

Warm-Ups Breathing/Body

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Warming Up

Good musicians "warm-up" before performing. Making music --whether with the voice or an instrument is a physical activity. Muscles that produce sound need to be warmed up. This helps to prevent injuries. Warm-Ups tune the ears, move a person into a musical readiness by stretching/relaxing both the body and the voice, and focus the mind on music.

Warm-Ups in school music lessons also provide an opportunity for a quick "practice" session for beat, rhythm and pitch matching. Each lesson in Can Do will have ideas for warm-up. Use the ones given in the lesson or, as the year progresses, your favourites from past lessons. The first time a warm-up is used, detailed instructions will be included in the lesson. Check out the appendix for a complete list of CanDo1 warm-ups.

Enjoy the warm-ups, they're intended to be fun. Keep the pace moving and time given short.

Body: Shoulder Shrugs

Have students mimic you as you ...

roll one shoulder forward, then back

roll the other shoulder forward, then back

draw both shoulders up to your ears, hold, then drop them

put chin down to neck and slowly raise it

REPEAT ONCE

Comment to students about the importance of posture for singing, i.e. straight backs, shoulders down, head held high.

Body: Stretches (while standing)

Stretch one hand up very, very high ... now let it go.

Stretch the other hand up very, very high ... now let it go.

Stretch your toes down low into the floor ... now let them go.

Move your head one way, now the other (stretching neck).

Pull your shoulders up to your ears, hold them, now let them go.

Once again, pull your shoulders up to your ears, hold them, and let them go.

Breathe in through your nose, and gently out through your mouth.

Again, breathe in through your nose and gently out through your mouth.

Very quietly, very gently, give your body a small, small shake.

Without making a sound, sit down.

Body: Yawning Sighs

Model a yawning sigh i.e. take a breath in as you pull your shoulders up to your ears, then slowly, steadily yawn an "aaaaah" out and bring your shoulders down to a relaxed position. The key is to let the breath out slowly and steadily. This is a relaxing exercise as well as a precursor to using a long sustaining breath out to sing on. Yawns really are contagious, so keep your patience at hand for the epidemic soon to hit your class.

Ask your students to do yawning sighs with you. Their challenge is to keep yawning (breathing out) as long as you do. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Body: Making Faces

Begin with a few simple stretches e.g. one arm to the sky, now relax; other arm to the sky, now relax. Remind students that musicians use all of their bodies to make music. Singers need to be able to use many muscles in their faces. Stretch the mouth very wide (giggles inevitable). Relax. Stretch the mouth from the forehead to the chin, dropping the chin down. Relax. Make a surprised face. Relax. Make a happy face. Relax. Make a sad face. Relax. Wiggle your nose like a bunny. Relax. Move your eyebrows around. Relax.

CD2

After the exercise, ask:

"What is the word we use for feelings in music?" (mood)

Music is a physical activity. Muscles and lungs produce sound. Stress affects sound. Stretching both warms up the body and releases tension at the same time.

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Body/Breathing: Flame Flickering

Imagine a candle, lit in front of you. Now try to make the flame flicker WITHOUT blowing it out.

Give a count-in of:

1	2	ready	breathe
in	through the	nose	and
1	2	

1st Time: as long as possible

2nd Time: until the conductor counts to 4

3rd Time: until the conductor counts to 8

Repeat.

Warm-Ups(3 minutes)

- 1** Body: Ho Ho Diaphragm Muscles
Ho ho ho ho
Ha ha ha ha
He he he he heeee

With one breath, each syllable is sounded to "so", then with another breath to "mi" and finally to "do." Change keys and repeat the pattern.

This warm-up exercises the diaphragm muscles as the expulsion of air to form the "h" comes from the belly/diaphragm pushing suddenly up against the lungs. At the same time it works as a pitch warm-up. And --it's fun.

While doing this exercise, occasionally ask students to place one hand gently on the diaphragm. This may help students to breath from their "belly" instead of from their chest. It's also a way to feel the muscle moving.

I first met Sarah when she was 6. She now sings opera professionally. In the audio track of this warm-up she offers a beautiful model. You may want to try using the track for students to echo, even if you are a singer yourself. It's helpful to provide different singing models for students to hear and echo.