good way to *feel* where the voice must be **placed!**

While discussing **placement**, to feel the chest voice, place one hand on the upper chest – while singing, you will *feel* the vibrations, or **Buzz** – you must try to focus your sound into the chest – to gain a better and more *round* sound.

Head voice – an easy way is to place hands round your face, from the temples forward, as if you are clocking out light (| *-* |) – see – the two lines on either side of the face represent your hands. Use that covering to focus your sound into the head.

You can also think about singing into a V-Shape (*^*) – the V-Shape happens between your eyes on your forehead. This is where you want to focus your **PING!**

Third, you can use the thumb approach shown above.

Another form of releasing tension is **VIBRATO**. This is when your throat is at its most relaxed – allowing the sound to *vibrate* off the inner walls, tension-free.

On the next few pages, you'll find Exercises and Vocalizes which will help you sing better. They are split into different sections:

Warm-Up
Support
Placement
Breathing
Challenging

Thank you for Reading. Questions, comments, concerns,
email me at:

lessons@dudleyvocalstudio.com

This Booklet has been written solely for use in Lessons with Chris Dudley. Further details, examples, policies, fees, updates and information, as well as a 12-page teaching philosophy, are found on my website.

www.dudleyvocalstudio.com

© 2005, Washington DC