

# Build Your Own Warmup

<p><b><i>Establishing Balance</i></b></p> <p>Walk around the room and ask:            “Can I tell if I’m leaning?”            “Is my weight over my leading foot?”            “Where do I sense the bottom of my torso?”</p> <p>Imagine dribbling a basketball out in front of you.            Where do you feel your center?</p> <p>Notice the pressure your feet exert on the ground,            and that the ground exerts on your feet.</p> <p>Notice if your head is free to move, your ribs            move easily in all directions, your hips feel open            and supple, your weight is equal across your feet.</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range,            high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>
<p><b><i>Stretching</i></b></p> <p>Stretch arms up to the ceiling and notice rib            expansion            Meet hands behind back, notice chest expansion            Hip circles            Bend to the floor roll up slowly            Neck semi circles</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range,            high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>
<p><b><i>Breathing</i></b></p> <p>Feel your throat open on inhale and exhale</p> <p>Imagine releasing a bowling ball or frisbee            while exhaling on a   shhhhhhhhhhhhh                                              ddddjjjjjjjjjjjjjj                                              ssssssssssssssss                                              zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz</p> <p>Inhale for 4 counts, suspend the breath for 4            counts, release the breath for 4 counts</p> <p>Pulse the breath on a quick shhh, ssss, or ffff</p> <p>Sigh out with open throat and slowly add sound</p> <p>Release air on a long wwwwooooahhhhh</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range,            high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>

<p><b><i>Connecting Spoken Phrases</i></b></p> <p>Well, Well, Well          Whoooo arrreee youuuuu          Mmmy Mmamma Mmmakes Mmmuffins          Name that tune          Late for class          Once upon a time          Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii          But I don't waaaaanna (toddler whine)          Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>
<p><b><i>Massage</i></b></p> <p>Chewing muscles, Temples          Tongue thrusts, Tongue curls          Under chin          Imagine chewing gum          Sides of hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage          Scrunch nose and lips together, spread far apart          in wide yawn and smile          Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>
<p><b><i>Semi-Occluded</i></b></p> <p>Sing through a straw or cup          Alternate every other pattern with the straw or cup and then a vowel          Start the onset of the pattern on a straw or cup, then open up to a vowel          Lip trill, Tongue trill, Raspberries          MMMMMMMM, NNNNNNNN, LLLLLLLLLL          NNNNGGGG, ZZZZZZZZ, VVVVVVVV, DJJJJJJ          Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i>          54321          5-1          1-8-1          123454321          1356531          534231271          1 5 8 5 3 1          other:</p>
<p><b><i>Focus the Sound</i></b>          (easy adduction)</p> <p>Tiny whimpers          Puppy whines          MmmiamMiamMiamMiam          MiuMiuMiuMiu (kitten-like)          MoneyMoneyMoney          GaNGGaNGGaNGG          NweedoNweedoNweedo          Toddle whines 'I don't wanna' 'Aww Maaan'          Vocal fry while breathing out &amp; breathing in          messa di voce in one direction          ingressive singing or speaking          Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i>          54321          5-1          1-8-1          123454321          1356531          534231271          1 5 8 5 3 1          other:</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Onsets</i></b></p> <p>While lip trilling, alternate air only and pitch Alternate SSSS to ZZZZ, SHHHH to DJJJJ, and FFFFFF to VVVVV</p> <p>Alternate WhyWhyWhy and AiAiAiAi and HaiHaiHaiHai</p> <p>Start AiAiAiAi with a puppy whine Start AiAiAiAi with vocal fry Lightly say "Uh-Oh" and "oops" Staccato Ng and B combined with a vowel (e.g. Ng-Ah, Ng-lh, Ng-Oo, B-Ah, B-lh, etc.) Staccato lh Uh and [ə] (schwa) Other:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Length of Time</i></b> ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b> ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b> ex: see examples page 54321 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1356531 534231271 1 5 8 5 3 1 other:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Tongue Independence</i></b></p> <p>Tongue thrusts with and without sound Slides with tongue completely out of mouth Raspberries NNNGGGG ---&gt; AAAAAA ZZZZZZ -----&gt; EEEEEEEEE EEEEEEE-----&gt; AAAAAAAAAA YaYaYaYaYa and KaKaKaKaKa (with jaw still) GangGangGangGang and MingMingMingMing The Blowfish (puff cheeks, tiny opening at lips) Other:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Length of Time</i></b> ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b> ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b> ex: see examples page 54321 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1356531 534231271 1 5 8 5 3 1 other:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Whoop Resonant Strategy</i></b></p> <p>Cop Car whoop WHOOP Siren WeeeUUUUeeUUUU Like on a swing WEEEEEEEE Imitate a ghost hoooOOOO Slide on Whoop, Wheep and Whaaap Octave glide on ooo-oh-ah, changing vowel slowly across glide to match the "whoop" boost Pigeon "Coo, Coo, Coo" Other:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Length of Time</i></b> ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b> ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b> ex: see examples page 54321 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1356531 534231271 1 5 8 5 3 1 other:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Hey Resonant Strategy</i></b></p> <p>Call out 'Hey' to get someone's attention Call out 'Hey' as if annoyed Hey STAY AWAY Slide on Hey Octave glide on eee-eh-ae, changing vowel slowly across glide to match with the "hey" boost Duck "Quack, Quack, Quack" Other:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Length of Time</i></b> ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b> ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b> ex: see examples page 54321 5-1 1-8-1 123454321 1356531 534231271 1 5 8 5 3 1 other:</p>

<p><b><i>Acoustic Mix Resonant Strategy</i></b></p> <p>Use [N] (=ng)  Sing the vowel chains [i] [I] [e] [ɛ] [a] [æ] and [u] [ʊ] [o] [ɔ] [ɑ] [æ]  Sing the vowel shape bridging exercise  Goose “Qwaa Qwaa Qwaa”</p> <p>Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i>  54321  5-1  1-8-1  123454321  1356531  534231271  1 5 8 5 3 1  <i>other:</i></p>
<p><b><i>Stability Across Vowels</i></b></p> <p>Neutral Vowels: [ɪ] (bit), [ʊ] (book), and [ə] (schwa=but). Use “bit, book, but”  Apply stability to other vowels by keeping the neutral vowel feeling with speech-level vowels:  Aaa([ə])-eehhh(lh)-eee(lh)-00hh(Uh)-uuuuu(Uh)  Sing the vowel shape bridging exercise  Slide low to high eeeee - ihhhh  Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i>  54321  5-1  1-8-1  123454321  1356531  534231271  1 5 8 5 3 1  <i>other:</i></p>
<p><b><i>Vowel/Consonant Combos</i></b></p> <p>Let the consonants lead and the vowels energize the consonants</p> <p>Louie Louie Louie Louie      Bwe Bwe Bwe Bwe  Boi Boi Boi Boi Boi          Bee Bo Bee Bo Bee  AngAngAngAngAng            Gi ko Gi ko Gi  Zingy Zingy Zingy Zing        Lee lo Lee lo Lee  Ai yai yai yai yai              Vee Veh Vee Veh  New New New New New  Speak words from a song or monologue  “The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog”  Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i>  54321  5-1  1-8-1  123454321  1356531  534231271  1 5 8 5 3 1  <i>other:</i></p>
<p><b><i>Bringing Attention Outside</i></b></p> <p>Walk around the room  Notice 5 things you see, 4 you touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste  Imagine tossing a ball  Bring your hands out by your ears, notice their presence with your peripheral  Create choreography for each warm-up  Create a horizon with your hand under your eyes  Sing each warm up with an emotion in mind, and notice how you feel and sound differently.  Focus on 4 core emotions: Anger, Sadness, Joy, Fear  Other:</p>	<p><b><i>Length of Time</i></b>  <i>ex: 4 min, 6 repetitions</i></p>	<p><b><i>Starting Pitch</i></b>  <i>ex: speaking range, high/middle/low range</i></p>	<p><b><i>Pitch Pattern</i></b>  <i>ex: see examples page</i></p>

## ***Explanations and Examples***

The primary goal of any warm up is to stretch and unpress the vocal folds. There are many other goals after that, however, that center primarily on coordination at local and global levels. Knowing the reasoning behind individual warm ups, and in what order you perform them, can be a key factor in their success. The key to utilizing the direct benefits of each one rests in tracking the sensations that you feel when performing them, and attempting to recreate those sensations when singing. Remember these helpful hints:

Warm Ups have specific purposes

Only YOU can warm your voice up

Many warm ups serve the same goal, pick what works for you

You have as much information as anyone about your voice

### **Centering, Stretching, and Breathing**

Aligning your body eliminates tensions that can cause vocal strain. The key to body alignment rests in noticing. We habituate posture in daily life in ways that puts undue stress on muscles throughout the body that we are often unaware of. Focusing your attention on certain muscles and muscle combinations, and noticing if they feel strained or not, provides the first important insight into your voice. Always inhale and exhale while performing these warm ups, to connect your breath to your body alignment through feelings of freedom.

### **Spoken Phrases**

Speaking allows the singer to align the vocal tract and breath without the added challenge of sung pitch. Focus on a relaxed inhale, and sustaining long (or extra-long) vowels while increasing vowel energy into consonants such that the consonant is energized by the vowel. This process sets the voice up nicely for singing by helping the vocal folds coordinate the breath pressure and vocal fold onsets with vocal tract consonants. Add the concept of twang for resonant strategy success.

### **Massage**

We tend to engage some muscles in perpetual tension when our bodies are out of alignment. Finding the ones that are significantly contracted and rubbing them while breathing and asking them to release can become an important aspect of body freedom. This will be particularly important with smaller muscles in the neck and face.

### **Semi-Occluded**

The principal benefit from semi-occluded exercises is the positive back pressure provided by the smaller aperture that helps the vocal folds vibrate and “gear shift” easily. After that, each SOVT has slightly different functions. The straw elongates the vocal tract, giving even more back pressure (try it with an [b] vs. a [m] and notice how the soft palate responds). The cup creates a similar back pressure, but allows the lips to move. Lip trills, tongue trills, and raspberries each require coordination with the lips/tongue and vocal folds, but be careful of jaw tension. When relaxation is achieved, they provide a positive coordination between the vocal tract and vocal folds that is unique each unto itself. Each of the sustained consonants ask for a different vocal tract position, and as such, can be used to create specific desired habits. The [z], for example, each requires the tongue to be in a forward position, and create a specific sensation that people can remember when singing. The [n], [ng], and [r] each help to create a more refined aperture opening between the throat and mouth.

### **Focus on the Sound**

Laryngeal registration (i.e. which laryngeal muscles are used in what configuration at any given moment) is critical to how we sound, yet, very difficult to perceive given the fact that we can't feel those muscles. This is further complicated by the fact that we can feel the muscles surrounding the larynx, which confuses our sense of perception. Laryngeal registration targets, therefore, need to focus on a relaxed/open, or “nothing”, sensation around the larynx, and specific vibratory sensations in the vocal tract that reflect the nature of vocal fold adduction. Each of these exercises encourages clean adduction and active/easy “gear shifting” of the laryngeal muscles. Focus on the vibration sensations in your face and mouth while doing them.

## Onsets

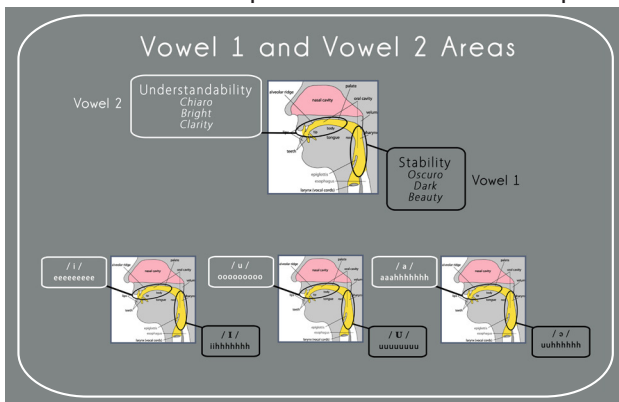
For maximum usefulness, the vocal folds need to come together with even, easy onsets. Hard onsets, by contrast, can cause disruption to vocal tract stability, and auditory perception of sound. Listen for smoothness in the sound, rather than the tell-tale “pop” of the hard onset, and try to feel as if your airflow is even and “pouring” through the sound. Easy onsets can take some time to coordinate with some singers.

## Tongue Independence

The tongue is a massive player in the vocal tract, and difficult to coordinate. One of the primary sensations that we try to habituate is a forward, rounded tongue position. Each of these exercises help in this habituation process, and each creates noticeable sensations that can be recreated when singing.

## Acoustic/Resonant Strategies: Hey, Whoop, and Acoustic Mix

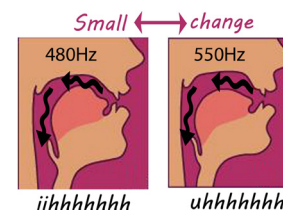
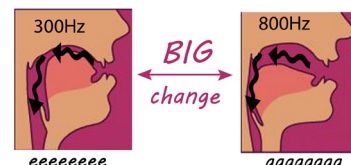
These three large-scale resonant strategies help to define tone color, and create stability. In particular, they can each be used to access certain stylistic traits that can be otherwise difficult to achieve. The Whoop strategy, which boosts the first harmonic, can be very useful for training a Western classical style of singing, particularly in the upper ranges (~D4 and higher), and can be helpful in training men to sing in a lighter, choral sound in their middle range (~A3-A4). The Hey strategy, which boosts the second-tenth harmonic, can be useful for training CCM styles of singing including pop, country, folk, music theater, and gospel. It is particularly useful in the lower to middle parts of the range. Above B4, the Hey strategy encounters challenges that make it less useful. You can feel both of the Whoop and Hey strategies in specific places in your face/head. People tend to feel the Whoop strategy more upward and back (near the ears and top of the head), and the Hey strategy more forward (near the upper teeth and nose).



The Acoustic Mix strategy, which boosts in between two harmonics (e.g. H1/H2, H2/H3, etc.), is more difficult to feel and habituate. In the middle range (G3-G4) it can be very helpful in western classical singing, as well as CCM styles like gospel and the music theater legit sound, and even rock and pop especially higher into the range. It is also essential for finding stability in the middle belt range (G4-D5). The most challenging part of the Acoustic Mix resonant strategy is maintaining independence between the mouth and the throat shapes even as interdependence is developed.

## Stability Across Vowels

We have a range of vocal tract adjustment choices available to us when shaping every vowel. The less the vocal tract has to move, the more easily stability is achieved, making the vocal folds more efficient, thereby helping with breath regulation and sound output. Learning to hear vowels as a complex of tone color rather than a singularity is a key to targeting stability. Using “neutral” vowels as a replacement for “speech-level” vowels helps singers avoid radical adjustments (e.g. use [ɪ] for [i] and [æ], [ʊ] for [u] and [o], and [ə] for [a] and [ɔ]). Using vowel glides helps to habituate sensations associated with subtle shape changes, as well as using the vowel chains and vowel shape bridging found on the bottom of the next page.



## Vowel Consonant Combos

These are pretty self-explanatory. You might want to start them by stretching the tongue, jaw, and lips while avoiding tension in the larynx area. The “bite an apple” inner smile sensation can play a role in freeing the tongue and jaw as well. As you sing the warm ups, pay attention to what the tongue, jaw, and lips are doing to create the consonants and vowels. Also notice if the general volume of your sound changes, as this would suggest that your adduction is changing, which may point to the fact that the change in vowel/consonant combination is destabilizing the vocal folds.

## Attention to the Outside

With all of the noticing and target creation that goes on in singing practice, the singer’s brain can get wrapped around itself, causing new roadblocks to form. These exercises can be used throughout the warm up process to help the singer focus their attention more generally on their bodies. The key is to commit to the task. A half-baked attempt will collapse on itself.

## Musical Exercises

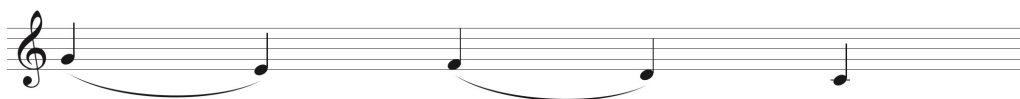
There are endless variations you can use for note patterns, each with their own benefits and challenges. We have offered five basic ones.

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1



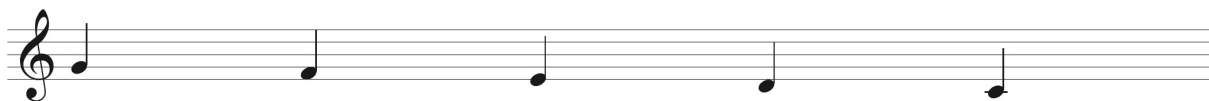
This exercise is great for middle range singing. The step-wise motion and limited range help singers feel smaller adjustments over time. Try starting on the top note to focus on other resonant strategy approaches and vowel needs.

5 3 4 2 1



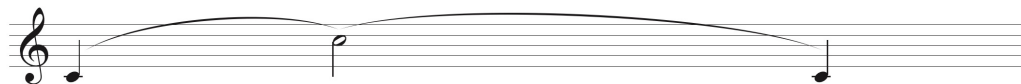
Equally good for middle range singing, the relatively small leaps are good for developing vocal fold “gear shift” coordination. Try using them on alternating vowels in order to develop vowel stability. Use vowels that share the first formant energy boost at first like [e] [o], and then move to more different vowels like [a] [u]. Consonants can be added for further coordination challenges, and vocal tract benefits. The “bit, bull, but” neutral vowels are very effective on this exercise. You can also extend it by adding 3-1-2-7-1 (G-E-F-D-E-C-D-B-C).

5 4 3 2 1



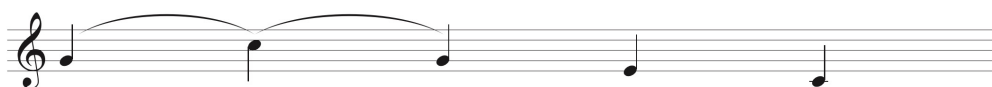
The simplicity and brevity of this exercise makes it nice for approaching range extremes. Starting on the highest note helps singers develop their body setup, prephonatory tuning, and easy vocal fold onset.

1 - 8 - 1

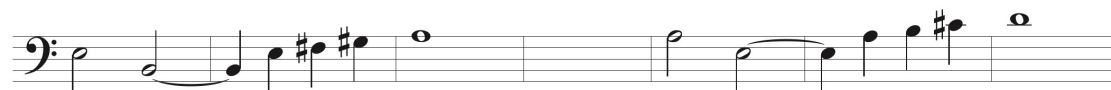


This exercise is wonderful for laryngeal muscle “gear shift” coordination. Try it with semi-occluded exercises, vowel and vowel/consonant combinations, etc.

5 8 5 3 1



This provides singers with a nice approach to notes in their upper range, and helps create vocal tract and laryngeal stability, as well as establishing sensations associated with large-scale resonant strategy adjustments.



[i] [ɪ]  
sensation: narrow wide

[i] - [ɪ]  
*slowly migrate  
between vowel shapes*

[u] [ʊ]  
sensation: narrow wide

[u] - [ʊ]  
*slowly migrate  
between vowel shapes*

**Vowel Shape Bridging Exercise** Continue to rise in pitch, and adjust vowel shape using the vowel chains [i] [ɪ] [e] [ɛ] [a] [æ] and [u] [ʊ] [o] [ɔ] [a] [æ] to help create a mix sensation across your range.