

# Kinesthetic Gestures

*Movement is often used to engage a singer's breath, energy, and musicianship.*

*Singers can benefit from using gestures throughout a rehearsal to help them understand musical concepts they are performing.*

## Staccato gestures

Staccato phrases can be tricky. Singers might find it hard to stay in pitch, maintain tall vowels, or continue the shortened rhythms. I have my singers “pop bubbles” in the air with their fingers while singing staccato phrases. The “popping” helps maintain the shortened sounds. I also instruct them to sing with the round space of the bubble.

Other staccato gestures can be “throwing a dart,” tip-toeing in a space, or tapping the staccato rhythm with their fingertips on their shoulder or arm.

## Singing Legato

Legato phrases can be tough to get singers to sing with energy through the entire phrase. Here are some gestures to use:

Paint on a blank canvas with smooth brush strokes in the air. Add a color to your “painting” – If you want a warm sound have your singers visualize warm colors: deep reds or oranges. Spread the butter or frosting gesture. Use one arm to “spread” your sound evenly over the other arm. Long, legato rotations. Using the arms, rotations should move perpendicular and not parallel to their body. This helps singers keep their energy and sound moving out in front of them versus staying right in front of them.

## Supporting the tone

Have singers imagine they are lifting weights. When someone is lifting weights, the support should come from their core strength and lower body; the idea is the same for singers supporting their tone. Some things to remember when having singers utilize this gesture: Keep knees slightly bent. Don't allow the chest to drop, vice versa, don't overextend the straightening of the spine. Singers should imagine they are lifting a fairly heavy object and the weight should be lifted over the entire phrase.

## Phrasing

Use sport gestures for phrasing: Throw a baseball/football, shoot a basketball, shoot an arrow, etc. The same way we might see football laces or baseball laces spin throughout a throw, so can singers visualize “spinning their sound” to the end of the phrase.

There are many ways you can have your chorus experiment following through with their energy and phrase.

## Other Kinesthetic Gestures

### *Using opposite movement for ascending or descending line*

Have singers move their arms upward when singing a descending line to avoid coming down too hard on their sound. The same thing applies to ascending lines and using downward motions. Have singers try to bend their knees, or a plie squat, to create support and an ease of sound throughout the ascension.

### *Move around the room*

Use the rehearsal space to have singers move freely while singing. Encourage them to really listen and fill up the entire room with their sound.

In addition to the benefit these movements provide in learning new musical concepts and vocal technique, they are a great way to break the monotony of rehearsal and encourage a climate that is relaxed and safe.