



# The Orange Spiel

News Of The Jacksonville Big O Chapter



<http://www.BigOrangeChorus.com>



Volume 43 Issue 2

February 2023

We meet at 7:00 most Thursdays at Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran, 7860 Southside Blvd, Jacksonville, FL  
Guests always welcome Call 355-SING No Experience Necessary

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Title	Page
Sing	1
Editorial	2 #
Strained Throat From Singing	3-7
The Five Why's	7-8
Top Tips For Older Voices	8-9
A Clever Practice Hack To Make	9-11
How To Sing From Your Diaphragm	11-12
Can A Voice Makeover Actually	13
A Modest Recruiting Proposal	14
Free Your Voice	15
Free Singing Tips	15
Quartet Corner	16
Chapter Quartets	16
Upcoming Schedules	17
Birthdays / Guests / New Members	17
Directing Team / Other Leaders	18
Chapter Officers / Music Team	19

## SING

Last month was a great time. I usually have to choose between the annual North Carolina Harmony Brigade (NCHB) rally and the annual Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States (SPPBSQSUS) convention, because they have been the same dates (and I have always chosen NCHB). This year, however, they were on different (consecutive) weekends. Yea. My wife let me do both (a missed birthday was involved). Thank you.

NCHB was, as usual, great (for more information on brigades, see <https://home.harmonybrigade.org>). A Harmony Brigade Rally is an annual invitational weekend event for barbershop singers with significant quartet experience who are vocally capable, committed to learning challenging arrangements, and who are prepared to enjoy success in rally activities. The charts are of championship caliber, and somewhat challenging. It is not a chorus-oriented event, although a chorus performance of repertoire songs is always part of the Saturday night public show.

SPPBSQSUS was different. With BHS being increasingly competition oriented, and what is acceptable as barbershop having become a moving target, this relatively new society is focused on our traditional roots. To be fair, this year's convention included it's first contest. It did, however have volunteer judges selected from the audience as well as "Shepherds of the Style" to ensure that the songs were properly barbershop. There were also tags, woodshedding, quartetting, gang singing, and just plain fun.

The SING philosophy continues:

Satisfy the member's need for singing fun  
Inspire the member to new heights  
Nurture the member's development  
Grow as a society

This could also be applied to a chapter like ours (nudge, nudge, wink wink).

# WANTED!!

## MEN WHO LIKE TO SING!



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For more detailed,  
timely information  
see my weekly  
publication:  
**Orange Zest**

## EDITORIAL

The new year is well underway. We have lots of good things planned. Let's all get involved and be prepared for performing.

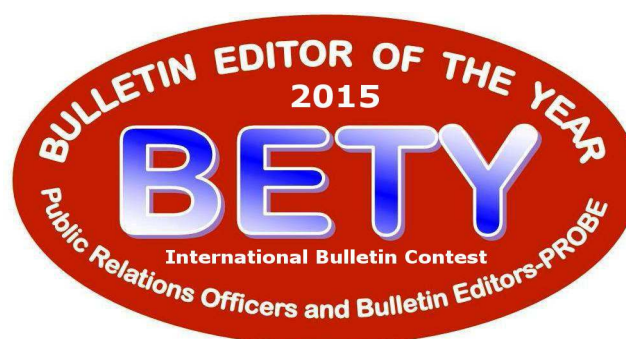
Let's see if we can get more people interested in coming to our rehearsals. Ask anyone you know who likes to sing. Invite friends, acquaintances, and even strangers. Singing is fun. Singing well is even better. Performing in public shares that fun with lots of people. Some might even want to join in the fun. Everybody wins.

We have some positions (both board and committee) that need filling. If you can help, as a leader or a helper, please see Jason.

Each and every man, improving, just a little, each and every day, will result in huge advances for the chorus.



"Hmm... better go with these."



## STRAINED THROAT FROM SINGING: SOLUTIONS FOR MORE RELAXED THROAT

by Katarina Hornakova  
from [how2improvesinging.com](http://how2improvesinging.com)

Do you experience strained throat?

If you are wondering how to stop straining your voice, you are in the right place.

Here, I will share most common causes of strained voice from singing and the best solutions for a more relaxed throat!

If you are experiencing a strained throat from singing, you are not alone.

It's actually quite common to feel vocal strain, especially when you are at the beginning of your singing journey.

But vocal tension is no stranger to seasoned singers either.

What is vocal strain?

First of all, let's clear out some terms.

When people talk about vocal strain or a strained voice ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvu\\_7GNRr-4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rvu_7GNRr-4)), they may refer to two different types of problems.

1. They may be talking about **strained vocal folds**. This is a more serious problem when the focal folds change their structure and the voice quality changes. You may sound hoarse or in severe cases, you may even lose your voice completely for a few days.
2. The second type of vocal strain refers to **strained throat muscles** inside and around your larynx. During healthy and efficient singing, the vocal folds come together without the engagement of other muscles. However, singers sometimes add unnecessary muscle action to help produce sounds, especially high notes or loud notes. In this case, your voice may still have good quality but **tight throat muscles** may eventually lead to vocal fold injuries.

Some **vocal strain symptoms** are:

- Discomfort
- Growing tightness
- Uneasy feeling of a closed throat
- Difficulty moving from one register to another
- Voice tires easily

- Difficult to sing for prolonged periods of time
- Voice sounds thin and dampened
- Muscle pain or even hoarseness (in more severe cases)

So, whether you strain your vocal folds or your throat muscles when singing, you want to eliminate tension from your singing.

Now, let's talk about causes and some solutions for more **relaxed throat muscles**.

There are many reasons why you may be straining but essentially, it all boils down to three most common reasons.

Cause #1: Too much muscle action

If you are singing at higher intensity levels than what you are used to, you can experience straining.

Even if you are using good technique, you may end up with sore throat because your muscles are not conditioned to work this hard.

This can happen when you don't warm up your voice, or when your amplification system fails and your voice has to compete with the band or background noise, or when you change your repertoire to high intensity songs.

The solution for these problems is fairly easy.

**Condition your voice for high intensity tasks gradually.**

Don't go from zero to 100%. Go from 0 to 5 %, then 10% and so on and slowly build up your vocal strength and endurance.

Always warm up and double check your amplification system.

Cause #2: Muscle action for too long

Similarly, to the previous cause, if you sing for longer periods of time than what your voice is used to, you can create muscle tension.

This scenario is common during special, like Christmas holidays, when singers have several performances lined up one after another.

Too much caroling!

(Continued on page 4)

## STRAINED THROAT FROM SINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

This type of strain is also very common with up-and-coming artists who are suddenly asked to sing much more than what their vocal instruments are used to.

Add emotional stress to this equation and vocal strain is born.

Again, the solution is quite straightforward.

Gradually prepare your vocal instrument for higher demands ahead of time.

Also, make sure that you schedule voice breaks and vocal rests.

For example, if you know that you have 3 performances and 2 rehearsals in a weekend, make sure that you schedule silent or quiet periods during that weekend too.

And skip the after party to preserve your voice.

### Cause 3: Unnecessary muscle movement in strained throat

The most common cause of vocal strain, especially in untrained voices, is **poor vocal technique**.

When we sing, only certain muscles should be moving in order to produce sound.

However, untrained singers may employ other muscles that are not necessary for singing and sound production.

The biggest offenders are the **jaw, tongue, and neck muscles, but also shoulders and abdomen**.

Sometimes, singers falsely believe that singing should feel or look certain way.

An example of that is unnecessary jaw movement when singing.

Sometimes, singers don't have enough experience or knowledge to recognize what's healthy and what is not.

This may include moving the head when singing high notes or lifting shoulders when inhaling.

Other times, inexperienced singers choose inappropri-

ate repertoire, which is out of reach for their current skills.

Or they imitate the wrong models who strain their muscles too.

And very often, singers are simply not aware of what is going on in their own bodies when singing.

Some examples of straining are quite obvious and observable.

But more often than not, unnecessary movements are hidden and not readily visible.

The solution is a long-term solution.

It starts with **self-awareness** and continues with **developing good vocal and** breathing technique (<https://tips.how2improvesinging.com/how-to-improve-breathing-for-singing/>).

It starts with education – learn what singing should feel and look like.

Choose good models to learn from, singers who produce tension free sounds and have good technique.

Have realistic expectations – good singing technique does not happen over time.

Sing repertoire that you are ready for.

Don't go straight for the most challenging songs, like Whitney Huston's, I will always love you.

But what can YOU do right now to start **singing without straining**?

Start building good breathing technique that will take pressure away from your throat.

Learn how to breathe from a low place and how to connect the breath to your voice.

I have some breathing exercises that will help you with that (<https://how2improvesinging.mykajabi.com/breathing-exercises-for-singers>).

If you are frustrated by that feeling of **strained throat when singing**, that holds you back from singing your favourite songs, keep on reading.

Here are three very specific throat relaxation exercises (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su6KSmlbrYk>) for singing without strain.

(Continued on page 5)



**STRAINED THROAT FROM SINGING**  
(continued)

(Continued from page 4)

When someone asks me how to not strain your voice when singing, three things come to mind:

- Breathing
- Open throat
- Easy phonation.

So, let me show you three exercises for singers to get rid of strained throat.

**Exercise 1: Breathing with Abdominal Release**

If you know how to manage breath with your whole body, you take the pressure away from your throat.

Singers who experience strained throat often use shallow breathing, so in this exercise we are going to focus on releasing the abdomen in order to make inhalation deeper.

Although, there are more components to deeper breathing, in this exercise, you will focus only on your abdomen.

Release your abdomen during inhalation.

But don't push the abdomen out.

Release the abdomen as you inhale.

This will allow the diaphragm to descend low.

Now, once you know how to do this simple breathing exercise, add "mee" on a simple 3-note scale.

Before you sing the scale, inhale and release your abdomen.

Sing in your comfortable range.

Then, move up or down the scale by a semitone.

**Exercise 2: Open your throat.**

To make more space in your throat, you can:

- Lift the soft palate
- Widen the pharynx
- Lower the larynx
- Get the tongue out of the way.

All of these movements happen somewhat automatically during inhalation.

In this exercise, we will focus on just one aspect and that is lifting of the soft palate.

Where is your soft palate (<https://tips.how2improvesinging.com/anatomy-of-breathing/>)?

It's the back part of the roof of your mouth.

Open your mouth and watch yourself in the mirror.

Inhale and lift the soft palate.

Exhale and keep the soft palate lifted.

Then, relax the soft palate and repeat.

Keep practicing this movement so that you get the movement of the soft palate under your control.

**Exercise 3: Lip trills**

Lip trills belong to a category of sounds, called semi-occluded sounds, which means that when you produce these sounds the pressures above and below the vocal folds are equalized and the vocal folds work at an optimal level.

So, lip trills will help you decrease the feeling of a strained throat.

First lift your cheeks to relax your facial muscles and blow air to set the lips into vibrations.

Now, do the same thing but sustain a neutral sound "uh" while blowing the air through the lips.

Once you know how to do this, combine the first exercise with lip rolls.

Inhale while releasing the abdomen and sing a 3-note scale with lip rolls.

Continue up or down the scale by a semitone.

Here is a video to demonstrate the exercises: (<https://youtu.be/su6KSmlbrYk>)

**5 Tips to Release Throat Tightness When Singing**

Now, I am going to share 5 tips on how to relax throat muscles (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9x5K7zGlac>) so that you can sing with ease again!

(Continued on page 6)

**STRAINED THROAT FROM SINGING**  
(continued)

(Continued from page 5)

If your **throat muscles** felt constricted during or after a vocal practice, performance or speech or had that feeling of strained **throat muscles**, **vocal tension** or even pain, here are 5 tips to **releasing tension** from your voice.

Follow one of these tips or all of them to **relax muscle tension** from your throat and even better, **avoid straining your voice**.

**Tip 1****Make Mirror Your Best Friend**

A mirror is a must in your practice room.

It will help you uncover unnecessary muscle movements that are often responsible for a **strained throat**.

The main perpetrators are:

- neck,
- jaw and
- tongue muscles.

A mirror can give you immediate visual feedback.

Make sure that you have a full-length mirror in your practice room and you observe yourself while singing.

The first step is to **become aware** of unnecessary movements.

Once you notice them, you can start eliminating them.

Of course, this is easier said than done.

So, what you need to do is to take one step at a time.

**Tip 2****Align, align, align**

Throat tension can develop as a result of incorrect body and vocal tract alignment.

For example, if you sing with your head in a forward position and stretched neck, this will eventually lead to vocal strain and tension.

So, check your posture throughout the day and maintain a well aligned body.

If you already have trouble with body alignment throughout the day, I would suggest improving your posture with yoga or pilates exercises or any other physical activities that improve your overall posture and body alignment.

If you are not keen on physical exercises, check out the Alexander technique exercises, especially an exercise called constructive rest, which is an easy but powerful exercise to improve body alignment and release tension.

**Tip 3****Breathe Low**

Can poor breathing lead to vocal tension?

The answer is yes.

Inadequate breathing technique can definitely lead to throat tension.

If you know how to breathe efficiently when singing, you take away pressure from your throat and larynx, whether you sing high, low, quiet or loud.

Your throat contains relatively small muscles.

If you use these small muscles in and around your throat to control air pressures and airflow when singing, you are putting a lot of stress on these muscles.

On the other hand, if the big muscles of your torso, starting with your pelvic floor muscles, your abdominals, postural muscles and other torso muscles are engaged to control the breath, you eliminate pressure from the vocal folds and throat.

Here is what to do:

- Inhale low
- Start exhaling from a low place
- Connect your breath to your voice

**Tip 4****It's in Your Head!**

What do I mean by that?

When I say that it's in your head, I mean that you may be putting too much pressure on yourself.

Many singers want to do singing tasks too early or too fast for their current skills and then, they only get frustrated by not being able to do them or even worse, they develop tension.

(Continued on page 7)

## STRAINED THROAT FROM SINGING (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

So, don't be one of them.

Singing is a journey and rushing your voice to perform at unrealistic high levels can only lead to tension.

### Tip 5 Care for Your Voice

It may sound fundamental but good vocal hygiene and care are essential for a **relaxed throat**.

Evaluate your voice use with a critical eye and answer questions like:

- Do I use my voice too much?
- Am I competing with loud music or environment and therefore strain my voice?
- Do I hydrate well?
- Do I sleep enough?
- Is my voice and body built for this vocal task?
- Do I abuse my voice by clearing my throat?
- Do I take medication that affects the function of my larynx?
- Is my voice and body built for this vocal task?
- Do I eat well balanced diet?
- And many more questions.

If you can pass all of these questions with a clean bill, then you are on a road to **relaxed throat muscles**.

### Bonus Tip

If you are already experiencing strained throat, you can eliminate it with **throat muscle relaxation exercises**, such as stretches and massage.

Stretches are easy exercises that should be part of your regular practice routine.

Stretch your neck and even your tongue to release that unwanted tension and strained throat.

Laryngeal massage is a wonderful tool and many people sing the praises about it. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um0fp2s2PUo>) and (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60TRKdsyYpw>)

## THE FIVE WHY'S

by Brody McDonald  
from choirbites.com

I read a lot of material regarding success, from music to sports to business. Success has a lot of commonalities across disciplines. And so it was that I discovered the "Five Whys," which is a practice that began at Toyota, and was widely adopted by other businesses.

The process is simple. Identify what went wrong, and ask why. Then ask why again and again - 5 total times. The goal is to get the ROOT CAUSE of the issue, then apply a fix to that root cause. Here are some examples for singing.

### EXAMPLE A:

- 1) Why is the tone thin?
  - The singers aren't singing openly
2. Why are the singers not singing openly?
  - They didn't breathe through an open vowel formation
3. Why aren't the singers breathing through an open vowel formation?
  - They waited until too close to the entrance to breathe
4. Why are the singers breathing so close to entrance?
  - They aren't counting rests to anticipate the entrance
5. Why aren't the singers counting rests?
  - They believe their responsibility to the music only occurs when actively singing: they are literally "resting" rather than tracking the music silently

### EXAMPLE B:

1. Why is the cutoff ragged?
  - The singers are placing the "t" at different times
2. Why are the singers placing the "t" at different times?
  - They are unsure of where the "t" goes
3. Why are the singers unsure of where the "t" goes?
  - They are not counting through the sustained note
4. Why are the singers not counting through the sustained note?
  - They are watching for a cutoff rather than tracking beats
5. Why are the singers watching for a cutoff rather than tracking beats?
  - The director always fixes the problem by saying "watch for my cutoff" rather than guiding the

(Continued on page 8)

## THE FIVE WHY'S (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

singers through the process of counting for the cutoff

The "Five Whys" addresses problems in a way that helps choirs identify how to prevent "mistakes" before they happen. The "Five Whys" helps determine if there is a gap in knowledge or in execution, and allows directors to make corrections accordingly.

## TOP TIPS FOR THE OLDER VOICE

by Liz Garnett  
from [helpingyouharmonise.com](http://helpingyouharmonise.com)

Today's title is the subject line of an email I received recently from LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon. She had been out and about visiting choruses, as is her wont, and had met with a group of ladies whose average age is a shade over 80, and asked me on their behalf if I had any technical advice for their singers, with an eye also to supporting the many other association members round the country who are singing joyfully into their later years.

So, the first and most important thing, they are already doing: keep singing! Singing is like any other skill: the best way to maintain it is to use it regularly. That said, both physical and cognitive capacities do become more fragile with advancing years, so things we once took for granted might over time need a little more care.

So, I'll start with a general principle, and then make some specific practical suggestions.

**Gentle Stretching** is the overall principle that underlies all the specific points below. There's the literal, physical sense in which gentle stretches will help keep your vocal instrument in good shape, but the metaphorical sense is possibly more important. Whatever you can currently manage in your singing – range, breath, music learning, stamina – you need to regularly take yourself to the edge of your capacities and then stretch just a little further. Don't push yourself hard, that's tiring and counterproductive, but do make sure you keep in touch with the maximum you can do.

The point is that if you stay too long away from your boundaries, the boundaries tend to contract to match. This is true for people of any age, but as we get older, it becomes harder to regain lost ground, so the impact of getting out of practice is greater. Stepping a bit beyond your comfort zone on a regular basis keeps you growing and learning, and promises a sense of achievement in exchange for making the effort.

With that in mind, here are some specific points, organised under the headings I use to plan vocal warm-ups.

- **Body.** It is a truism that the voice works better when given support by the rest of the body. It produces a better sound and gets tired less quickly. So, all the things that people tell you about keeping active being good for your health are also true for your voice. Getting out for a walk helps your singing as well as all other aspects of your wellbeing.

In terms of when you actually sing, make sure you get your body feeling engaged and active before you start. Gentle stretches are good here. And always aim to stand or sit actively to sing, with your feet well connected into the ground, and (if seated) your sitting bones grounded in the seat. Feel like your whole body is involved in the act of singing

- **Breath.** A deep-seated breath is how your bodily support connects to your voice. [Bubbling](#) is always a good exercise for this, since it's impossible to do without connecting into the breath. Another good exercise for preparing to sing is to breathe out for increasing lengths of time (count of 4, count of 8, count of 12...four times table to 20) with a relax-refill breath for two between each. You can do this to a bubble or hiss too.
- **Phonation.** That is, the actual contact between your vocal folds that makes the sound. The goal is not to push your larynx but let it vibrate freely – that way it tires much less. Once again, bubbling is good for this, as are any [SOVT exercises](#). If your voice is feeling fragile, the classic exercise is hum/sing through a straw into a glass (or bottle) of water – singers stole this one from voice therapists and it's really good for rebalancing a tired larynx
- **Range.** Vocal range is a function of how flexible your larynx is, so this is one where gentle stretching is valuable in its literal, physical

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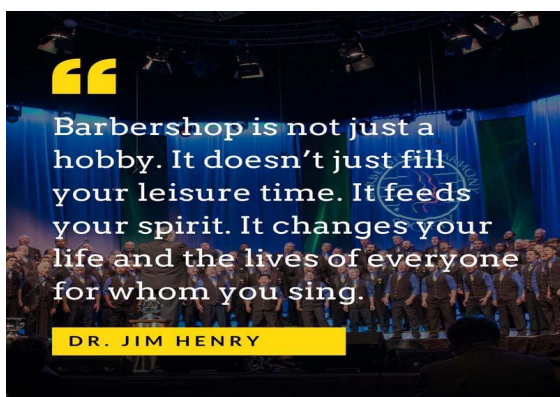


### TOP TIPS FOR OLDER VOICES (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

sense. Make sure you warm up to the extremes of your range, not just the notes you'll need for the music you have in hand. Sirening – i.e. swooping freely up and down throughout your range is the classic exercise here. Do it to an NG hum (as in the end of the word 'sing') for a gentle but effective workout of your range.

- **Ear.** Many people experience some degree of hearing loss in later life, and for this you really need the support of an audiologist. Do let them know you sing, as it will make a difference to the kinds of therapeutic aids they recommend for you. In chorus, experiment with your position relative to other singers and distance from them to work out how best to hear what others are doing.
- **Brain.** The best form of gentle stretching for the brain is learning, so make sure you keep engaging with new repertoire, not just singing the songs you already know. If you're singing in a genre like barbershop that includes choreographic gesture as part of the performance tradition, then coordinated movement is also really good for the brain. The ideal things to be working on to keep the brain moving are things that you can't get right first time, but can achieve with a few repetitions.
- **Ensemble.** Mutual awareness and collaboration to make the music work together is at the heart of harmony singing. Social connection is also strongly correlated with wellbeing and life expectancy, so for this one, we come back to the first point: keep doing what you're doing. Not only is it a deeply satisfying way to spend your life, it will keep that life going for longer so you get to make more music.



## A CLEVER PRACTICE HACK TO MAKE PRACTICING MORE ENJOYABLE

by Dr Noa Kageyama  
from [bulletproofmusician.com](http://bulletproofmusician.com)

In her viral 2008 TED Talk, neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor remarked that “Although many of us may think of ourselves as thinking creatures that feel, biologically we are feeling creatures that think.”

I'm often reminded of this quote around this time of year, when our thoughts turn to the new year and the new habits we'd like to incorporate into our lives.

Habits like exercising more regularly. Or practicing more consistently. Or flossing!

A lot of these goals seem simple enough on paper. But we know from experience that it can be a real challenge to maintain these new behaviors.

How hard?

Well, take exercise, for instance. I still remember my exercise behavior prof in grad school saying that statistically, we have a better chance of quitting heroin cold turkey than we do of maintaining an exercise program beyond 6 months.

And why are the numbers so discouraging?

### Information isn't the problem

Well, for better or worse, research has found that our decisions and actions are often aligned more with how we *feel*, than what we *think*.

For instance, your brain already knows plenty about the benefits of exercise. So the problem is not a lack of information. And cramming more knowledge into your noggin isn't going to get you to the gym any more than reading an article about the benefits of practicing scales will make you crack open your trusty book 'o scales on a consistent basis (though I'm going to put that link there anyway, just in case).

### Thinking vs. feeling

The challenge, is that many new habits aren't inherently fun at first. So as much as you may *want* to work out, you may not *feel* like working out, and the feeling could win out. Because is a good workout satisfying? Totally. But are you having fun in the 5th interval of a Tabata workout? Probably not.

(Continued on page 10)

## A CLEVER PRACTICE HACK (continued)

(Continued from page 9)

For me, practicing felt like this too. I did it every day because I wanted to get better, and because playing well was important to me. But was it something I'd do for fun? Ha! Not so much.

More often, I'd spend the day procrastinating, allowing myself to get distracted, and guilt-tripping myself, until my desk was spotless and all of my pens were organized by color and ink remaining...

So what are we to do when our wants and feels are in conflict?

### Tapping into the feeling side of the equation

Well, instead of focusing on the "want" side of the equation, some researchers have explored this challenge from the "feel" direction.

As in, is it possible to get more people to stick with an exercise program by increasing its enjoyableness?

Spoiler alert – the answer appears to be yes. But the more important question, and the real challenge, is how do you make exercise (or practicing for that matter) more enjoyable – without making it easier and reducing its effectiveness?

### How our experience unfolds over time

It turns out that our perception of how much we enjoy or dislike an experience depends quite a bit on how that experience plays out over time.

Specifically, we tend to prefer experiences that become more pleasurable over time, as opposed to experiences that start out great, but become increasingly unpleasant over time – *even if the total amount of pleasure we experienced is about the same*.

Sort of like a movie that takes a while to get into, but ends great (e.g. The Usual Suspects ), vs. a film that hooks you from the start, but ends with such an unsatisfying conclusion that you can't believe you sat through the whole thing just for that (e.g. Arlington Road ).

### Two opposite workouts

To take a closer look at this in the context of exercise, a group of researchers (Zenko et al., 2016)

recruited 46 participants to participate in two mirror-opposite 15-minute exercise sessions.

22 participants were in the increasing-intensity group. They started out on an exercise bike at an easy, comfortable pace, but their workout got progressively more intense and challenging over the course of 15 minutes.

24 participants were in the decreasing-intensity group. These participants began their workout at the most challenging level, but the intensity gradually decreased to an easy, comfortable pace over the course of 15 minutes.

The overall workout intensity was identical. The intensity was just organized differently for each group.

And did that make any difference in how they felt about the workout, and whether they'd do it again?

### Perception during the exercise session

As predicted, the increasing-intensity group's pleasure ratings of the workout *decreased* as the workout became more challenging<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, the decreasing-intensity group's pleasure ratings *increased*, as their workout became easier.

And interestingly, the average overall ratings for the workouts were pretty much the same. Meaning, that overall, both groups experienced about the same amount of pleasure (or lack thereof) during the course of the workout.

However, a very different story emerged when participants were asked how they felt about the workout *after* they finished exercising.

### Perception after the exercise session

The increasing-intensity group's average pleasure rating of the workout after completing it was 2.09<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the decreasing-intensity group's average rating was 2.56. This suggests that the group that ended easy remembered the workout as being more pleasant than it actually was (because there was no difference in their ratings of the workout during the exercise session itself).

The post-exercise enjoyment numbers were also quite different. While the increasing-intensity group's average enjoyment score was 86.64, the decreasing-intensity group's score was 100.39<sup>3</sup>. Which suggests that a workout that starts tough, but gets easier towards the end, is a more enjoyable

(Continued on page 11)

## A CLEVER PRACTICE HACK (continued)

(Continued from page 10)  
workout.

### Remembering the past; forecasting the future

Most intriguingly, there was a big difference between the two groups' *remembered* and *forecasted* pleasure ratings. The decreasing-intensity group remembered the workout as being much more pleasurable than the increasing-intensity group – with scores of 55.51 vs. 25.05<sup>4</sup>.

The decreasing-intensity group also anticipated that they would enjoy doing the same workout again in the future way more than the increasing-intensity group thought they would – with scores of 51.75 vs. 31.47<sup>5</sup>.

So what are we to do with this?

### Caveats

This study didn't include a follow-up to see if participants in the decreasing-intensity group were actually more likely to work out in the days that followed, but this study reminded me of some advice I received years ago, related to helping young kids study.

I was told that instead of pushing your kids right to the edge of their tolerance level, stop a few questions short of what they can handle. That way they'll remember the session as being easier, than if they ended it feeling spent and exhausted. And then it'll be easier to get them to start studying again, with less resistance the next time.

### Take action

Exercising and studying and practicing aren't exactly the same of course, but this "start tough/end easy" principle might be interesting to experiment with as you start off the new year.

For instance, what might practicing feel like if you identify the most important – and most challenging – practice task or challenge on your list, and tackle that first in each practice session? With that out of the way, you could then move on to less onerous tasks, and end with the most enjoyable/easiest/funniest things on your list.

Or what might happen if you front-load orchestra rehearsals, choir and band practice, and chamber music rehearsals with the most challenging items

on your to-do list? And then progressively work on easier or funner things as the rehearsal progresses?

This also means creating a practice to-do list and taking a moment to do some prioritizing, but that's probably not such a bad habit to cultivate for the new year too. As author Robert Heinlein once said, "In the absence of clearly defined priorities, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia."

## HOW TO SING FROM YOUR DIAPHRAGM

by Suzy Woltmann  
from backstage.com

Whether it's Barbra Streisand's goosebump-raising 19-second note in "A Piece of the Sky," or Bill Withers' iconic 18-second one in "Lovely Day," the ability to hold a note requires a singer to vocalize from their diaphragm. While learning how to sing from your diaphragm may not make you the next Ariana Grande, it will help you achieve better breath control and hit longer notes.

### What is the diaphragm?

The diaphragm is a sheet of skeletal muscle that separates your heart and lungs (the thoracic cavity) from the rest of your internal organs and controls airflow in and out of the lungs.

### What is diaphragmatic singing?

Singing from the diaphragm involves taking deep, long breaths that move air from the diaphragm gently over the vocal cords.

From the highest falsetto to the lowest bass, the sounds made by singing are produced when air from an exhaled breath moves over the vocal cords, making them vibrate. Singing from your diaphragm versus your throat is a difference of breath support and vocal control. Singing from your throat means taking shallow, fast breaths, while singing from your diaphragm means taking deep breaths from your chest. This reduced strain on the throat supports vocal chords and grants greater breath control and projection.

Vocal coach Eric Arceneaux goes more into depth about diaphragmatic singing here:

Part 1 <https://youtu.be/-SeSL9WdVBo>

Part 2 <https://youtu.be/MXq90p-mHUg>

### How to strengthen the diaphragm

(Continued on page 12)

**HOW TO SING FROM YOUR DIAPHRAGM**

(continued)

*(Continued from page 11)*

Just like any other muscle, the diaphragm needs to be strong to function optimally. And just like any other muscle, the diaphragm can be strengthened with proper training and exercise. Practicing deep breathing for 10–15 minutes a day will help activate and strengthen your diaphragm muscle.

Know what muscles to activate: Stand up straight with proper posture and feel the bottom of your ribcage: This is where the diaphragm muscles connect. Even if you're not sporting a six-pack, your abdominal muscles give you the power to move air through the diaphragm.

You should also familiarize yourself with the pelvic floor muscles that support the bladder and bowel (as well as the uterus and vagina for female people). Imagine that you're stopping urination in mid-stream—that group of muscles is your pelvic floor. Exercises that engage the pelvic floor, such as Kegels, can strengthen these muscles and help better support your diaphragm.

Go horizontal: Lie down on a flat surface with your knees bent and put one hand at the bottom of your rib cage. Inhale slowly and feel your stomach push against your hand. Ensure that you're breathing from your diaphragm and not your throat by keeping your other hand on your chest; this hand should remain as still as possible. At the end of your inhale, tighten your abs so that your stomach contracts, and exhale slowly through pursed lips.

Sit up: Once you're familiar with the way your diaphragm moves when you breathe deeply lying down, do the same activity while sitting up in a chair. This exercise will train you to activate your diaphragm when breathing and singing while sitting and standing.

**How to sing with the diaphragm**

To sing from your diaphragm, you must warm up, stand up straight, bear down on your pelvic floor, take deep breaths, and sing long notes.

Warm up: Before singing, spend 15–20 minutes preparing with vocal warmups.

- Stretch each arm up and over the other side of your core to open up your diaphragm.
- Do vocal slides using increasing intervals and volume.

- Blow raspberries with your lips to reduce the resistance on your vocal cords.
- Fake a yawn while keeping your mouth closed.

Posture is everything: Stand up as straight as possible to optimize your diaphragmatic breathing. Your diaphragm needs the kind of space to expand and retract that only comes from standing tall with a straight spine. It can help to imagine you're pushed up against an imaginary wall (or if slouching is a struggle, you can even practice singing while standing against a real wall).

Bear down on your pelvic floor: "A slight bearing down on the pelvic floor helps keep the abdominal muscles of support consistently engaged without pushing inwards," says vocal coach Arden Kaywin. This allows for "the optimum amount of air movement and subglottal pressure to create a beautiful, resonant sound without getting out of breath." To use your pelvis to hit notes like Elvis, Kaywin advises that you put your hands on your obliques, breathe in, and then breathe out with a hiss. Engage your pelvis and push gently downward with your pelvic floor. Then repeat the exercise while holding a lip trill note at a pitch comfortable for you. Lower your pelvic hold incrementally, the higher the pitch.

Breathe deep: Now's the time to summon your diaphragm-strengthening exercises: Gradually push the air out of your lungs and feel your stomach contract. Inhale deeply and feel your stomach expand. Keep your throat open and relaxed to ensure that you're not accidentally taking shallow breaths from the throat.

Sing long, sing strong: Finally, sing and hold a note—soft "ahh," "ohh," and "ooh" vowel sounds are best—and focus on the feeling of your stomach slowly expanding. You should find that your breath and voice are supported and that you have better musical stamina.





## CAN A VOICE MAKEOVER ACTUALLY CHANGE YOUR LIFE?

by Roger Love  
from [rogerlove.com](http://rogerlove.com)

How long does it really take to fundamentally change the way someone's voice sounds when they speak? Decades? Years? Months? How about...minutes!

Yes, I've learned how to create lasting change in an individual's voice in just one session of less than an hour, and I'm excited for you to see the difference for yourself!  
(<https://youtu.be/dLjSn93Gjdg>)

How you sound is who people perceive you to be. That perception change impacts you in two ways.

First, when you change your voice, you change the way people perceive you internally. As in, what's your personality, IQ and expertise? What culture most influenced you? How confident are you?

This applies to how other people perceive your emotions, as well. Is she angry at me? Is he sad about what just happened?

In fact, you're likely to be stunned at how incredibly accurate your voice can be when it comes to expressing how you're feeling. And how easily it can give away your emotional state, if you're not cognizant of the sounds your voice is making.

Now, here's the second perception change:

As in, how old are you? How attractive are you? Are you strong or weak?

By simply knowing these facts, you're ahead of the crowd because most people don't even know they're being judged emotionally and physically when they talk.

Which is shocking, because...

Judging someone by the sounds their voice makes is actually part of our evolutionary hardwiring.

In the wild, sounds communicate an animal's intentions. Are they trying to eat you, mate with you, or join your tribe?

Sound is also how we judge if another animal is a

threat to us. Since the size of the vocal cords (or vocal tract, depending on the animal) is proportional to the potential pitch of an animal's voice, if the sound coming from the bushes is high-pitched, it probably belongs to a small animal. No threat there. But if the roar is low-pitched, it's probably an animal with a very large body. RUN AWAY!

By the way, if you think we've lost this evolutionary advantage over time, think again. Recent scientific research has shown that women can judge with incredibly high accuracy the upper body strength of a man...by listening to nothing more than an audio recording of his voice!

Our minds *subconsciously* pick up on these attraction and physical body cues when we listen to someone else's voice, without us even having to pay specific attention.

### The Voice and Perception Feedback Loop

1. We speak.
2. Others hear our voice and make instant conclusions about us, emotionally and physically. In this stage of the feedback loop, they've formed an initial impression of us, which we could call a preliminary perception.
3. Listeners react to us based on how they perceive us. *For example, if they judged us to be informed, experienced, and confident, they're more likely to respect us or yield to us. If they detect that we're insecure, uncertain, or bluffing, they might do the opposite, and on and on.*
4. Listeners' responses inform how we perceive ourselves. *For example, are we really in control? Are we as capable as we thought? And so on.*
5. How we perceive ourselves (which we determined in Stage 4) impacts how we feel, which impacts the sound of our voice when we go to say something else....which starts the feedback loop again, back at Stage 1.

The conversations we hold, day in and day out, are a repeat of that feedback loop.

Let's recap the big take-away here:

If you want to change how you feel about yourself and the way the world sees you, you don't have to change your body or career or wardrobe.

Instead, just start with your voice. Because a voice improvement is a life improvement.



## A MODEST RECRUITING PROPOSAL

by Michael Tate

What if we recruited people who had most of the soft skills that appear to serve Barbershop well, and the only major hurdle was teaching them to sing?

What if you reached out to people who were accustomed to:

- a) being watched in public,
- b) committing to attending gatherings devoted to collective and personal growth,
- c) understanding that their body is a vessel for execution of a task, and
- d) that external feedback with the component of (respectful skeptical) trust is commonplace in getting better?

People who knew that self-care is critical in meeting one's potential?

People who understand that it's ok to show your emotions? Who know that managing failure feelings is simply a fact of functioning?

People who know that personal study dramatically improves the product at the gathering? And that the highly-skilled people in a craft enjoy the nuts & bolts of the activity?

People who have learned some comfort in their skin to the point that just because they can't *currently* do something, it doesn't mean they can't learn it, and have the wherewithal to try new things. And they know full well that becoming competent might take a little time, and that's ok?

People who like spending time with people who love what they love?

People who, as a bonus, also enjoy competition with mutual respect for the other participants?

What if you reached out to these folks and said, "hey, y'know, I do this thing, and we look for people like you. Would you come meet my friends and sing with us?"

What if we recruited college athletes?

What if we contacted college coaches and asked to provide entertainment at their season-end banquets or other team functions?

And if a student athlete asks about what we do, we say things like, "well, sadly, you probably can't play [insert sport here] forever. If you like, we'd love you to come hang out with us and learn the magic of ringing a chord?"



Here's a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop on amazon.com you can sign up for the Amazon Smile program, and designate the Big O as your charity of choice. Then anytime you make a purchase on Amazon (Smile), they make a donation to us! No cost to you, and a donation to us: win win!

**Please Note:** Amazon is discontinuing this program, this month, in order to support charities and non-profits that THEY want to support.



Here's a simple way to financially support the Big Orange Chorus, at no cost to you! If you shop at any of the more than 400 merchants or like to purchase eGift Cards, FlipGive will give us back from 1% to 20%, depending on the merchant.

To sign up, visit <https://www.flipgive.com/f/570688> and start shopping.

Thanks in advance!!

## FREE YOUR VOICE

by John Newell, Lead, *Realtime*  
from Let It Out ©2013 Used by permission

### Tongue Strategies and Exercises

First get your tongue into good position. Find the position in your mouth that feels comfortable and produces your best sound. You will definitely need a coach or a trusted ear to help identify your best sound.

- Drop your jaw open, as described earlier. Let your tongue rest in a loose and completely unforced position. Look in the mirror. You should see plenty of your tongue's front surface area, as if the front of it is like a ramp sloping down to your lower lip. If you do not, you are tensing the rear of your tongue. A natural tongue position should be with the tip resting behind the front lower teeth or even on top of them.
- When you sing with your most natural voice, you should be able to see in a mirror plenty of front surface area of your tongue. A relaxed tongue is not flat like a table, but has a convex curve all the way to the tip. Be very wary of flattening the tongue, or dropping it down, or retracting it, or bunching it. Tiny adjustments here and there may, and will, occur, but dramatic changes are a danger sign. Experiment with the resonant sensations with each vowel sound, so that each feels like it is vibrating and penetrating the same spaces of your head. You may even find that the strongest resonance on some vowels occurs when you do not drop the back of your tongue as far as you have done previously. For example, I once sang my 'ee' vowels with deliberate internal mouth space and my tongue depressed. However, I sounded covered, dark, muddy and forced. Now my tongue surface area is easy to see, my jaw is loose, the sides of my tongue may be lightly in contact with my upper middle molars, and my sound is cleaner, more focused and stronger. Experiment yourself.
- As you sing extended notes, watch your tongue in a mirror. If it flattens so far that you can see your uvula (the tissue dangling at the rear of your mouth), it is possibly too tense. If the length of your tongue has a deep valley or furrow along its middle from front to back, it is possibly too tense.

(to be continued next month)

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Yvonne DeBandi  
from [a2z-singing-tips.com](http://a2z-singing-tips.com)

I = Increase your breathing capacity and control by doing breathing exercises every day. Be sure to avoid patterned breathing. Singers must negotiate phrase lengths of all different sizes, so it is important to be versatile.

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Nicole LeGault  
from [a2z-singing-tips.com](http://a2z-singing-tips.com)

I is for Imagery. When you are describing through song an event, an emotion, an experience, your surroundings, specific people, etc... you must have a clear vision in your mind's eye of the images you are describing. If you neglect to do this, the words will seem to have no meaning.

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Mick Walsh  
from [a2z-singing-tips.com](http://a2z-singing-tips.com)

I. Imagination is the singers greatest asset. Use it wisely. Eliminate all negative thoughts and think positive. If you imagine that you can do something then you almost certainly can. The opposite also applies. If you are having trouble with a song try imagining you are the singer who sings it. Unlike guitar players or other musicians (and yes, singers are musicians) we do not have fret boards, keys or buttons to press so we must develop our imagination to hit the right notes, in the right key, at the right time.

## FREE SINGING TIPS

by Teri Danz  
from [a2z-singing-tips.com](http://a2z-singing-tips.com)

I= Initiate -- Look for opportunities to sing. They are out there. Be like a tiger, watch for opportunities and do the work to be able to take them.



## QUARTET CORNER

Our quartets are regrouping.

What is YOUR quartet doing? Don't have one? Find three other guys and start one! Can't find a match? Drop me a line and I'll run a list of guys looking to quartet up here in the bulletin. It's one of those really fun things that you don't fully understand until you've done it.

It's never too early to be thinking about Singing Valentines. Quartets are always needed, officially formed or pickup. It's only a few easy songs. Learning more than one voice part to these songs can help make you easier to fit into a quartet.

## CHAPTER QUARTETS



No Name Yet

? tenor

Mark Roblez lead

Jason Dearing bari

John Alexander bass

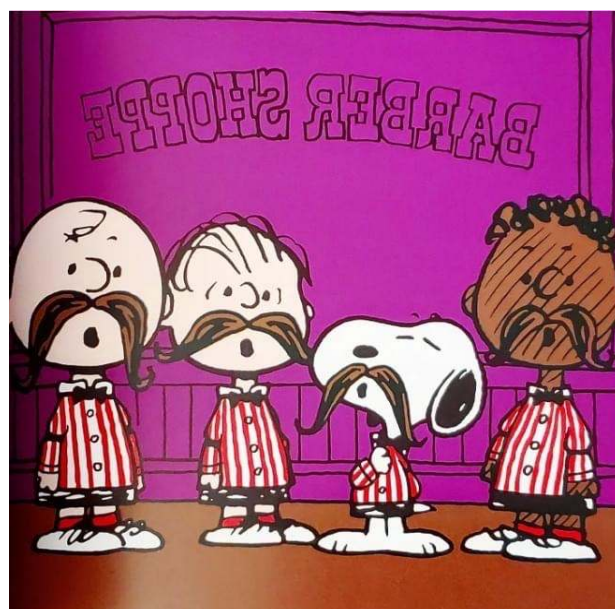
No Name Yet

? tenor

? lead

? baritone

? bass



# Big Orange Chorus

## REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Thu	02 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Feb	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	02 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	09 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	16 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	23 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods
Thu	30 Mar	Shepherd of the Woods

## BIRTHDAYS

Les Mower	05 Feb
Phil Warmanen	12 Feb
Tom Frutchey	15 Feb

## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Tue	14 Feb	Singing Valentines
Sat	25 Feb	Icemen Game
Fri	17 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sat	18 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
Sun	19 Mar	Sunshine District Spring Conv
...more to come		

**"Musicians must practice a piece until muscle memory sets in. Where the brain is free to forget, but the body still clearly remembers. This gets rid of thoughts allowing the music to simply *FLOW*."**

www.musiciansunite.com

**I'll talk to anyone about anything, but sooner or later I'll tell him I sing. I'll invite him to visit on Thursday night and if he likes what he hears, he just might become a member and maybe he'll bring another good man who likes to sing.**

## RECENT GUESTS

Roger Erestaine	Ron Blewett
Jon Greene	Jim Harper
G Lane	Brandon Edwards
Joe McLean	Adom Panshukian
Christian Cornella-Carlson	
Michael Reynolds	Kyle Batchelder
David Brown	Thomas Barhacs
Pat McCormack	David Brown
Richard Breault	Justin McGhie
Emily Dearing	Sean Henderson
Doug Owens	Chris Redman
Steve Moody	Jeff Fullmer
Doug Schultz	Ryan Himes
Ron Geno	Mike Ryan
Dale Patricu	Gary Weddel
Stephen Gramza	Curt Shepherd
Conner Barber	Craig Dopp
Julian Bryson	Bob Lemons
Jim Hughes	Chris Loken
Dale Martin	

# WELCOME

## NEWEST MEMBERS

Les Mower	April
Ray Parzik	August
Ed Fitzgerald	September



## 2021 DIRECTING TEAM



Jay Giallombardo  
Front Line  
Director

## 2021 OTHER CHAPTER LEADERS



David Walker  
Uniform  
Manager



Les Mower  
Chorus  
Manager



John Alexander  
Bulletin  
Editor



Frank Nosalek  
Webmaster &  
Technology

PHOTO  
NOT  
AVAILABLE

vacant  
Show  
Chairman

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Article and column submissions are solicited.  
Help make this a better bulletin. Send me stuff!  
The deadline for March is 24 February.  
Items without a byline are from the Editor.

*The Orange Spiel*  
John Alexander, Editor  
2429 Southern Links Dr  
Fleming Island FL 32003

Back issues are available online at:  
[www.bigorangechorus.com/newsarchive.htm](http://www.bigorangechorus.com/newsarchive.htm)  
More specific and timely performance information  
is in my weekly sheet, *Orange Zest*.

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one with someone  
you are bringing to  
a chapter meeting.  
Let them know they  
belong here!**



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**IMAGINE 80 MEN ON THE RISERS  
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**



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