

Vocal Warmups for Public Speaking



Like any instrument, tuning and warming up your vocal cords before you speak can be an excellent way to prepare for success. Taking 10 – 15 minutes to warm up your voice on the day you plan to give remarks or speak can ensure that people can hear you loudly and clearly. It also helps you to avoid vocal cracking, vocal fry, and squeaking. Let your words be heard!



Warm-Up 1: Body Stretches

PURPOSE: Loosen your body and relax your muscles to reduce tension and nervousness.

INSTRUCTIONS: Take five minutes to do simple, gentle stretches to loosen your shoulders, neck, arms, legs, and feet. Any safe, comfortable exercise can work if it relaxes your body and loosens you up! Tailor your stretches to make it right for you and your needs.

Adapted from the National Institutes of Health, Division of Occupational Health and Safety, Exercises and Stretches, <https://ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndWellness/Ergonomics/Pages/exercises.aspx>.

Deep Breathing

- Stand or sit in a relaxed position
- Put one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest
- Breathe in slowly through your nose
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Exhale slowly through the mouth
- Repeat 2 – 3 times or as desired

Neck Stretch (Side)

- Tilt your head to one side, with your ear towards your shoulder
- Hold for 15 seconds
- Bring your head back to its normal position and relax
- Repeat 3 times, on each side of your neck

Shoulder Shrug

- Slowly bring your shoulders up to your ears
- Hold for approximately 3 seconds
- For five seconds, rotate your shoulders clockwise
- For the next five seconds, rotate your shoulders counter-clockwise
- Repeat 3 times

Wrist Stretch

- Hold your arms straight in front of you
- Pull one hand backwards with the other hand, then pull downward
- Hold for 20 seconds, and then relax
- Repeat 3 times, with each hand



Warm-Up 2: Vocal Range

PURPOSE: Warm up your vocal range from low sounds to high sounds to avoid cracking.

INSTRUCTIONS: Either humming or singing, spend 2 – 3 minutes on a vocal scale, pushing your voice to the highest range and the lowest range it will go. If you'd prefer, you can also sing-along to a song that uses high-tone to low-tone vocal ranges.

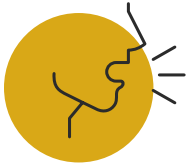
Don't worry if you're not a singer or a vocalist, or if your voice cracks or squeaks. You want it to crack or squeak a couple of times to chase the frogs out of your voice. For those who like to sing in the shower, this is your moment – heat and humidity can help you warm up your vocal cords faster and more comfortably!

Helpful Resources

- **Major Scale Vocal Warmups** (3:34 minutes)
Meli Music Lessons ([YouTube](#))
- **Hum Vocal Warm Up #1** (2:25 minutes)
Jacobs Vocal Academy
([YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), [Apple Music](#) and others)
- **5 Fun Vocal Warmups** (SOLFEGE Sing-Along)
(1:14 Minutes, first exercise only)
In Unison Music Lessons ([YouTube](#))

SING-ALONG VOCAL WARM-UP SONGS WITH SCALES

- “[Do-Re-Mi](#),” Julie Andrews singing Rogers & Hammerstein, The Sound of Music (1965 film)
- “[Mamma Mia!](#),” Meryl Streep singing ABBA, Mamma Mia! (2008 film)
- “[Ain't No Sunshine](#),” Bill Withers (1971)
- “[House of the Rising Sun](#),” The Animals (1964)
- “[Halo](#),” Beyoncé (2008)
- “[Rolling in the Deep](#),” Adele (2010)
- “[Shape of My Heart](#),” Backstreet Boys (2000)
- “[Take On Me](#),” a-ha (1985)
- “[One Sweet Day](#),” Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men (1995)



Warm-Up 3: Enunciation

PURPOSE: To avoid “mush mouth” and ensure that your audience can clearly hear your words.

INSTRUCTIONS: Recite 2 – 3 different tongue twisters below for 5 – 10 minutes. Work to over-enunciate the words and letters, and practice the twisters in different styles. (For example, try one version in an “excited” voice and one in an “angry” voice.)

For a challenge, take a clean straw or chopstick and hold in your mouth between your front teeth and bottom teeth. Now try the tongue twisters and see how many you can do before you have to start over! Good luck.

RECITE 2 – 3 TIMES, STARTING OVER EACH TIME YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

- The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue.
- The excess taxes Texas taxes us Texans vexes us.
- The sixth Sheik's sixth sheep is sick.
- Grass grew green on the graves in Grace Gray's grandfather's graveyard.
- Rubber baby buggy bumpers.
- Pete Briggs pats pigs.
Briggs pats pink pigs.
Briggs pats big pigs.
Pete Briggs is a pink pig, big pig patter.
- Betty Botter thought her bitter batter better, after Betty's mother added butter.

But the butter Betty's mother bought her daughter didn't matter in the batter.

The bitter batter being better had her daughter ponder about the butter.

The butter Betty's mother brought her daughter wasn't butter, it was water.

Betty Botter's bitter batter's baking was better being wetter.