

# **HANDOUT: Common Vocal Issues & Breathing to Sing**

**From *Everything You Want To Know About Vocal Production & More!* Session**

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## **Common Vocal Issues**

Breathing incorrectly  
Not properly warming up  
Vocal fatigue after singing  
Vibrato (Tremolo or Wobble) – *see below for more*  
Vocal register breaks (passagio)  
Not practicing correctly  
Singing out of natural vocal range  
Too dark & covered  
Too Nasal & forward  
Sing too loud  
Sing too lightly  
Mouth too wide  
Mouth too narrow  
Tongue tension  
Trying to imitate another singer  
Diet, food, liquids, reflux, lots of H2O

## **Breathing to Sing**

Breathe deeply from your lower lungs – imagine a rubber ring around your waist (your diaphragm)

Breathe in and try to push the ring outwards

Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose and mouth

Avoid raising your shoulders as you breathe in – keep them relaxed and level

Relax!

When you breathe in, your diaphragm expands, causing a vacuum in the lungs, and air fills the vacuum. When people breathe out in everyday life, the diaphragm relaxes, and air is pushed out of the lungs. In singing, the diaphragm stays engaged throughout the time right before a sound is made to the end of the sound.

It cannot be stressed enough how important these two concepts are for proper singing. Think of proper breathing as having enough gas in your car to get to your destination. Without enough breath, something has to give in order to make it to the end of the musical phrase. Typically singers get tense as they run out of breath. If you haven't figured it out yet, any tension other than diaphragm engagement is the enemy of the singer. It causes the majority of vocal issues, and stems from bad habits.

## **Vibrato / Wobble / Tremolo**

It's like an internal massage for your vocal mechanism. Holding a straight tone takes more breath pressure, and can be more fatiguing, especially if you are not using proper technique at all times.

A wobble is usually a support problem (not enough lower body resistance of the upper and lower abdominals and the lower lumbar muscles to hold back the breath pressure), followed by carrying too much weight too high in the voice (singing with too much "thick vocal cord mass"), lack of focus in the tone, and lack of support.

A tremolo is a vibrato that is too fast and varies too little in pitch, while a wobble is too slow and varies too widely. Another common problem is an unintended straight tone – a seeming inability to produce vibrato at all.