

# MUSICAL THEATRE VOICE CLASS

*with kakrie galo*

## Other Vocal Techniques

This is, by no means, a complete list of vocal techniques, but I've put together a list of good starting points to help break through frustrations many new singers face.

The Vox Yoga YouTube channel has an excellent series of short & sweet explanations of many of the techniques I've listed below, as well as many others I don't go into detail about here. Her playlist, "Quick Singing Tips," is an excellent place to go if you'd like to learn techniques beyond those I've laid out in this document.

### SOVT (Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract) Exercises

#### **What are SOVTs?**

These exercises are done by phonating (producing sound) while narrowing the mouth. This can be achieved by singing through a straw, doing lip trills, or humming to relieve the vocal cords of excess strain or pressure.

We can use these exercises to warm up, cool down, or practice particularly difficult music to strengthen the vocal cords without wearing them out.

#### **Exercise examples:**

- Singing through a straw
- Lip trills
- Tongue trills
- Hum on mm, vv, ng, zz, nn

Video reference:

 [Quick Singing Tips | SOVT Exercises. Why and how to keep a healthy voice with these easy exercis...](#)

### Listening to Yourself

Listening to your own voice can be one of the most uncomfortable yet revealing tools to use. By listening to yourself, you become aware of habits and techniques you can improve on. If you have trouble with matching pitch, this is a great way to help train your ear.

#### **How do I listen to myself?**

- Touch your fingers to your ear and sing. Your hand will help bring the sound up to your ear.
- Take a video. This isn't quite as effective as holding your hand to your ear, but it can be useful if you want to analyze without direct feedback.

While a big reason we listen to ourselves is to improve, you should also look for ways you are singing healthily, beautifully, with control, etc. Also be sure to note your progress as you listen.

## Clear vs. breathy tone

Breathy sound should be a purposeful choice. Sometimes we *do* want a breathy sound, but many singers struggle to make the purposeful choice of clear tone.

Video references:

[Have you got clear tone? - Cassie Lawrence, Vocal Coach \(The Estill Model\)](#)

📺 Quick Singing Tips | Breathiness. Is it a necessity or choice? Sing healthily with a breathy tone.

### **Exercises:**

1. SOVT exercises (see SOVT subheading for specific exercises) can be great ways to strengthen the voice
2. Gradual hhh to eee
  - a. Take a big breath in.
  - b. Breathe out slowly on an ee vowel mouth shape.
  - c. Gradually add ee phonation so that your first sound sounds breathy, gradually closing the vocal folds to let less air through. (Think hee instead of ee to help with a smooth onset.)
  - d. Play with more vs. less breathy sounds.

## Exploring the Four Registers

We change our registers by either lengthening or shortening the vocal folds.

1. **M0: Slack vocal folds, vocal fry**
  - a. This is the sound that is produced by relaxing the vocal cords and allowing them to vibrate very slowly. People do this naturally at the end of sentences, and can be recognized as a low-pitched, breathy, and/or “bacon frying” sound.
2. **M1: Chest voice, thick vocal folds**
  - a. This is the register most of us use when speaking.
  - b. We sometimes call this “chest voice” because many people can feel vibrations in their chest.
  - c. “Belting” is almost always either fully done with thick folds, and sometimes is a mix of thick and thin vocal folds.
3. **M2: Head voice, thin vocal folds**
  - a. This is often thought of as a lighter, higher sound.
  - b. While it is often a less obviously powerful sound than when using thick vocal folds, opera singers almost exclusively use thin folds. They achieve a very powerful and full sound by training their voice to be incredibly resonant and by strengthening the muscles used to sing.
4. **M3: Whistle register**
  - a. This is not a register most of us naturally know how to use. This vocal register is achieved by thinning the vocal folds and only engaging a small part of the folds to create a high pitch only possible within this register.

Video references:

Overview: [📺 Quick Singing Tips | Vocal Registers. What are Chest & Head Voice? M1 & M2? Thick &...](#)

Thin Folds: [📺 Myths Surrounding Head Voice / Thin Folds / M2. Quick Singing Tips 🗣️](#)

Thick Folds: [📺 Myths Surrounding Chest Voice / Thick Folds / M1. Quick Singing Tips 🗣️](#)

## Mixing

Video reference:

[📺 The difference between MIX and BELTING #howtosing #learntosing #singinglessons #singingteac...](#)

## Breathing and anchoring

Correct technique when breathing and using anchoring to support the breath can help give singers control and stability, especially when singing powerfully.

Anchoring- [📺 Quick Singing Tips | Anchoring. How to access torso and head & neck anchoring to su...](#)

Breathing- [📺 Quick Singing Tips | Breathing. Understand the Breathing System & How to Breathe fo...](#)

## Glottal vs. Aspirate vs. Smooth onsets

Choosing which onsets and offsets to use for your specific repertoire will probably come very naturally.

However, knowing the differences and being able to experiment with different onsets and offsets may help fine-tune the “vibe” of your songs.

**Glottal onsets:** Vocal folds come together before the sound, like when singing “uh oh”

**Aspirate onsets:** breath comes before sounds, like when singing “hoo”

**Smooth onsets:** Breath and sound come at the same, like when singing “you” or “woo”

Video reference: [📺 Quick Singing Tips | Onsets & Offsets. Different ways to start and finish notes an...](#)

## Smoothing the passaggio

When switching between the registers, particularly thick and thin folds (chest and head voice), we often experience a break or crack in our voices. This is something that, with much practice, can be smoothed to switch seamlessly between registers.

Video reference: [📺 HOW TO MASTER THE PASSAGGIO](#)

### **Exercises:**

Basses, Baritones, Tenors: [📺 One Vital Singing Trick to Smooth Out the Break](#)

Sopranos, Mezzos: [📺 One Vital Singing Trick to Smooth Out the Break](#)

Altos: [📺 One Vital Singing Trick to Smooth Out the Break](#)