Build Your Own Warmup

Establishing Balance Walk around the room and ask: "Can I tell if I'm leaning?" "Is my weight over my leading foot?" "Where do I sense the bottom of my torso?" Imagine dribbling a basketball out in front of you. Where do you feel your center? Notice the pressure your feet exert on the ground, and that the ground exerts on your feet. Notice if your head is free to move, your ribs move easily in all directions, your hips feel open and supple, your weight is equal across your feet. Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page*
Stretching Strech arms up to the ceiling and notice rib expansion Meet hands behind back, notice chest expansion Hip circles Bend to the floor roll up slowly Neck semi circles Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page*
Breathing Feel your throat open on inhale and exhale Imagine releasing a bowling ball or frisbee while exhaling on a shhhhhhhhhhh ddddjjjjjjjjjjjj sssssssssssssss zzzzzzzzzzzzzz Inhale for 4 counts, suspend the breath for 4 counts, release the breath for 4 counts Pulse the breath on a quick shhh, ssss, or ffff Sigh out with open throat and slowly add sound Release air on a long wwwwooooahhhhh Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page*

Connecting Spoken Phrases	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page*
Well, Well, Well Whoooo arrreee youuuuu Mmmy Mmamma Mmmakes Mmmuffins Name that tune Late for class Once upon a time Hiiiiiiiiiiiiii But I don't waaaaanna Other:			
Massage	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page*
Chewing muscles, Temples Tongue thrusts, Tongue curls Under chin Imagine chewing gum Sides of hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage Scrunch nose and lips together, spread far apart in wide yawn and smile Other:			
Semi-Occluded	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Sing through a straw Alternate every other pattern with the straw and then a vowel Start the onset of the pattern on a straw then open up to a vowel Lip trill, Tongue trill, Raspberries MMMMMMM, NNNNNNNN, LLLLLLLLL NNNNGGGG, ZZZZZZZ, VVVVVVVV, DJJJJJJ Other:			
Focus the Sound **(easy adduction)**	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Tiny whimpers Puppy whines MmmiamMiamMiamMiam MiuMiuMiuMiu (kitten-like) MoneyMoneyMoney GaNGGaNGGaNGG NweedoNweedoNweeedo Toddle whines 'I don't wanna' 'Aww Maaan' Vocal fry while breathing out & breathing in messa di voce Other:			

Onsets While lip trilling, alternate air only and pitch Alternate SSSS to ZZZZ, SHHHH to DJJJJJ, and FFFFFF to VVVVV Alternate WhyWhyWhy and AiAiAiAi and HaiHaiHaiHai Start AiAiAiAi with a puppy whine Start AiAiAiAi with vocal fry Lightly say "Uh-Oh" and "oops" Staccato Ng and B combined with a vowel (e.g. Ng-Ah, Ng-Ih, Ng-Oo, B-Ah, B-Ih, etc.) Staccato Ih Uh and [ə] (schwa) Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Tongue Independence Tongue thrusts with and without sound Slides with tongue completely out of mouth Raspberries NNNGGGG ---> AAAAAA ZZZZZZ -----> EEEEEEEEE EEEEEEE-----> AAAAAAAA YaYaYaYaYa and KaKaKaKaKa (with jaw still) GangGangGangGang and MingMingMingMing Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Whoop Resonant Strategy Cop Car whoop WHOOP Siren WeeeUUUUeeUUUU Like on a swing WEEEEEEEE Imitate a ghost hoooOOOO Slide on Whoop, Wheep and Whaaap Octave glide on ooo-oh-ah, changing vowel slowly across glide to match the "whoop" boost Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Hey Resonant Strategy Call out 'Hey' to get someone's attention Call out 'Hey' as if annoyed Hey STAY AWAY Slide on Hey Octave glide on eee-eh-ae, changing vowel slowly across glide to match with the "hey" boost Other:	***Length of Time*** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	***Starting Pitch*** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	***Pitch Pattern*** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*

Same Shape Resonant Strategy Glide on Nur (vowel closest to the "ou" in "would") Stacatto and legato alternating N-ur and Nur-Nur Same exercises without the "r", only "Nu" and allow the jaw greater freedom To achieve middle belt (G4-D5) think a little more "aw" in the "ou" Other:	**Length of Time** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	**Starting Pitch** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	**Pitch Pattern** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Stability Across Vowels Neutral Vowels: Ihhhh (bit), Uhhh (bull), and [ə] (schwa=but). Use "bit, bull, but" Apply stability to other vowels by keeping the neutral vowel feeling with speech-level vowels: Aaa([ə])-eehhh(Ih)-eee(Ih)-00hh(Uh)-uuuuu(Uh) Mmaaa Mmehh Mmeee Mmooo Mmuuu Slide low to high eeeeee - ihhhhh Other:	**Length of Time** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	**Starting Pitch** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	**Pitch Pattern** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Vowel/Consonant Combos Let the consonants lead and the vowels energize the consonants Louie Louie Louie Louie Boi Boi Boi Boi Boi AngAngAngAngAng Zingy Zingy Zingy Zing Ai yai yai yai yai New New New New New Bwe Bwe Bwe Bwe Bee Bo Bee Bo Bee Gi ko Gi ko Gi Lee lo Lee lo Lee Vee Veh Vee Veh Speak words from a song or monologue "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog" Other:	**Length of Time** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	**Starting Pitch** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	**Pitch Pattern** *ex: see examples page* *54321* *5-1* *1-8-1* *123454321* *1356531* *534231271* *1 5 8 5 3 1* *other:*
Bringing Attention Outside Walk around the room Notice 5 things you see, 4 you touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste Imagine tossing a ball Bring your hands out by your ears, notice their presence with your peripheral Create choreagraphy for each warm-up Create a horizon with your hand under your eyes Sing each warm up with an emotion in mind, and notice how you feel and sound differently. Angry, Annoyed, Joyful, Sleepy, Jealous, Flirtatious, Cheerful, Perky, Depressed, Maniacal, Suprised, Mischevious Other:	**Length of Time** *ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions*	**Starting Pitch** *ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range*	**Pitch Pattern** *ex: see examples page*

Explanations and Examples

The primary goal of any warm up is to stretch and unpress the vocal folds. There are many other goals after that, however, and knowing the reasoning behind individual warm ups, and in what order you perform them, can be a key factor in their success. The key to utilizing the direct benefits of each one rests in tracking the sensations that you feel when performing them, and attempting to recreate those sensations when singing. Remember these helpful hints:

Warm Ups have specific purposes

Only YOU can warm your voice up

Many warm ups serve the same goal, pick what works for you

You have as much information as anyone about your voice

Centering, Stretching, and Breathing

Aligning your body eliminates tensions that can cause vocal strain. The key to body alignment rests in noticing. We habituate posture in daily life in ways that puts undue stress on muscles throughout the body that we are often unaware of. Focusing your attention on certain muscles and muscle combinations, and noticing if they feel strained or not, provides the first important insight into your voice. Always inhale and exhale while performing these warm ups, to connect your breath to your body alignment.

Spoken Phrases

Speaking allows the singer to align the vocal tract and breath without the added challenge of sung pitch. Focus on a relaxed inhale, and sustaining long (or extra-long) vowels while increasing vowel energy into consonants such that the consonant is energized by the vowel. This process sets the voice up nicely for singing by helping the vocal folds coordinate the breath pressure and vocal fold onsets with vocal tract consonants.

Massage

We tend to engage some muscles in perpetual tension when our bodies are out of alignment. Finding the ones that are significantly contracted and rubbing them while breathing and asking them to release can become an important aspect of body alignment. This will be particularly important with smaller muscles in the neck and face.

Semi-Occluded

The principal benefit from semi-occluded exercises is the positive back pressure provided by the smaller aperture that helps the vocal folds vibrate and "gear shift" easily. After that, each SOVT has slightly different functions. The straw elongates the vocal tract, giving even more back pressure (try it with an [b] vs. a [m] and notice how the soft palate responds). Lip trills, tongue trills, and raspberries each require coordination with the lips/tongue and vocal folds, but be careful of jaw tension. When relaxation is achieved, they provide a positive coordination between the vocal tract and vocal folds that is unique each unto itself. Each of the sustained consonants ask for a different vocal tract position, and as such, can be used to create specific desired habits. The [z], for example, each requires the tongue to be in a forward position, and create a specific sensation that people can remember when singing. The [n], [ng], and [r] each help to create a more refined aperture opening between the throat and mouth.

Focus on the Sound

Laryngeal registration (i.e. which laryngeal muscles are used in what configuration at any given moment) is critical to how we sound, yet, very difficult to perceive given the fact that we can't feel those muscles. This is further complicated by the fact that we can feel the muscles surrounding the larynx, which confuses our sense of perception. Larygeal registration targets, therefore, need to focus on a relaxed/open, or "nothing", sensation around the larynx, and specific vibratory sensations in the vocal tract that reflect the nature of vocal fold adduction. Each of these exercises encourages clean adduction and active/easy "gear shifting" of the laryngeal muscles. Focus on the vibration sensations in your face and mouth while doing them.

Onsets

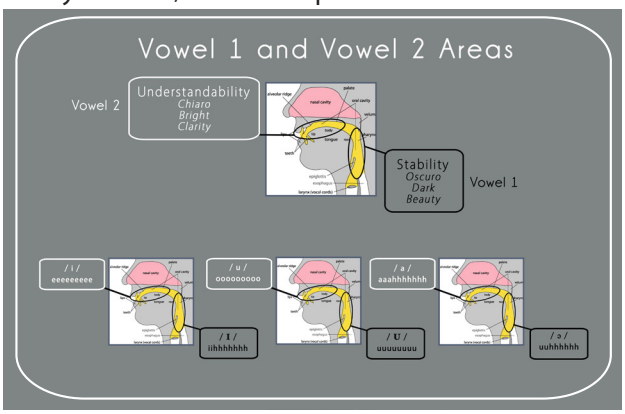
For maximum usefulness, the vocal folds need to come together with even, easy onsets. Hard onsets, by contrast, can cause disruption to vocal tract stability, and auditory perception of sound. Listen for smoothness in the sound, rather than the tell-tale "pop" of the hard onset, and try to feel as if your airflow is even and "pouring" through the sound. Easy onsets can take some time to coordinate with some singers.

Tongue Independence

The tongue is a massive player in the vocal tract, and difficult to coordinate. One of the primary sensations that we try to habituate is a forward, rounded tongue position. Each of these exercises help in this habituation process, and each creates noticeable sensations that can be recreated when singing.

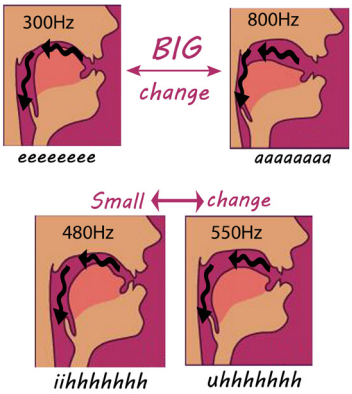
Acoustic/Resonant Strategies: Hey, Whoop, and Same Shape

These three large-scale resonant strategies helps to define tone color, and create stability. In particular, they can each be used to access certain stylistic traits that can be otherwise difficult to achieve. The Whoop strategy, which boosts the first harmonic, can be very useful for training a Western classical style of singing, particularly in the upper ranges (~D4 and higher), and can be helpful in training men to sing in a lighter, choral sound in their middle range (~A3-A4). The Hey strategy, which boosts the second harmonic, can be useful for training CCM styles of singing including pop, country, folk, music theater, and gospel. It is particularly useful in the lower to middle parts of the range. Above B4, the Hey strategy encounters challenges that make it less useful. You can feel both of the Whoop and Hey strategies in specific places in your face/head. People tend to feel the Whoop strategy more upward and back (near the ears and top of the head), and the Hey strategy more forward (near the upper teeth and nose). The Same Shape strategy, which maintains a similar shape throughout the range, and therefore boosts whichever harmonic it happens to be nearby, is more difficult to feel and habituate. In the middle range (G3-G4) it can be very helpful in western classical singing, as well as certain CCM styles like gospel and the music theater legit sound. It is also essential for finding stability in the elusive middle belt range (G4-D5). The most challenging part of the Same Shape resonant strategy is maintaining independence between the mouth and the throat shapes even as interdependence is developed. People tend to feel the sound move around their face, moving from forward (low pitches) to upward (high pitches).



Stability Across Vowels

We have a range of vocal tract adjustment choices available to us when shaping every vowel. The less the vocal tract has to move, the more easily stability is achieved, making the vocal folds more efficient, thereby helping with breath regulation and sound output. Learning to hear vowels as a complex of tone color rather than a singularity is a key to targeting stability. Using "neutral" vowels as a replacement for "pure" or "speech-level" vowels helps singers avoid radical adjustments (e.g. use [I] for [i] and [ae], [U] for [u] and [o], and [ə] for [a] and [c]). Using vowel glides helps to habituate sensations associated with subtle shape changes, and can be used with neutral vowels to help create Same Shape and Varied Shape (Whoop and Hey) resonant strategies.



Vowel Consonant Combos

These are pretty self-explanatory. You might want to start them by stretching the tongue, jaw, and lips while avoiding tension in the larynx area. The "bite an apple" inner smile sensation can play a role in freeing the tongue and jaw as well. As you sing the warm ups, pay attention to what the tongue, jaw, and lips are doing to create the consonants and vowels. Also notice if the general volume of your sound changes, as this would suggest that your adduction is changing, which may point to the fact that the change in vowel/ consonant combination is destabilizing the vocal folds.

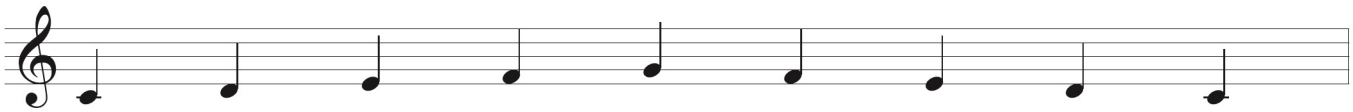
Attention to the Outside

With all of the noticing and target creation that goes on in our singing practice, the singer's brain can get wrapped around itself, causing new roadblocks to form. These exercises can be used throughout the warm up process to help the singer focus their attention more generally on their bodies. The key is to commit to the task. A half-baked attempt will collapse on itself.

Musical Exercises

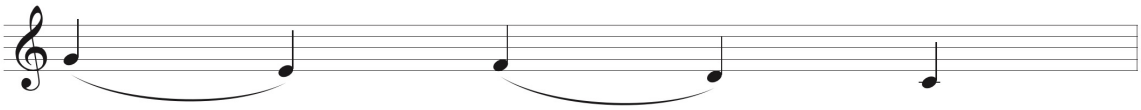
There are endless variations you can use for note patterns, each with their own benefits and challenges. We have offered five basic ones.

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1



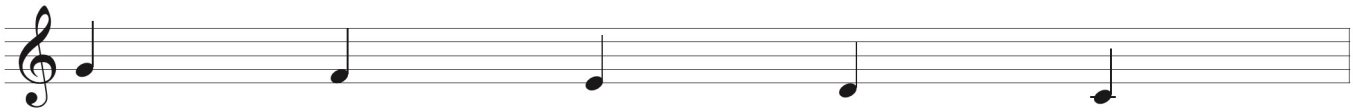
This exercise is great for middle range singing. The step-wise motion and limited range help singers feel smaller adjustments over time. Try starting on the top note to focus on other resonant strategy approaches and vowel needs.

5 3 4 2 1



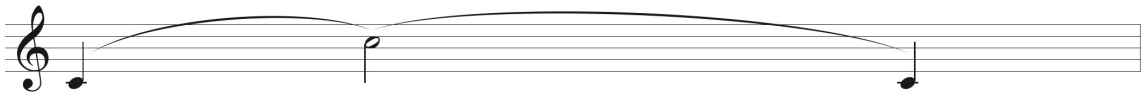
Equally good for middle range singing, the relatively small leaps are good for developing vocal fold "gear shift" coordination. Try using them on alternating vowels in order to develop vowel stability and lengthening. Use similar vowels at first like [a] [o], and then move to more different vowels like [e] [o]. Consonants can be added for further coordination challenges, and vocal tract benefits. The "bit, bull, but" neutral vowels are very effective on this exercise. You can also extend it by adding 3-1-2-7-1 (G-E-F-D-E-C-D-B-C).

5 4 3 2 1



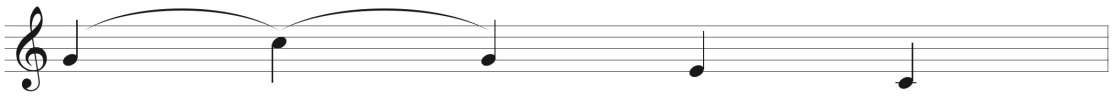
The simplicity and brevity of this exercise makes it nice for approaching range extremes. Starting on the highest note helps singers develop their body setup, prephonatory tuning, and easy vocal fold onset.

1 - 8 - 1



This exercise is wonderful for laryngeal muscle "gear shift" coordination. Try it with semi-occluded exercises, vowel and vowel/consonant combinations, etc.

5 8 5 3 1



This provides singers with a nice approach to notes in their upper range, and helps create vocal tract and laryngeal stability, as well as establishing sensations associated with large-scale resonant strategy adjustments.

Connecting Spoken Phrases	Length of time ex. 4 minutes 6 repitions	Starting pitch ex. C4 "middle of range" "speaking range" "low range"	Pitch Pattern see back page for examples on staff
★Well, Well, Well -Whoooo arrreee youuuuu -Mmmy Mmamma Mmmakes Mmmuffins -Name that tune -Late for class -Once upon a time ★Hiiiiiiiiiiiiii Other:	3 min.	middle	n/a
Massage *See back page for images* -Chewing muscles, Temples ★Tongue thrusts, Tongue curls ★Under chin -Imagine chewing gum -Sides of hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage -Scrunch nose and lips together, spread far apart in wide yawn and smile Other:	2 min.	n/a	n/a
Semi Occluded -Sing through a straw -Vocal fry through the straw ★Alternate every other pattern with the straw and then a vowel -Start the onset of the pattern on a straw then open up to a vowel -Lip trill, Tongue trill, Raspberries -MMMMMMM, NNNNNNNN, LLLLLLLLL NNNNGGGG, ZZZZZZZ, VVVVVVV, DJJJJJJ Other:	6 rep.	B4	5 4 3 2 1 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1 3 5 6 5 3 1 5 3 4 2 1 5 8 5 3 1
Focus the sound *(easy adduction)* -Tiny whimpers ★Puppy whines -MmmiamMiamMiamMiam ★MiuMiuMiuMiu (kitten-like) -MoneyMoneyMoney -GaNGGaNGGaNGG -NweedoNweedoNweeedo -Toddle whines 'I don't wanna' 'Awwmann' ★Vocal fry while breathing out & breathing in Other:	2 min.	e5 go up to G5 down to e4	5 4 3 2 1 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1 3 5 6 5 3 1 5 3 4 2 1 5 8 5 3 1