

PRACTISING AT HOME EVERY DAY – Author Alyson Chaney

To keep our voices in best possible shape for the contest weekend it's important we do some daily practising at home.

Here's a handy guide to some of the best warmups we have shared with you this year. Happy singing!

First of all, remember that you are an "A" singer so don't forget your "A" faces! Remember how great a sound we produce when our faces are lifted, and when there is joy in our eyes. Always remember to keep the sound in the 3rd floor and use any kinaesthetic tools that will help you achieve your best sound.

To start, remember the "pint of air". This simple kinaesthetic retracts your false folds, adds space to your sound and ensures silent and effective breathing producing a free and open sound.

Then on an NG do some range stretching exercises, like those we have done recently. Start on a comfortable note and slide from 1 to 5 and back down again. Initially go down a semitone at the end of each sequence. Go down as far as you can. If it's further than you've ever gone before, great! If not, try to imagine yourself singing that note. "Fake it until you become it"!

Repeat the same exercise, but this time go a semitone higher at the end of each sequence. Again, imagine yourself singing the highest notes if you can't get there. Celebrate what you can do! Remember too that using the NG siren exercise is the best way to smooth out the break (passagio) in your voice (if indeed you have one).

Bubbling up and down an octave - try this several times and remember to keep your eyes switched on. Have a conversation with yourself to explore the highest and lowest notes in your range. Use kinaesthetics to keep the bubbling in the 3rd floor and listen for the overtones!

Now try a downward scale (87654321) using NG or bubbling and keep the sound lifted throughout. Good faces will help maintain a pitch which is on the high side of the note.

Do some tongue wagging. Imagine you are watching Michelle tanning in front of the chorus. Waggle through a sequence of 123454321 going up or down a semitone at the end of each sequence. Keep the wagging light and free! Again please keep your eyes switched on even though the lower half of your face might be doing some strange things!

Spend a bit of time each day on reinforcing some instant accuracy warmups. Do a staccato version of "Happy Birthday" on a vowel sound like OO or EE. Make each note separate and really concentrate on getting straight to the note each time. Focus is the key word here. Try the same exercise (staccato again) with "My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean". Another good way to reinforce instant accuracy is to do some arpeggios, (1358531) , again in staccato, using different vowel sounds, or by putting a consonant in front of each vowel, like b, k, g etc and focussing on producing a really clean interval.

Do some of Britt-Hélène's "passionated" MO MO MO, VOH VOH VOH, VEE VEE VEE exercises to finish off. Keep the sound lifted at all times.

Good luck and keep giving yourself these little singing lessons every day. Your voice will thank you for all your endeavours!

Please email me if you need me to clarify any of the above, or to do a recording for you if that would be more beneficial.

Aly with help from members of the Music Team

Best wishes

Alyson