

# Vital Vowels

## Why are vowels important?

- Basis of all acappella music
  - Resonance of the vowel
  - Openness of the vowel
  - Freedom of the vowel

## What are singing vowels?

- Not just a letter from the alphabet (A, E, I, O, U)
- It's a sound produced through an open vocal tract with an unrestricted airflow.
- There are hundreds of vowel sounds.
- Vowels help with
  - Tuning
  - Airflow
  - Resonance
  - Placement of sound
- The vowels are arranged in sound order from the front of the mouth to the back near your throat.

## The Vowel Chart

Vowel	Vowel Sound	As in the word...	Sing in the...	Marking
I	ee	meet	oo space	(ee)
E	eh	met	ah space	eh
A	ah	saw	ah space	ah
O	oh	home	oh space	o
U	oo	blue	oo space	(oo)

<https://www.serenevocalstudio.com/blog/2019/12/3/vowels-master-vowels-and-you-can-master-anything>

## How do we make them work?

- Pick your favourite vowel - work voice from strength and make those stronger before moving to those less strong.

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**Exercise 1:**

- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 (connected/legato with no breaths) on favourite vowel

**Tips:**

If the top note is most ideal sing just that first. 5 (breathe) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

If the bottom note is most idea sing just that first. 1 (breathe) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Lack of ease shows with a more narrow vowel. Not because it's a pitch you can't sing, rather you're out of your comfort range.

**Exercise 2:**

- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 alternating good vowel with another.
- "Oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee" (they have shared resonant space - see the table above)
- "Ee-ah, ee-ah, ee-ah, ee-ah, ee-ah"

**Exercise 3:**

- 1, 2, 3, 4
- then up an octave 1, 2, 3, 4
- then back down the octave 1, 2, 3, 4

**Tips:**

We're looking for the same quality, freedom and resonance in both octaves.

Those with higher voices might want to start and finish on the upper octave.

It can help to add some "ahhh" to all the vowels.

**Mythbuster -**

"I have to smile and lift my eyebrows all the time to make my sound better"

Smiling doesn't always help. We need to use our eyes to smile and our mouth to sing. Your eyebrows are not connected to your soft pallet. They can serve as a reminder but there is no anatomical connection.

**Exercise 3:**

- Take your little fingers and point them vertically upwards at the side of your nose
- Say "preh" (not prey - keep it a short vowel)
- 1,3,5,3,1
- Feel what those little muscles do.



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- We are exercising them.
- Now sing the word "pray" with and without the fingers.

**Tips:**

We're looking to really isolate these little muscles

The vast majority of sound on short vowels is going up through those little muscles so don't over extend your jaw.

**Exercise 4:**

- "Mee - Mah - mee - mah - me - mahh" [5, 1(up), 5, 3, 5, 1(down)]
- Alternate the vowels however you want to e.g. "Meh - moh" "Mee-Moo"

**Exercise 5:**

- "Oh I can sing and blend my voice with you"
- 4 part exercise