

Breathing

The voice is a wind instrument and you need breath to play it. For singing, refilling the lungs completely gives you distinct advantages:

Increased ability to sing longer phrases and greater control for high notes, low notes, soft, loud, tone coloring, flexibility, vibrato, straight tone (non-vibrato), clear tone and singing smoothly through the registers.

(Techniques CD – track 2-4 / DVD chap 2)



Robin Sung – From Star Search to Stardom

Intake of Air (✓)

We recommend that you breathe in through the open mouth and nose for the following reasons:

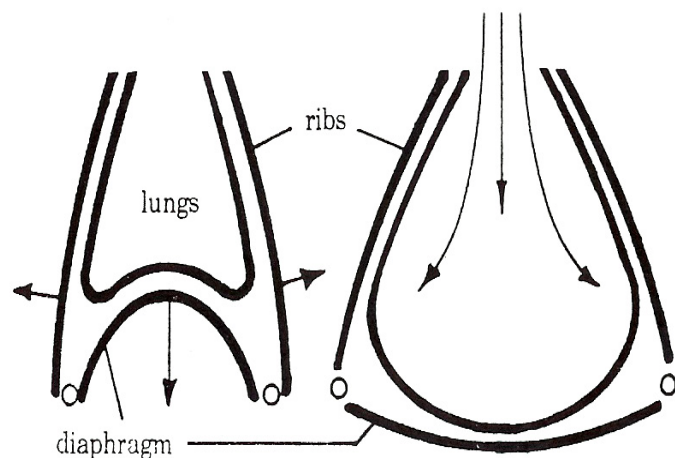
1. You cannot take a quick, deep a breath through the nose alone as you can through the mouth and nose. The nasal passage alone presents greater resistance to the air intake.
2. A quick nose breath is often facially unattractive, noisy and distracts from the performance.
3. Taking a breath through the open mouth and nose prepares the resonating passages for the free out-flow of sound.

Breathing through the nose alone is reasonable when there is adequate time as during the instrumental introduction (intro) to a song or during an interlude (break).

Pace your breaths so that you don't hold your air before you sing. Holding your breath tends to tighten the throat muscles. If you do get into a situation where you have taken a breath too early, hold it with a relaxed, open throat by sustaining a comfortable expansion of the rib cage and lower stomach.

Rib Cage, Diaphragm Lower Stomach

[Schematic Representation]



The rib cage encases or surrounds the lungs. It is expandable and must expand for the intake of air. For a full breath, you must help the rib cage open as the diaphragmatic muscle pulls down to enlarge the chest cavity. The lower stomach and small of the back relax and expand with the intake of air.

Taking a full breath feels like you're expanding out against a belt around your waist as you inhale. Your objective is to make room for the lungs to inflate to their fullest capacity by allowing them to expand downward as well as outward. It is helpful to think of the in-flowing air swelling downward into your lower back.

GUIDELINES:

1. If your intake of air is natural, effortless and unnoticeable, your audience will not be distracted from the continuity of the emotional communication of your performance.
 2. Keep your upper chest and shoulders relaxed as you take a breath. Raising them can cause undesirable tensions in the upper body and throat and you may look uncomfortable.
 3. Don't pull your stomach in or up as you breathe in. This action will restrict the downward expansion of the lungs.
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EXERCISES (Tech CD track 3-4)

1. Place your open hands on your hips and slide them upward about three inches until your thumbs reach the lower ribs towards the back. Now, take a full breath (✓) through a comfortable open mouth, nose and throat. Expand your ribs outward against your thumbs and hands, pushing them apart. Allow the lower stomach to expand at the same time.

Feel the expansion outward and downward. The shoulders do not rise but remain relaxed and down. Relax your neck and jaw. Feel your tongue forward and relaxed, the tip resting against the lower teeth. Feel a slight yawning sensation as you feel the air flowing in through both your mouth and nose to cool the back of your throat.

Inhale for 1 count and hiss out for 4 counts - 3 times in a row.

(✓), 2 ---- OUT ... 2 ... 3 ... 4
(Inhale), -- (s s s s s s s s s s)
(✓), 2 ---- OUT ... 2 ... 3 ... 4
(Inhale), -- (s s s s s s s s s s)
(✓), 2 ---- OUT ... 2 ... 3 ... 4
(Inhale), -- (s s s s s s s s s s)

For effortless singing, always replenish the air between phrases with a full, deep breath. When time permits, let your breath out and breathe normally.

2. After a full breath, hiss out for 4 counts, using the tongue and teeth as resistance to the air. Replenish the air in 2 counts. Hiss out for 5 counts. Take a full breath again in 2 counts. Hiss out for 6 counts. Replenish in 2 count ... and so on. Increase the duration of the hiss to at least 10 or 15 counts or more. See how long you can sustain the hiss. Repeat the exercise, replenishing the air in 1 count to improve your ability to take a deep breath quickly.

Keep the air pressure steady throughout the hiss. Don't pause between taking in air and beginning the hiss. Keep the breath flowing. Try louder and softer hisses but keep the pressure constant from beginning to end of each hiss. With this exercise you can train yourself to breathe quickly and deeply, extend the length of your song phrases and improve your vocal control in all areas.