



Ultimate Guide :

90 *Days* to become

a better singer

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Introduction

Do you love to sing? Do you find yourself singing along with your iPod music or whatever is playing on the radio at the moment? Or are you a more serious singer with career plans?

The interesting fact about singing is that professionals and amateurs alike want to sing better when they enjoy singing. If this describes you then you're in for a real treat because the information in this ebook was written just for people who want to sing better. The goal of this ebook is to give you essential information about singing so you show improvement within 90 days.

In reality, singing is like any other skill. It must be practiced regularly, and there is almost always room for improvement. Great artists like opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, rocker Mick Jagger and soul singer Aretha Franklin practice regularly looking for new singing techniques and better voice control. Professionals work diligently to perfect pitch, tone and time and when they hit the high notes it's a thing of beauty.

Becoming an accomplished singer takes time, but you can hear improvement in just a few lessons. You must become thoroughly familiar with your voice and then begin to take the right steps to control what comes from your vocal cords. Despite what some think, a true singer uses the whole body to get the best sounds. You have to learn how to breathe, relax and articulate.

For those who hope to sing professionally or for the entertainment of others, there is information on connecting with an audience and projecting the right emotion.

You will also read about singing lessons available as software programs. They are ideal for people who just can't afford the money for private singing lessons or when scheduling is a problem. Thanks to the internet you can learn to sing at home as if you are getting private professional lessons. It is hoped you will find the inspiration to pursue your singing career.

This ebook is just a starting point for singing training. It presents essential concepts, looks at common singing mistakes and talks about the benefits of singing lessons. In the end though, your progress will depend on your willingness to practice, practice and practice. So let's sing!

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Looking for singing help

Have you ever met a person who cannot sing? Think carefully before you answer because the truth is that every man and woman can sing. The problem is that every man and woman may not be able to sing well. There are good singers, bad singers and untrained singers. The good singers represent those who have a natural talent that has been honed and perfected through practice and probably lessons.

Bad singers are people who sing off-key, cannot carry a tune or torture melodies and words. The interesting fact is that even bad singers can become good singers in many cases with the right training.

That's why a third category named "untrained singers" is mentioned. Untrained singers include people who are:

- Familiar with singing concepts but need to upgrade their skills
- Have no singing training at all but enjoy singing
- Interested in singing – have never tried singing – but are ready to learn how to sing for the fun of it

You could say the untrained singers' category includes everyone! People decide to sing for many different reasons but they can be divided into two broad categories:

1) Personal Reasons

Do you enjoy singing in the shower? When you go to a birthday party, do you always end up singing a song to entertain the guests? Are you in the church choir or a local singing group to sing just for the enjoyment of it? Other personal reasons for singing include:

- Taking part in a local theater production
- Singing in a band made up of friends who enjoy jamming
- Accompanying your guitar playing
- Singing in the school glee club
- Singing in the shower (had to add this one!)

People have personal reasons for singing, and they often include singing to themselves or singing for the benefit of family and friends. But that doesn't mean singing is taken lightly. Even when you sing as a hobby or just for fun, Learn ALL the essentials of becoming a great singer, check out Singorama at:

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you still don't want to make people cringe when you try to hit certain difficult notes or can't keep up with the music.

The information in this ebook talks about improving your singing in 90 days so others can enjoy your hidden talents. Imagine how surprised your grandmother will be when you break into song at her 90th birthday party and she doesn't have to turn off her hearing aid!

2) Professional Reasons

The information in this ebook is also for anyone who wants to sing professionally. Professional singers entertain others and get paid to do so. But professionals are not just stage singers. This category includes:

- Singing in a local band for local establishments
- Hired solo singers
- Rock, country and pop singers seeking fame and fortune as recording artists
- Singing stars headed for the Broadway stage
- Opera singers
- Local event entertainers at fairs, special events, rodeos, sports events, etc.
- Jazz vocalists

Professional singers are not just those who hope to break into show business and eventually make millions recording CDs. They also include entertainers who work locally and really have no plans to go to New York, Nashville or Los Angeles to look for the "big break."

Teach Yourself Lessons Work

It would be nice if everyone could afford to take professional singing lessons taught by experts. In-person one-on-one lessons are quite expensive unfortunately, so they are simply not an option in many cases. But thanks to technology, you can still get the same high quality training and instruction through self-help computer software.

Why should you consider teach yourself lessons? There are lots of reasons!

- Learn the correct basic methods upon which you can build your expertise

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- Correct bad habits that have developed due to lack of training
- Develop your singing potential by learning professional techniques such as proper breathing, articulation, and voice specifics like pitch and range
- Gain access to professional lessons not available locally
- Protect your vocal cords from strain
- Learn to use the whole body to improve your singing
- Try out a variety of song types and expand your horizons
- Develop a personal singing style
- Enjoy the convenience of working on your lessons on your time schedule and not someone else's

At home self help singing lessons give you an opportunity to learn from those professionals you cannot afford to hire. As you will learn in a later chapter, the singing software sold today offers a number of lessons covering a broad range of topics. It's just like taking expensive lessons from the experts but at a fraction of the cost.

At this point, we have considered why people sing and why they should take self-help lessons. Now it is time to get down to the nitty-gritty of improving your singing in less than 90 days. In the following chapter, you will read about vocal cords, and the physical and emotional aspects of singing.

More than Vocal Cords

Singing involves a lot more than just...well...making noises using your vocal cords. Singing is sound, and sound is created through vibrations flowing through some type of medium, which in this case is air.

In most descriptions of how sound is produced, the voice is compared to a wind instrument. Blow into a clarinet, for example, and sound is created by

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forcing the air to vibrate in the column of the instrument which is called the resonator.

When you consider that your singing is like playing a wind instrument then it's easy to understand that singing is about a lot more than vocal cords. If you learn anything from this ebook then it should be this: singing requires control and training of the whole body, and not just the vocal cords.

In the following sections we will discuss vocal cords, the different types of voices, the voice specifics that impact the quality of singing, and the physical and emotional aspects of learning to sing well.

Just remember as you read that singing is a powerful communication method that also happens to be a lot of fun. You might want to croon like Michael Bublé, rock like Lady Gaga, hip hop like Will.I.Am or quietly sing like Sarah McLachlin. You may want to belt out the soul like Aretha Franklin or sound a little country like Taylor Swift.

Whatever singing style you intend to pursue, you will need to learn to control your body which is your own personal wind instrument. You will also need to learn how to project emotion and connect with an audience.

Vocal Cords and the Breathing System

Though your vocal cords are not the only part of your body that affects your singing voice, it's a good place to start the discussion. When you hear words like acoustics and resonance, you may not necessarily think of vocal cords. But your vocal cords are part of a system that includes:

- Lungs that inhale and exhale air
- Vocal folds that vibrate
- Pharynx and mouth which make up your resonator

Acoustics refers to the principles and properties of sound. Just think of all the times you have heard teenagers talk about the "great acoustics" of their stereo systems. What they are talking about is the quality of sound that is achieved through sound frequency (number of vibrations), amplitude (sound

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volume and intensity), duration (how long the sound lasts) and form (structure of the sound).

Your lungs, vocal folds, mouth, air passageway and the diaphragm all play a part in sound production. Another term you need to know is *tone*. Tone is the quality of the sound. To get good quality, which is one of the singing goals, you need to control your breathing in a way that produces the best human acoustics and tone.

Yes...it's true! You are going to "play" your breathing system so that your natural wind instrument makes beautiful sound. Breathing is intricately entwined with sound and thus your singing quality. You must manage how air flows through your breathing system. That's why singing lessons always include breathing lessons, and you are instructed to begin your sound-making effort in the diaphragm and not in your voice box where the vocal cords are located.

Remember the child's song that chants something like this: The ankle bone is connected to the leg bone, and the leg bone is connected to the knee and so on? That same type of connectedness applies to your breathing system.

- Diaphragm – large muscle that separates the abdomen and the lungs and its contractions contributes to the inhalation and exhalation of air
- Lungs – air sacs that expand and contract as air is drawn in or expelled
- Trachea – the channel of your human wind instrument through which air passes
- Vocal cords – vibrating folds that create sound as air passes through and causes changes in air pressure
- Voice Box (larynx) – cartilage box that contains the vocal cords
- Pharynx – the throat or the tube that runs from the top of the larynx to the nose and includes the hard and soft palates
- Mouth – oral cavity that includes your lips, tongue, and teeth

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- Resonating chambers – the facial bones around the cheeks next to the nose and the hollow sinus cavities over the eyes

So now that you know the parts of the body that affect your singing, you can begin to learn how each one affects the sound you produce. All these parts work together to create sound tone, resonance, articulation, intensity, pitch and range.

Did you think that to sing well all you had to do was open your mouth and let the sound pour forth? There are probably some people who have a gift and an instinct that lets them produce ideal sound without practice, but they are few and far between.

You need to seriously practice breathing control if you want to improve your singing in 90 days. In general, the parts just mentioned serve the following purposes in sound production.

- Diaphragm – affects sound strength
- Lungs – healthy lungs can assist with clearer sound
- Trachea – fully open it will enable unimpeded air flow for better sound
- Vocal cords – the characteristics of the vocal cords affect the pitch and quality of sound produced
- Larynx – where resonance is created
- Pharynx – critical to creating rich sounds that do not have a nasal quality
- Mouth – used to articulate words in a song
- Resonators – creates amplified sounds with full tone

In a nutshell this is how it works: When you get ready to sing, the folds of the vocal cords lightly close. The lungs expel air through the folds forcing them to gently vibrate. The vibration creates sound.

To produce the best sounds you will need to learn how to control many of these physical parts. For example, you will need to learn how to control your breathing while maintaining a good posture for example.

In the next section, we will review the different types of voices, which are determined by how your physical parts function.

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Voice Types

There are five basic types of voices, and they are separated by gender.

- Women – soprano or alto
- Men – tenor, baritone or bass

The voice classifications are defined according to the range of notes the voice can sing well. There are many different physical features that determine the type of voice you are working with as you sing. For example, the pitch is partially determined by the physical attributes of the vocal cords including the length and width. *Pitch* refers to the high note and the low note you can sing.

This is important to understand because you have a voice that nature gave you. If you are a tenor then you will not want to choose songs that need a bass singer. If you are a soprano then you want to pick songs that fit within the range of notes you are most qualified to sing.

Probably one of the biggest mistakes beginning singers make is choosing songs that require notes outside their range. Think of it like this – could you hit the high notes in an operatic song? Most people cannot, so you wouldn't want to pick a song suited for an opera.

Now think in terms of all songs including modern day rock or pop. You might not be able to handle the songs Mariah Carey (a soprano) sings if you are an alto.

On American Idol, one of the frequent comments made by the judges is that the song the contestant chose did not fit their voice well. It's like trying to put a square peg into a round hole. The fit will never be good unless you choose songs with a range suitable for your voice classification.

Another term you might like to keep in mind is *tessitura*. Tessitura refers to the note range you are the most comfortable singing. We have all listened to singers that go too far out of their singing comfort zone, and the result is almost painful to hear. Singers do regularly exceed their range but trained singers also know their limits.

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Vocal cord activity creates the type of singing voice, while the other parts of your sound production system add nuances. Short vocal cords that are kept relaxed will produce a deep voice. Vocal cords that are lengthened and kept tighter will lead to sounds that have a higher pitch.

Following is a general summary of the vocal types that have been defined in the music world.

Soprano

The soprano describes a female singing voice that is at the highest level. The note range is generally between middle C and High C on the music scale. It is in this note range that the soprano will sing with rich powerful tones. Mariah Carey, Jessica Simpson, Julie Andrews and Maria Callas are all sopranos.

The typical soprano has a tessitura closer to the high C as opposed to the middle C. Some can sing many more octaves above high C. But the voice classifications are defined by the most comfortable note range for the singer's voice.

A mezzo soprano is a singer who can sing more comfortably or powerfully at the lower end of the scale range or a couple of octaves below middle C. A classic mezzo-soprano is Aretha Franklin. Think of her rich warm singing tones at the lower end and yet she can slide to the top and hit the high C.

Other mezzo sopranos include Celine Dion, Tina Turner, Patti LuPone and Cecilia Bartoli. Some people classify Lady Gaga as a mezzo soprano.

Alto

An alto is the lowest female singing voice. Also called contralto, the note range is E, F or G below middle C, to G above the treble clef staff.

An alto voice is dark and rich. Jazz singers are often altos that have voices that seem warm and almost poured.

There are not many true altos, and it is a very distinctive voice. Familiar altos include Alicia Keys, Cher, Tracy Chapman and Amy Winehouse.

Tenor

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A male tenor has a range that starts with the C below middle C. The range extends to the A on the treble clef staff. This is the highest male singing voice. Like the soprano, the voice's power is in the upper section of the range, and a tenor can often go higher than the A above middle C.

Tenors frequently get lead singing roles in movies and plays. But tenors can vary in voice resonance. Classical tenors like Luciano Pavarotti and Enrico Caruso had heavier resonance than modern day tenors like Elton John, Justin Timberlake or Paul McCartney.

Baritone

A baritone sings in a range that extends from A below middle C to the A above middle C. Generally, most male singers are baritones because the note range falls within middle range of a man's voice.

Names of familiar baritones include Robert Goulet, Elvis Presley and Barry Manilow.

Bass

The bass voice is the lowest of the voices of male singers. The bass is dark and heavy and low. Generally the note range is from the low E to the E above middle C. Bass singers have a tessitura that hovers around the octaves below middle C.

True bass singers are not common. One of the most well known is Richard Sterban who is a bass singer with the Oak Ridge Boys. Other bass singers include JD Sumner who was with the Elvis Presley back-up singers, and Barry White.

You don't have to know your vocal type, but knowing it can help you have a more enjoyable singing experience. As mentioned, you will be able to choose songs that fit your voice best. You will also know the notes that will probably be most comfortable for your voice. You can practice within your range and develop a high quality and pleasing singing voice.

Taking Lessons

There are a lot of reasons why taking singing lessons is important. Some of the reasons are simple. You can gain more confidence as a singer by
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knowing you are doing all you can to create the highest quality singing. This confidence will also help you develop the best stage presence so you can connect with the audience.

If you hope to become a professional singer, then lessons are almost mandatory. As you have probably figured out by now, there are many aspects to voice control and sound production. Learning the proper techniques and voice specifics can help you advance your singing career.

Following are some of the things you can learn by taking singing lessons.

Avoiding Vocal Cord Damage

Your voice relies on many different physical components. All those physical components are tissue like muscles, cartilage and bone. In addition, there are more delicate tissues like mucous linings present, and these linings can cause you problems when they become inflamed due to sickness or exposure to allergens.

Lessons can't prevent bacterial infections of colds, but they can help you prevent damaging your vocal cords. The entire vocal system can be quite fragile. Improper use of your voice can damage the vocal cords, and this makes singing lessons all the more valuable.

As related to singing, vocal cord damage can result from:

- Singing or talking outside the comfortable note range for your voice (too high or too low pitch)
- Singing too loudly at almost a scream (think of rockers where you read they had to take time off to let their vocal cords heal)
- Singing for long periods of time without a rest
- Strain or overuse
- Nodules forming due to repeated excessive pressure on the same vocal cord locations
- Failing to do vocal cord warm-up exercises
- Speaking in a voice too low that forces muscles and the vocal cords to work unnaturally

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When vocal cords are damaged, the voice can become gravelly sounding or raspy. You might get hoarse or have trouble singing notes with consistency. Sometimes people with strained vocal cords have voices that suddenly cut out on particular notes.

Singing lessons can prevent many of these problems by teaching you how to avoid vocal cord strain. You also learn how to control your breathing so that your vocal cords work as efficiently as possible. Later in this ebook you will read more about breathing.

Vocal Cord Health

Closely related to preventing vocal cord damage is vocal cord health. Singing lessons can only do so much to protect your vocal cords from damage. You have to take responsibility for your lifestyle if you are serious about improving your singing for 90 days.

The videos you see that show rock musicians smoking one cigarette after another in between music sets should actually make you cringe. Smoking is not only bad for your general health, but it can lead to a raspy hoarse sound and wheezy lungs. That doesn't sound like something a good singer wants does it?

The rockers can sometimes get away with raspy sounds simply because the loud music covers up voice and breathing sounds. Refusing to smoke is just one way to benefit your singing. Following are some more suggestions for maintaining vocal cord health:

- Drink plenty of water so the vocal cords stay hydrated and work smoothly
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Do regular cardiovascular exercises to maintain healthy lungs and a healthy cardiovascular system
- Give your vocal cords regular rest to avoid overuse
- Don't try to sing outside your normal pitch range
- Do learn to sing more powerfully through singing lessons while staying within your tessitura

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- If you feel any larynx aching, detect cracks or missing in your singing then stop and rest for at least a day or two
- Get plenty of sleep because sleep restores all of the body's systems from the day's stresses including the stress on your vocal cords
- Do drink warm soothing and refreshing herbal teas, but avoid caffeine which will dry out vocal cords
- Avoid alcohol because it too will dry out vocal cords
- Avoid foods that cause even mild allergic reactions or phlegm production
- Don't try to frequently talk over noises like air conditioners or car engines, because loud talking will strain your vocal cords
- If you suffer from frequent heartburn or acid reflux you need to see a doctor because regular stomach acid production can damage your sensitive trachea, larynx, pharynx and more
- Be careful about the type of medications you take because antihistamines are drying and can cause vocal cords to dry out also

This may seem like a long list of mostly “don't do”, but consider this fact. Most of the suggestions for maintaining vocal cord health are followed by anyone living a healthy lifestyle whether they sing or not!

Physical Aspects of Singing

There are many physical aspects to singing and we will discuss each one briefly. As you read through the descriptions, it is important to remember that learning how to sing better is an ongoing process. You don't do breathing exercises just once, you do them frequently. You want to always maintain good posture and to clearly pronounce your words.

Breathing

There are two sides to breathing – inhaling and exhaling – and both play an important role in singing. Breathing is a natural biological function, but you can control how you breathe in order to develop your best singing voice.

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Inhalation is when you draw in breath. You want to inhale using your diaphragm and not your chest. When you breathe from your chest, it means you are taking shallow breaths. You want to learn how to take deep breaths.

The diaphragm, as described earlier, is an important muscle that separates the abdomen and rib cage. But many beginning singers don't realize the diaphragm muscle is also connected to other abdominal and back muscles.

To breathe deeply you need relaxed back muscles that don't limit your diaphragm movements. To practice breathing deeply:

- Loosen the back and diaphragm muscles with stretching exercises
- Stand with good singing posture
- Lift your rib cage first
- Breathe deeply so that your diaphragm expands and contracts, and not your rib cage
- Take many deep breaths and practice while feeling for expansion in your diaphragm muscle, side and back muscles

For singing you must learn to take in air quickly without making a lot of noise. All of us have heard singers who breathe so loudly while singing that it's impossible to enjoy the song. While practicing deep inhalation, you also want to practice doing it quietly.

Exhaling properly might be even more important than inhaling correctly. Sound doesn't happen until air is forced out through the vocal folds. Once you have stretched your muscles and assumed a good posture, you will:

- Concentrate once again on the abdomen and back muscle area
- Inhale as just described
- Release the air slowly in a steady stream
- Feel for movement in your middle muscle groups instead of in your rib cage

Proper exhalation never involves sudden bursts of air being shoved out of the lungs. When you take singing lessons, you will learn a number of exercises that teach you how to expand your lung capacity, control your exhalation, and release air without making breathing noises.

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As you move into more complex breathing exercises, one of the first ones you will do involves making a constant hissing sound while releasing air from the lungs at a steady rate. You can use this exercise to increase your diaphragm volume, and to learn how to control the tension in your voice, and the speed and volume of your singing.

You have learned that proper breathing involves your diaphragm and back muscles more than your rib cage. That may be a surprise to you if you're a novice singer. Another component of breathing you may have noticed is posture.

Posture

Posture is critical to becoming a good singer. It has been mentioned several times already that singing involves the whole body, and not just vocal cords or breathing apparatus. Anytime you are singing you want proper alignment of the body. Notice you need to align the whole body and not just the spine. Good posture enables the diaphragm muscles to work properly and air to flow smoothly from the lungs, and then up and out of the mouth after passing through the vocal cords.

Proper posture requires alignment from your neck all the way down to your feet:

- Keep your neck straight so your ears are aligned over your shoulders. Don't jut your head out
- Keep your shoulders back and down - and don't lift them up
- Keep your spine straight and not curved
- Keep your chest lifted so that the diaphragm works properly
- Keep your hips slightly tucked so that the spine stays straight
- Keep your knees flexible and don't lock them
- Keep your feet separated by shoulder width

Good posture will eventually come naturally if you practice it regularly. There are a number of exercises you can do to help you develop good posture. For

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example, you can tighten and release your midsection and buttocks while maintaining a straight spine. Chin tucks, knee bends and many other exercises will lead to muscle tone and promote good posture.

Diction

It is annoying to enjoy a singer's voice yet be unable to understand the words, or to misinterpret the words. Sometimes it is due to the music overwhelming the singer's voice. Often it is because the singer is not articulating the word vowels and consonants.

Vowels

A...E...I...O...U! In a continuous flow of air you create vowel sounds. It is vowels that play the most important role in tone production. That is because it is the vowels that linger on to produce the longer sounds that separate normal speech from singing.

Vowels are pronounced by controlling the shape of your mouth and tongue, and the position of the soft palate at the back of your throat. The soft palate should be lifted in order to allow clear air flow into the resonators in the face. You don't want to open your mouth too wide horizontally, and you want to keep the jaw relaxed.

These are exercises and techniques you will learn in detail when you take singing lessons. Vowel pronunciation is an interesting topic because there are actually 20 different sounds made using the 5 vowels. For example, think of the way you pronounce the words bat, bake and ball.

Your tongue and lips must be moved in order to pronounce vowels well too. For example, say the word "coot". Did your tongue drop a bit and the lips round? Now say the word "cat" and you will notice your lips widen while the tongue moves in the mouth. Lessons will teach you to keep the horizontal width of your lips in a neutral position so you can keep the soft palate lowered for best air flow.

This may seem like a lot to learn, and that's precisely why people take singing lessons. Learn to pronounce lyrical vowels the correct way and your singing will improve drastically.

Consonants

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A vowel requires continuous air flow but a consonant needs air flow to be interrupted for correct pronunciation. Though the lips, tongue and palate affect air flow and thus vowel sounds, they are called tone articulators when pronouncing consonants. To become a better singer you will need to learn to control the hard and soft palates, the shape of the lips, the placement of the tongue in the mouth and against the teeth, and the position of the lower jaw to produce crisp clear consonants. All of these physical components are called articulators.

Following are some of the things you will learn when taking singing lessons:

- How to pronounce words clearly while keeping them sounding natural by avoiding misplacement of consonant stress
- How to eliminate slurring
- Avoiding letter dropping
- Pronouncing difficult letter combinations like “th” in a way that does not interrupt tone and song flow
- Pronouncing notoriously difficult letters at the end of words like “m” and “r”
- Keeping words separated so that each one is distinct

Singing lessons will help you overcome common diction problems. For example, if you are a typical beginning singer you probably let your tongue block the throat while pronouncing the double “LL” leading to a garbled sound. This problem and many others can be corrected through practice.

Relaxation

If your body is tense then your ability to sing will be affected. For example, tight back muscles can hinder your diaphragm’s functioning. Tight vocal cords can negatively affect the tone of your singing or even make it impossible to sing smoothly.

During your singing lessons you will be taught to always warm up before singing. Warm ups include relaxing the body first through stretching and gentle exercises like yoga type plies to loosen the back and hip muscles.

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After relaxing your body, the next step is to warm up your vocal cords. Good warm up exercises will serve three purposes:

- 1) Prepare the vocal cords for singing
- 2) Teach vocal methods that improve singing results
- 3) Provide warm ups you can use before actual performances

There are many ways to warm-up your vocal cords:

- Slowly inhale and exhale repeatedly
- Hum through the scale while keeping the throat relaxed
- Sing the alphabet without stopping to work on breath control
- Sing the notes of your comfortable scale range
- Practice singing a single word but at a range of pitches
- Putting your lips and mouth in a neutral position, and moving between tones from one end of sound to another, i.e. “ay” as in pray to “aw” as in brawl or “ee” to “ah”
- Sing patterns of notes as you progress through lessons
- Sing notes in ascending and descending patterns
- Add consonant exercises such as singing the vowel “o” but using your tongue only to form consonant letters

This list just gives you an idea of the types of vocal exercises you can do to warm up your vocal cords.

All About Emotions

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As many people take singing lessons to perform in public, it's important to work on presentation too. Presentation refers to how you present yourself as a singer on stage to an audience. Presentation affects:

- The confidence you feel as a singer
- Your ability to connect with the audience
- Your ability to sing well by maintaining proper posture and form
- Movements you make like walking on stage or making hand gestures

As a matter of fact, many singing instructors will tell you that projecting confidence is one of the most important things you can do as far as connecting with an audience. Singers who are confident don't just stand still on stage. They move around and use hand gestures to emphasize the words in the songs, but you can't do that well unless you practice.

You should walk with confidence and a good posture onto stage, and your body should appear to be relaxed. Unless you are a punk rock performer, you don't want to move around too much and distract the audience from your singing. You want each member of the audience to feel as if you came to sing just for him or her.

Using American Idol again, think about the times the judges said, "You can really sing but you also have a way of presenting yourself that indicates you could be a star performer." That is a singer who has presented her or himself well and connected with the audience.

There is something else you need to be careful about too. You can be overly dramatic and project too much emotion also. This will usually turn off the audience and the listeners will be sitting there hoping the song ends soon.

One of the best steps you can take to make it easier to present yourself correctly is to choose songs that fit your voice style. If you pick the wrong song and find yourself struggling to hit the notes, the audience will notice and the connection will be lost.

The many vocal exercises you do are designed to add amplitude, control, resonance and tone to your singing. As you master these various aspects of

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singing, you will find that it is much easier to add emotion. Rich melodious tones that wash over the audience are your lures.

Learning how to use a microphone is also important. The microphone can be a handy tool for enhancing your singing, or an impediment that blasts your singing faults.

There are different types of microphones including the dynamic microphone, the condenser microphone, and the wireless microphone. The dynamic microphone is a good choice for beginning singers who need to work on microphone technique.

It's important to realize that a microphone does not fix your singing problems. It is only for projecting volume so the people in the back of the audience can hear too. Learning to handle the microphone on stage is critical. We have all witnessed a singer struggle with a microphone that won't fit back into the stand or who holds it too close or too far.

Following are some suggestions for mastering microphone techniques.

- Hold your mouth within 3 inches of the microphone so it picks up the whole sound range of your voice
- Keep the microphone at your mouth while turning your head or moving your body on stage
- Keep the microphone balanced in your hand so you never lose control
- Practice articulation at home using a microphone so you can learn to avoid making loud popping noises using certain letters like "d" or "p"
- Never let the microphone block your face
- Learn how to move the microphone closer and away from your mouth depending on the strength of certain notes you sing

Voice Specifics

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Much of the discussion so far has focused on how to improve your singing using your body, managing your vocal cords and practicing with vocal exercises. In this section we will talk about some of the technical aspects of singing. This is not intended to be an in-depth discussion but rather one that introduces you to the basic theory of singing.

Pitch

Pitch is a term used to indicate how high or low a note is, and is based on the frequency of vibrations made by waves of sound. Each note on the scale is defined by the number of vibrations produced each second.

Everyone sings multiple pitches which make up the range of notes discussed earlier that are associated with voice classifications. In other words, you can sing different pitches along a scale of notes, but the high and low notes you can comfortably sing will depend on your vocal qualities.

When you are learning to sing, you will learn about relative pitch. You will learn to recognize the C note (for example) as the absolute pitch, and then hear the notes that surround that C as relative pitch.

Each pitch, or note, is assigned a letter – A, B, C, D, E, F and G. The letter assignment is an absolute pitch reference. A C is a C! When the singing instructor says to sing the E note, you will know exactly what note he is talking about.

To sing better, you will need to learn how to recognize absolute pitch and then practice so you can accurately match the note with your voice. From that absolute pitch, you can then begin to practice singing ranges of notes.

Intervals

How do you stay in tune? It is not just by recognizing pitch. You also need to understand intervals. An interval is the distance separating two notes or pitches. There can be a smaller half-step or a larger whole step.

With singing lessons you will learn to recognize the distances between the two pitches. Does this remind you of relative pitch? It should, because when you are hearing the intervals you are actually working with notes around a base note. In this case the relative pitch note is usually the lower note in the notes comprising the interval.

Rhythm and Timing

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“I’ve got rhythm, I got music...who could ask for anything more?” That’s a line from the famous song “I’ve Got Rhythm” written by George Gershwin. But why would rhythm make anyone happy?

Rhythm is synchronicity of your singing with the music, and can even incorporate your body movements. Rhythm addresses how long you need to linger on a note while singing. Each note in the song you sing will have a note value which is the beat of the music.

As you learn to master rhythm in your singing lessons, you will learn about whole notes (4/4 beat), half notes (half of a whole note), quarter notes (half of a half note) and eighth notes (half of a quarter note). The number of beats in a measure determines how long you hold a note. A measure is simply a set of four beats. So a 4/4 beat means there are 4 whole notes in one measure.

Here’s another old expression people use a lot: It’s all in the timing! Of course they are often referring to how they time their investments. In music, there is a time signature. This is a number that looks similar to a fraction and appears on the written music.

The timing signature tells you the number of beats you will find in the measure, and it also tells you what the overall beat is to be. So a 4/4 written on the music means there are 4 quarter beats in the measure and the basic beat is a quarter note.

The importance of taking lessons is probably becoming clearer by the minute as you read. This is a very short description of rhythm and the time signature. There is so much more to learn like dotted notes, tied notes, slurred notes and rest. You will also need to learn how fast to sing the notes (tempo), when to change the tempo, and when to hold a note.

Key

Music is written in a key. The key is the central note around which the music is written. When someone says a song is written in the key of C, then C is your point of reference for singing the song.

Range

There was some discussion of range in the section that discussed the different types of voices. Range is the high and low notes you can comfortably sing without straining your voice. For example, a bass singer would have

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difficulty singing a song written for a tenor unless the key is changed - and doing that can significantly change the song.

One of the steps in learning to sing better is identifying your range. As you progress, you can extend your range to higher and lower notes than those in your tessitura. Extending your range involves diaphragm and breathing control.

Sight Singing

Sight singing means being able to sing music without hearing it played first. To be able to sight sing takes a good understanding of the notes written on paper, the musical notations giving you instructions about things like tempo and key, and the notes on the scale.

It takes a lot of practice to successfully sight sing. You need to be able to look at sheet music and “hear” the absolute pitch first and then how the relative pitches sound. As you learn to sight sing, you will sing plenty of patterns while learning to identify melodies.

In 90 days?

It may seem as if there is simply too much to learn to be able to sing better in 90 days. A lot of terms have been introduced, but you can sing better in a short period of time just by learning how to control your breathing. Yes...that's right...you will see some singing improvement quickly by practicing your breathing exercises and correcting your posture.

As you have seen, there are many different techniques and exercises you learn that will fully develop your voice whether you want to sing at home, on stage, or in a studio. You may not even be fully aware of your true singing ability because you have not tested your voice range and don't know how to interpret song instructions. This is why taking singing lessons can be so important.

Choosing Singing Software

You can get expert singing advice right at home simply by using singing software.

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In fact, singing software is designed to help *all* singers no matter what type of song style is chosen. You may want to sing:

- Musical theater
- Classical music
- Country
- Rock
- Pop
- Gospel
- Rhythm and Blues
- Jazz
- Choir
- Hip hop

If you are a beginning or intermediate singer, chances are you need help taking your singing to the next level. In reality though, you don't even want to go to the next level unless you are sure you understand the basics, many of which were mentioned earlier in this ebook.

If you are truly serious about singing then you need to call upon the experts. You can do that by purchasing singing software which costs a fraction of the cost of private lessons. Because of technology, the software can help you develop singing techniques, address special needs, and even provide voice feedback.

Shopping for Singing Software

When choosing a software package, you want to consider the following:

1. Good explanations and information

The information should be understandable and thorough. Thorough means it includes essential information about vocal basics first to lay a good foundation. The following lessons should teach increasingly progressive material so you can work towards reaching your singing goals. High quality singing software will teach you how to identify your personal sound, how to adapt your speaking voice to the music you want to sing, how to improve your confidence level, and how to develop singing skills needed to be successful.

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2. Matches Your Learning Style

If you learn by doing, then you want to buy singing software with plenty of lessons that will teach you and encourage you to improve your vocal skills, expand your singing range, improve your singing tone and even how to deliver a song successfully (think presentation!)

3. Has a Variety of Features that Insure Learning Success

Picture this scenario: You get excited about learning to sing only to discover the software you bought is so basic you could have figured out the material from a book!

You don't want to buy singing software that fails to teach you what you need to know to pursue your singing career (no matter how you define that career). But you also don't want to buy software that is "flat" and just throws material at you without really helping you to mature as a singer.

When buying singing software, look for the following features:

- Written and audio materials so you can study and hear the lessons
- Appropriate for the level of singing experience – beginners and more advanced singers should find plenty of relevant material
- Thorough lessons that cover all the important specifics of particular topics and don't leave you confused by lack of detailed information
- Offers advice from recognized expert instructors in the singing field
- Gives you the ability to record your singing so you can hear how you sound as you learn new techniques

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- Provides plenty of warm up exercises
- Offers voice feedback which gives you valuable information about your singing and where you need to work on improvement
- Gives you the ability to practice a variety of songs so you can expand your horizons and test the limits of your singing abilities

4. Gives Valuable Information On Special Singing Topics

Do you want to learn how to harmonize? That is not an easy skill to learn but there is software on the market that includes techniques for learning how to sing with others.

Do you want to sing in a band? Then the singing lessons should specifically include the particular techniques you need to learn to be successful. For example, you will learn voice projection, matching your singing style to the rhythm of the song, and blending your singing with the music to prevent being drowned out.

Maybe you just want to sing with a guitar or a piano. The software you buy should teach you how to harmonize with an instrument, so to speak.

Quality singing software should also teach you to sight sing. Sight singing is a skill that is an almost necessity to be a successful singer. Not all software includes important lessons on this topic which would leave a big gap in your singing education.

5. Recording Studio

In effect, the singing software should be the equivalent of a recording studio. This will enable you to get feedback, try new vocal techniques, utilize a backing track, and create audio files.

6. Price

The price of the software should be reasonable. You can spend a small fortune on software and still not get the features you need. You should be careful about falling for sales hype, and check to see that the singing software offers the benefits listed above.

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Correcting Common Vocal Problems

This topic is put under its own heading because it is so important. There has been a lot of discussion on everything from learning vocal techniques to handling a microphone on stage. But many people seeking voice lessons are bringing problems with them that they have already developed through amateur singing efforts.

Singing software should provide expert advice that helps you overcome vocal problems including but not limited to the following:

- Singing too quietly - which means you must learn breathing techniques that improve amplitude
- Lyrics are difficult to understand - which means you need to work on diction and better control of your tongue, mouth, and lips
- Singing off-key (over or under pitch) - which means you need help with relaxation, breathing, and identifying your natural range
- Voice cracks indicating a strained voice - which means you need to learn how to identify the causes of your vocal strains
- Unable to hit the high notes - which means you need more vocal power through air control in order to reach close to the upper scale range of your tessitura

These are just a few examples of the types of common vocal problems singers in training face. You want to buy singing software that addresses these real problems with workable solutions.

There's a lot to consider when purchasing singing lessons. Whether you plan on singing karaoke or with a heavy metal band, the software you purchase should help you meet your goals.

Conclusion

Singing is something everyone does at some point in their life. People who sing at church, at the local community theater, with a band or alone all have something in common. There is always room for improvement!

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Singing is an art form and that means there are certain techniques to master in order to create masterpieces. What is so wonderful about singing is that you can define what a masterpiece of singing is in your life. You might simply want to be able to harmonize better with your church choir members. Your masterpiece might be learning how to sing pop music so you can pursue a singing career. Perhaps you see yourself as the next recording studio sensation.

Singing is a creative activity that requires physical and emotional control. It would be nice if you could just tweak this and that, but singing is an inclusive event. Your posture must support your breathing and your breathing affects the sounds that are produced by your vocal cords. What you drink or the air you breathe can affect your vocal cords, so singers must adopt a lifestyle that supports their art form.

The best way to learn how to sing is methodically. That is why singing lessons were invented, and with technology you can bring those lessons home. One of the advantages of using singing software is that you can work at your own pace and take all the time you want learning certain techniques. You never have to feel pressured or rushed, or even run up a huge expense in lessons.

With singing software, you can bring the expert vocal teachers right into your living room. By following the lessons step by step, you will notice improvement in your singing within 90 days. Many people sing better much sooner.

If you have a goal to sing your very best then there is no time like the present to begin working on that goal. Even if you don't know a thing about singing, except that you enjoy doing it, vocal lessons are in order. Many people reading this will have some singing experience and lessons are in order for them too.

The reason is that, like all art forms, practice makes perfect but you have to know what to practice!

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Recommended Reading: Singorama by Emily Mander

<http://singorama.churchchoirmusic.com>

Even if you're not a professional musician, wouldn't it be great to be able to sing like one? One way to learn how to do that is Singorama.

Singorama is a downloadable interactive multi-media singing course by Emily Mander. It includes 28 audio lessons, 21 vocal exercises, two e-books, and two bonus software programs.

If you're a beginner it will give you a solid foundation from which to launch your musical aspirations. If you have some experience already, it will help you polish and improve your musicianship and performance skills.

The audio lessons and vocal exercises are presented in MP3 format; they could stand alone, but are supplemented by two e-books. Version 2.0 of the course also includes two bonus software programs: Perfect Your Pitch Pro ear training, and Jayde Musica theory game. These replace the earlier e-book on how to read music that was included with version 1.0.

What's covered?

The course begins with the fundamentals: posture, breath support, tone quality, resonance. The early lessons lay a good foundation of vocal technique. Each subsequent lesson reinforces and builds upon the earlier ones. The Beginners Book opens with a brief overview of music history and theory, then goes into a detailed explanation (several chapters) on the anatomy and physiology of singing.

The remainder of the book discusses various aspects of good vocal technique: pitch, tone quality and placement, breathing. It refers to relevant vocal exercises along the way; as with the audio lessons, each successive chapter builds on and reinforces the previous ones. Each lesson begins with an overview of what will be covered, thorough explanations and demonstrations of the exercises and techniques, and the rationale for each.

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Most of the lessons are between fifteen and twenty minutes long. All of them include examples of the desired sound and sing-along practice. They are designed so that you can play them over and over as many times as desired.

The vocal exercises are provided separately so they can be used singly in practice sessions, though they are also included in the lessons themselves. The later lessons in the series teach the student how to develop your own practice regimen to work on individual goals.

Once you have mastered the basics, you will learn how to project your voice, sing and improvise harmony, expand your range, and approach learning new material. There are lessons on stage presence, performance anxiety ("stage fright"), auditions, and songwriting.

The overall program is very well-constructed, with instruction in solid vocal technique that starts with the fundamentals and moves on from there. It is not tailored to any one style or genre of music, but it does offer suggestions based on genres. For example it might say, for a rock song, try this; for a musical theatre production, try that.

If you follow the program sequentially and faithfully, you will become a better singer, musician, and overall performer. I highly recommend getting a copy and seeing what this exciting course can do for your singing performance.

You can pick up a copy from the link below:

<http://singorama.churchchoirmusic.com>

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