

**Vocal Technique Lesson with Romain – Handout Friday 24 April 2020**  
**Feeling the diaphragm: the key to improving your vocal technique**

Hi everybody,

I hope you enjoyed the previous lesson and that you realized how important it is to get to the **CORE** of your voice.

You must have felt some improvement, if you have been focusing on:

Connecting more with yourself

Opening up more your voice

Relaxing more your body

Expressing more music

Be patient because often after a few small steps you manage to do bigger ones. There will be days too when you feel that you are going backwards. That is the life of all artists, all athletes, because our bodies and minds are not always on top of their form, but what matters is the long term progression, and I am sure if you keep believing in yourself, you'll get there!

You are going to tell me: Romain, those are just nice words to hear, they are very abstract. How can I really feel a change in my body and my voice? Is there a way for me to be more in control?

That is what this lesson is about. It is about the **physical CORE of your voice**.

I am talking about the part of your body where your voice is born...

**The diaphragm, or belly muscles** is you prefer.

You probably have heard of it, and maybe it still feels somehow unreal. But don't despair: we are going to get to know the diaphragm and understand hopefully better how it can control our voices.

**Here are a few exercises for you to become aware of it.**

**1/ Cough**

Give a gentle cough while looking at your tummy and checking what movements are happening. These are the contractions of your new best friend 'Diaphragm'.

Try to change the rhythm of your cough: longer ones followed by short ones, and then mix them up. See the waves it is creating on your tummy.

Sometimes performers singers don't have time to do a proper warm-up. They can end up on stage without any vocal preparation. You may have witnessed that. In that case, they often cough a bit, as discreetly as possible.

Now you know why? To get their voice ready and for them to reconnect with their precious diaphragm.

So next time you want to sing, whether it is a warm-up or a song, try coughing!

## **2/ Be a dog**

Imagine for a minute that you have become a dog. No need to be on all fours though!

Put one hand on your tummy. That hand is going to try to feel the diaphragm. Now, while keeping that hand on your tummy, open your mouth, with your tongue slightly hanging. Take short doggy breaths, be a dog, and feel how your diaphragm and tummy are moving. When you want, change the pace of it and take longer breaths. And then come back to shorter ones...

Now, carry on, but bring your other hand close to your face and feel the warm air coming out of your mouth.

## **3/ Imaginary balloon**

Imagine blowing up a balloon.

This time, the flow of your air is the opposite of the short dog breath, you should aim for a long and even flow of air going out of your mouth.

While you are blowing up your imaginary balloon, your tummy is like another balloon but with its air blown out. When you start, your imaginary balloon is totally empty while your tummy is a balloon full of air. And at the end, you get the opposite.

## **4/ Blow raspberries**

No need for more details. Put your lips together and blow as if you were playing the trumpet. By doing that, your belly muscles contract.

Even if you sound very silly, very serious stuff is going on then!

## **5/ Laughter**

Always good to end a session with a good laugh don't you think?

To be more physically aware of the diaphragm, maybe even better than a cough is laughter. So time to have a good laugh, while placing a hand on your tummy, and feeling the belly muscles in action.

Try different sort of laughs: happy, amazed, hysterical, without any sound, with different sounds: Ha ha ha! Ho ho ho! Hi hi hi!

I know this is difficult to say that in these strange times, but try to find something that makes you laugh each day.

And guess what: it will even make you become a better singer, no joke!