

Vocal Technique Lesson with Romain – Handout Friday 3 April 2020
An introduction to warm-ups and vocal technique.

Hi all!

Thank you for choosing to learn vocal technique! I hope you'll enjoy it.

Take a few minutes and a sheet of paper, and ask yourself this question:

What are the objectives of this course on vocal technique?

Write any ideas that come to your mind. Whatever you will think of is probably a good answer because it makes sense to you.

If you are stuck, maybe ask yourself:

1/ How can I improve my voice?

2/ What is the point of doing vocal warm-ups?

Here is my answer, which I hope, will help you in your quest for a better voice:

You should **aim to get to the CORE of your voice and your self, and share them both at the same time to others.**

If you follow these steps, hopefully your voice will sound better:

clearer (not nasal), louder (different from your speaking voice), fuller (engaging the whole body).

In the end your voice will sound more like you.

We will be doing a few exercises and apply them to the songs you want to sing.

Get to the CORE, C-O-R-E

C like Connect, O like Open up, R like Relax, E like Express.

First of all, C like Connect, Connect with yourself.

Try and stop listening to the outer world, and focus now only on yourself.

Close your eyes if you want to and we're going to do some simple breathing.

Breathe in with you mouth open and fill your whole body with air, sending oxygen to every part of yourself. Deep breathing... Touch your belly with your hands to feel how the air is getting in and out. Try to not let it out too fast, aim for a constant gentle flow of air coming out.

Now, focus on connecting with your body. Massage your head gently, then your jaws, your neck, your shoulders, your arms, your wrists, your tummy, your legs, and finally your lower back.

Let's apply this to the song of your choice. Do the same thing, while singing that song.

I am choosing 'Summertime' for today's lesson because it's got a nice calm and relaxed feel to it. You may want to choose something similar to Summertime in terms of mood.

Time to move on to letter O of Core, Open up, Open up your voice

You may find that it is a hard task especially if you think you are naturally rather shy or introvert. But don't worry, I went through this myself, and I can assure you that anybody can open up their voice, regardless of their characters.

Anyway, we'll talk more about it in the next weeks, but for now, let's do this little exercise which will help you making the difference between your speaking voice and your singing voice.

Say with your soft speaking voice: "Sometimes I talk to myself". Repeat it.

Now say with a louder speaking voice "Sometimes I talk to you" as if you were talking to someone next to you. Repeat it.

Ok, you must hear a difference already. But now, with the same volume, sing to that person: "Sometimes I sing to you". No matter what you are singing, but maybe something simple or with the same pitch. Repeat it.

You may be surprised how loud it actually sounds and think: "Is it me singing that loud?"

Finally, get into the performance mode where you must imagine and sing to a big audience in a big hall. And sing loud with your arms open: "Sometimes I sing to the world". Don't be shy, repeat it and try to enjoy this feeling. No need to sing always like that when you practise at home but that's what you should aim for when performing. Again, let's apply this to the song of your choice, only one or two lines of a verse or chorus.

For example, if your song is Summertime, speak this first to yourself: "Summertime, and the living is easy". Try again. Then speak it as if you were speaking to someone next to you. Try again. Now, sing it to that imaginary person. Once more. Finally, sing it to your big imaginary audience with your arms wide open.

This should definitely help. If you have the patience, you can go all over your song like that. Or maybe just focus on the moments when you feel less confident.

After C and O, let's work on R, R like Relax.

Relax your body and reduce all the tension in your body. When we think of relaxed, sometimes we end up all floppy, with no energy. This is the wrong kind of 'relaxed', we want the body to be gently engaged and ready to be put in action.

Let's focus on the upper body, first of all, the shoulders. Give them a nice roll.

Then, work on your jaws. Imagine you are chewing a massive piece of gum.

Now yawn a few times.

Relax your neck by turning it to your left and then your right.

Hopefully this will both improve your voice and eliminate vocal fatigue.

Let's apply this to your song. Do the same actions while singing through your song.

For example, sing the first verse, while rolling your shoulders.

Then sing the chorus while chewing that big piece of imaginary gum.

During the bridge, maybe have a big yawn.

And for the next verse, turn your neck to your left and to your right.

Finally, we need to think of the E of CORE, E like Express

Express what? Think for a couple of minutes: what should we express when we sing?

Write down your answers.

I am sure you have come up with some of these answers, and you may even have thought of other important elements.

Express yourself, express the meaning of the song, the emotion, the mood, the rhythm, the articulation, the melody, the groove etc.

When you sing, imagine an audience, sing beyond the 4 walls surrounding you.

Singing with expression is also very good for your soul because like that, you can release deep emotions.

Now, as a final exercise, this would be way too much to ask you to sing your song while thinking of all that we said today. It will take some time, no rush, these things will get more and more natural if you focus on them one after another. For now, just sing the song thinking of one or two things, and you'll see that it has already improved hopefully.

So I hope it all helped. What we learned today is to focus on **getting to the CORE of your voice and yourself. Once you are connected to yourself, with your body open and relaxed, you can focus more on what is the point of singing: expressing the music you love and sharing it to other people.**