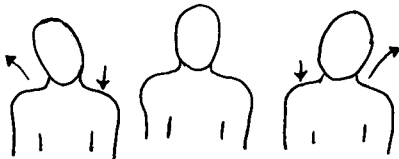


Cyclone or Washing Machine This energizer opens the breathing mechanism. Feet a few inches apart, so the leg bones are straight under the outer edges of the pelvis. Hips steady; pelvis always faces forward, or the torque of this pose goes into the knees. Arms at right angles. Turn back and forth from your waist, raising the arms a few inches every 5-10 breaths, then come back down slowly. The whole exercise should take about a minute. Again, the hips do not move. (A word of caution to those with lower back problems. These twists are excellent for lower back-aches, but they are done lying down, with less movement).

Hippy Shake Many of you know this fun activity. This is a tension breaker, laughter creator, and energizer; it also aids in body awareness. In order, shake each body part, counting out loud to 8: left hand, right hand, left forearm, right forearm, left entire arm, right entire arm, left foot, right foot, left calf, right calf, left entire leg, right entire leg, whole body. Then count to 4, do the same thing, then to 2!

PHYSICAL WARM-UPS: SEATED



Neck Stretch These poses calm the mind, and relaxes the jaw, neck and tongue. Tilt your neck gently to the left shoulder, lifting both sides of the face, as if bending around an imaginary grapefruit lodged between shoulder and neck. Reach diagonally up and out with the head, while stretching down with the right deltoid (shoulder muscle). Hold, and sigh through the stretch for five breaths minimum. Come back to center on an exhale. Reverse. Secondly, turn to either side, chin parallel to the floor, pulling back on the opposite shoulder. Watch for clavicular breathing and for "Chicken Neck" (esp. in high school males), as both inhibit healthy, free singing.



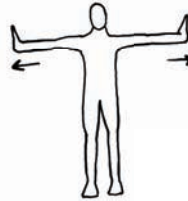
Fieldgoal Arms reaching straight up past ears, shoulders relaxed. Hold for five to ten breaths, set the ribcage, then bring arms down on the exhalation, keeping the ribcage lifted and expanded. This helps to discourage the "heave and collapse" ribcage breathing.



Shoulder Rotation Clasp your hands behind your back, palms facing forward, lift as high as comfortable, gently roll shoulders. Breathe. Repeat with palms facing back.



Double Helix Stretch your arms straight out to the sides, bring forward, cross elbows, bend at elbows and see if you can get palms to touch. If comfortable, gently roll shoulders.



Samson Reach arms straight out to the sides again, but this time attempt to point your fingers toward the ceiling, pushing through the heels of the hands. This is not as easy as it sounds. This loosens up the muscles that become constricted due to holding music. This posture is also excellent for pianists.



Chair Twist This favorite aids ribcage awareness and expansion. Sit in a chair sideways. Place right thigh firmly against the back of the chair, feet and knees together. Exhale and place your hands on either side of the back of the chair. With each exhalation, turn and twist farther around to right. Breath into ribcage. Neck, jaw, shoulders are relaxed, only forearms work. Reverse.

BREATH DEVELOPERS

Breath Comparison Ask your choir to purposefully breath high in the chest, then change to low in the belly, and ask for comments. Do they feel more "in their head", or connected to their "gut feelings"? Which method makes them feel more grounded, which makes them anxious or flighty?

Font of Strength Breath 1 Sit on a chair, eyes closed for inward concentration, with hand just below belly button. Breathe into this area for ten breaths, quiet and focused. Check that the impetus of the breath begins low, then expands outward.

Font of Strength Breath 2 Same, but inhale with hands on side ribs (like an accordion), then move hands to belly, exhale a 'tss' by gently drawing the belly toward the spine. Repeat a minimum of ten times. Over time, this will help train healthy breathing habits.

Folding Exhale This movement encourages a full exhale from the abdomen. Seated, bend over slowly from hips as you exhale. Allow inhale to occur naturally as you sit up. Repeat for no more than five breaths. (This is excellent for asthmatics, but only under controlled circumstances - avoid if asthma is acute. Those with migraines or eye troubles should not do this exercise, as there is increased blood pressure to the head).

Lower Back Expansion Good to do right after massage, alone, or in partners, depending on the comfort level of your singers. This is done seated, your hands on your lower back around the kidneys and lower lumbar muscles. Breathe and expand into this area. Partners can check for improper raising of shoulders on the inhalation, and that they fully, vocally sigh on the exhalation.