

HOW TO DO A PVI

OBJECTIVES: To teach musical leaders how to give a PVI

NOTE: Individual volunteers will be used in the class. Time will not allow coverage or discussion of all possible vocal issues. Exercises will be pulled from the lists below as appropriate for the volunteer. When necessary, other suggestions not listed here may be introduced

INTRODUCTION: WHY HELP OTHERS HELP THEIR VOICE

To help singers achieve and maintain vocal health into old age when muscles thicken and become less flexible

To help singers sing with more confidence in rehearsal and in performance

To help singers achieve better blend and section accuracy

To help singers release vocal tension and achieve vocal freedom

To help singers develop a more keen awareness of their own voice

Because you can!

A THOUGHT OR TWO:

A PVI is not intended to immediately “fix a failed performance audition

Focus on the singer and avoid showing off your wealth of knowledge

Keep the session tension-free

Give the singer breathing work and one or two other items of homework

Every voice will always be a work in progress and every voice has its own sensitivity to new construction.

Work with simple, familiar exercises in the session to keep concentration on basic techniques and freedom from tension

Consider carefully before “directing” a voice to move further “forward” or to “match” another voice. These instructions can cause a singer to create a false, manipulated sound not really her own.

Make several attempts at a method before changing direction. Allow time for the brain to create new pathways and the ear to hear new dimension in the sound.

ALIGNMENT: TYPICAL POSTURE FAULTS (Your class notes on reverse)

PHYSICAL EXERCISES (Your class notes on reverse)

Visit a good physical therapist for exercises to correct posture problems caused by out of condition muscles

FACIAL POSTURE

- a. Lifted countenance – happiness, anticipation, “ah-ha”
- b. Jaw dropped easily from the back (not chin from the front).

THE BREATH: BEGIN TO BREATHE

Muscles of inhalation are the external intercostals and the diaphragm

Muscles of exhalation are the internal intercostals, the diaphragm and, to a balanced extent, the muscles of the abdominal wall.

Exhalation for singing involves balanced resistance of the external intercostal muscles and the muscles of the abdominal wall and back.

Maintain aligned posture and flexible movement

PRACTICE INHALE AND EXHALE

1. Arms out at shoulder level; bend knees into partial squat. Repeat above exercise (prevents shoulder breathing) (Use a wall or chair for balance if needed.)
2. Allow lower ribs to expand -- sense torso expansion
4. Inhale across roof of mouth and through nose;
5. Be aware of the beginning sensation of a yawn
- 6 Sense an open throat without muscular assistance
7. Cheeks up -- Sensation of “Ah-Ha!”
8. Add light to the eyes to help the pieces work as a system
9. Blow out using correct musculature (resist rib collapse -- guide them down slowly in preparation for next breath). Avoid controlling air flow with neck muscles and lips.

AIRWAY RELAXATION

Puppet Jaw

1. Hum: One note at a time with “puppet jaw.”
Allow jaw to drop for each new breath.
2. Keep cheeks energized with a sense of width.

Tongue position

1. Tongue on lower lip: Pulse forward slightly from the back of the tongue
2. Pulse tongue and breathe
3. Pulse tongue and create tone: Keep tongue moving smoothly and in contact with lower lip during inhalation and during tone flow.

Neck freedom

1. Gently: Keep shoulders quiet and turn head slightly from side to side while breathing and singing.

VOCALIZING:

RESONANCE/FOCUS (Your class notes on reverse)

Listen to resonance: Encourage the singer to allow subtle adjustments a note at a time: Discover the sensation of no sensation!

CONSISTENCY AND RANGE (Your class notes on reverse)

Keep the exercises well-supported, but buoyant; never forced.

ASSESS THE SONG:

1. Listen for obvious breaks in range changes
2. Listen for “force” or “muscling” in dynamic changes
3. Listen and watch for breathing style and breath timing
4. Watch for alignment issues, especially when visual routine is added

DEALING WITH VOCAL ISSUES:

BREAK MENDERS: (Your class notes on reverse)

“Breaks” are built into the voice when we attempt to manipulate the voice with muscle – especially when trying to achieve unreasonable volume and when incorrect support is applied.

**WHEN YOU
NEED HELP**

Find it! Ask other knowledgeable people – consult with vocally knowledgeable directors and coaches in the region, visiting faculty, and vocal instructors at local high schools and colleges.

Take lessons from a qualified instructor.

When several exercises produce no reduction in vocal tension over a two- week period, one or more notes are missing in a singer's range, "huskiness" or any other type of unmusical tone emerges, gently but clearly suggest the singer visit an otolaryngologist who can identify any physical issues causing vocal problems.

**HELP THE
SINGER TAKE
CHARGE:**

1. Encourage with generous amounts of tenacity and patience.
2. Train the voice: It must learn and practice before it can guide the system.
3. Train the ear to hear and accept the new adjustments.
4. Work always on breathing and add one item at a time.

CLOSING:

Helping singers discover and develop their voices is a special gift to be shared generously and gently -- and only as requested.