



19. VOCAL COACHING

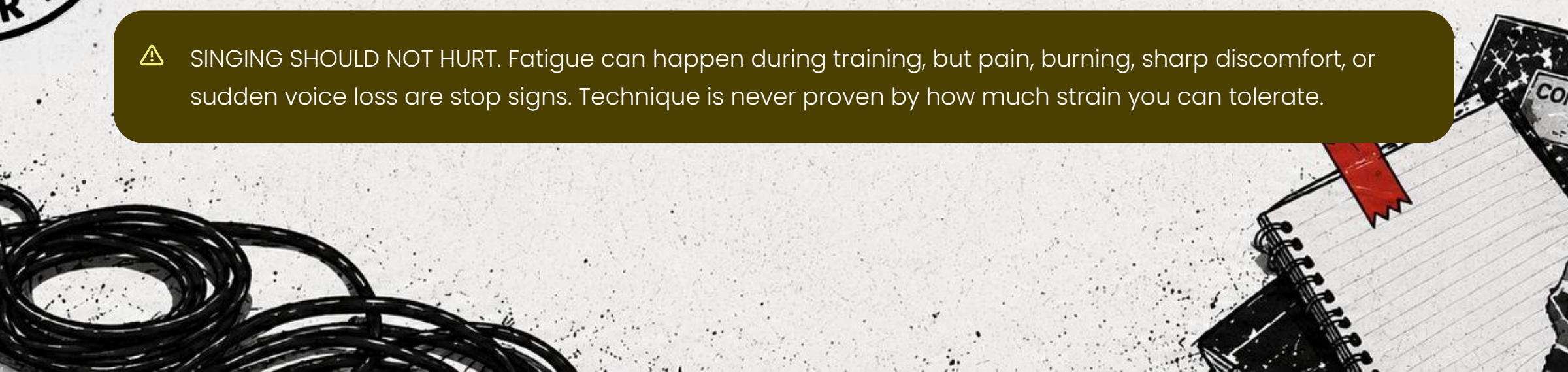


19. Vocal Coaching

Breath, Control, Pitch & Performance

A practical voice training system for producers & artists. Technique is coordination, not force, and this guide is built around repeatable exercises that make good coordination automatic enough that emotion can take over when you perform.

⚠ SINGING SHOULD NOT HURT. Fatigue can happen during training, but pain, burning, sharp discomfort, or sudden voice loss are stop signs. Technique is never proven by how much strain you can tolerate.



Your Voice Is a Physical Instrument

A strong vocal does not come from pushing harder. It comes from breathing efficiently, releasing unnecessary tension, controlling airflow, matching pitch, shaping vowels, and learning how to change intensity without losing control.

This guide is built around repeatable exercises. The goal is not to sound "perfect" in one session. The goal is to make good coordination automatic enough that emotion can take over when you perform.

Every section of this system targets a specific layer of vocal coordination, from the breath that powers the note, to the onset that starts it, to the resonance that colors it, to the performance intention that makes it land. Work through each part in order, and return to earlier sections when a later one feels unstable.

Breath

Efficient airflow powers everything

Control

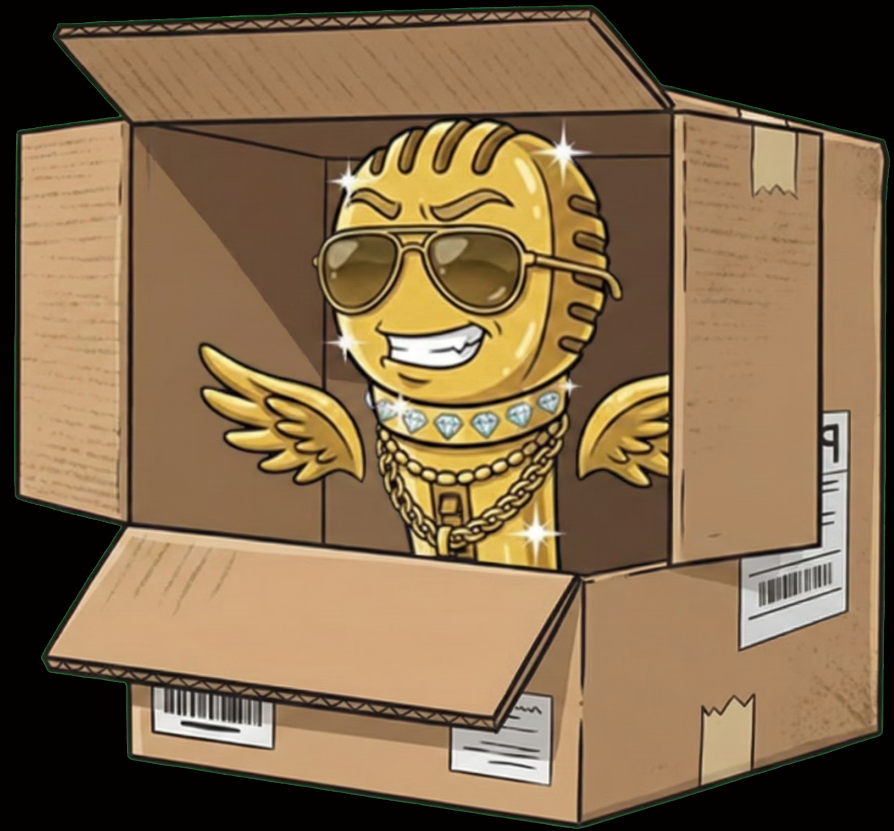
Coordination beats force every time

Pitch

A listening skill before a singing skill

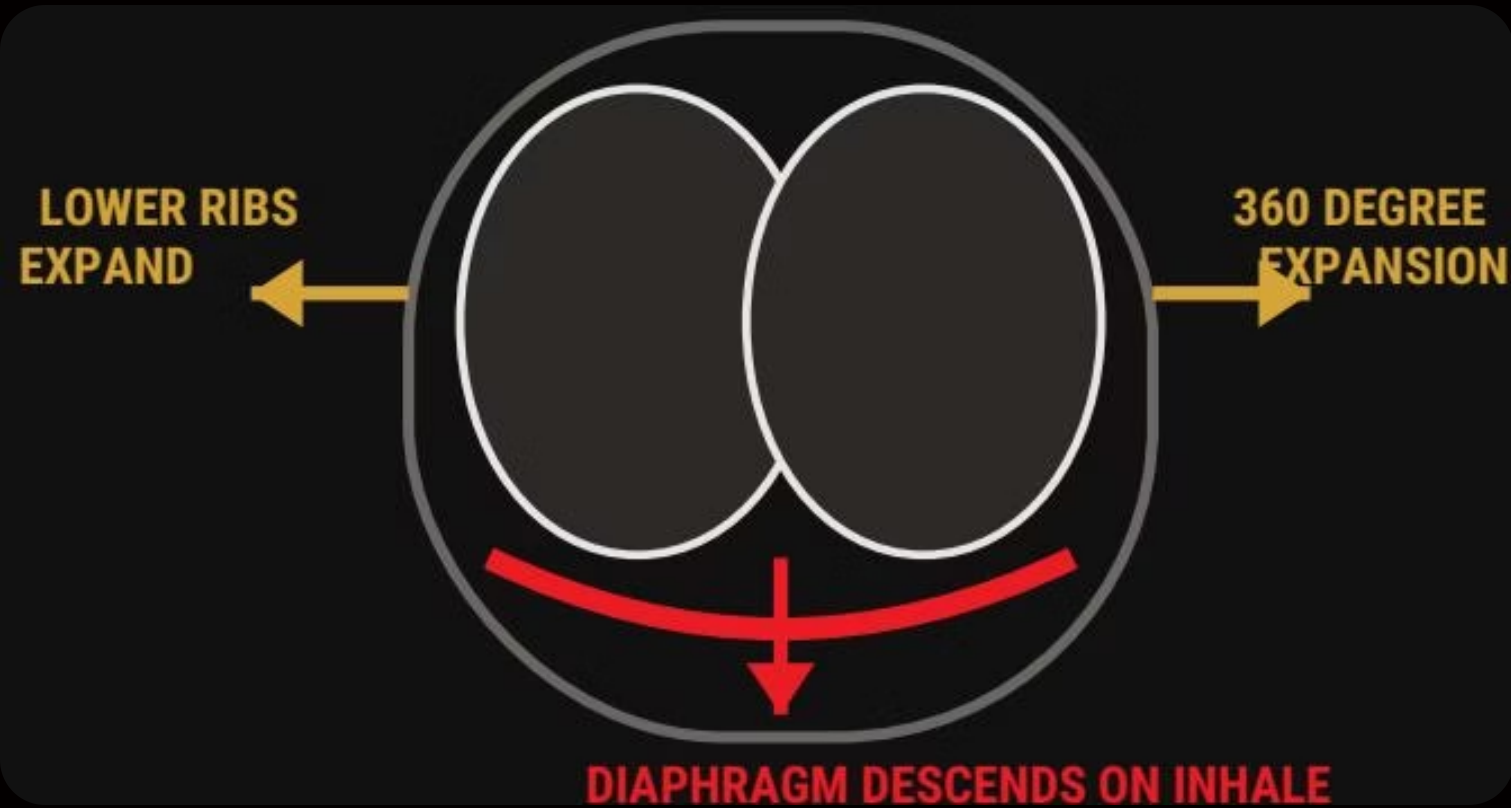
Performance

Technique must eventually disappear



Part 1: What "Diaphragm Breathing" Actually Means

You do not breathe *into* the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a muscle that helps create the pressure change that draws air into the lungs. Understanding this distinction changes how you approach every inhale.



1	2	3
Inhale: Create Room The diaphragm contracts and moves downward while the lower ribcage expands. The abdomen is allowed to release. Think low, wide, quiet breath rather than lifting the shoulders.	Sing: Control the Release Air leaves the lungs while the torso manages pressure. Good "support" is coordinated resistance to collapse, not squeezing the stomach as hard as possible.	What You Should Feel Ribs widen. Belly is free. Neck stays quiet. Shoulders do not jump. The breath feels organized before the first note.
✗ No Shoulder Lift	✗ No Belly Push	✗ No Forced Hold

Exercise Set 1: Build Breath Control

Train a quiet inhale and a steady exhale before adding pitch. These four exercises form the foundation of every other technique in this guide. Complete them in order at the start of each session until the pattern becomes automatic.

1

360 Breath — 2 Min

Hands on the lower ribs. Inhale silently for 4 counts. Feel the lower ribs widen into your hands and the abdomen release. Exhale normally for 4. Repeat 6 times without raising the shoulders.

2

Hiss Ladder — 4 Min

Make the airflow boring. Inhale for 4. Hiss on **S** for 8 counts. Repeat at 12, 16, then 20. The hiss should stay equally strong from beginning to end. Stop before you squeeze out the last drop of air.

3

Air Pulses — 3 Min

Controlled response, not crunches. Take one low breath. Make eight short **TS** pulses, then one long hiss. Feel the torso respond without the neck or jaw joining the work.

4

Phrase Map — 3 Min

Spend air on purpose. Speak one lyric line on a single breath. Mark where you inhale. Repeat the line at 50%, 70%, and performance intensity while keeping the same calm inhale.

✓ PASS THIS SET WHEN: You can inhale quietly without shoulder movement, sustain a hiss without pressure collapsing halfway through, and finish phrases without gasping or forcing the last words.

Part 2: Alignment & Warm-Up

Alignment Before Power

Good posture is not rigid. It gives the breath and larynx room to work. Check each zone before every session.

01

Feet + Knees

Feet planted comfortably. Knees unlocked. Do not lean backward to reach notes or fold forward when a phrase gets difficult.

02

Ribs + Sternum

Keep the torso buoyant instead of collapsed. Let the ribs move freely. Do not freeze them open like a bodybuilder pose.

03

Head + Neck

Head balanced over the spine. Chin approximately level. High notes are not located in the ceiling. do not chase them with your chin.

Tension Resets

Run these before every session. They take under two minutes and make coordination significantly easier.

Shoulders

Lift toward the ears, hold 2 seconds, release. Repeat 3 times.

Jaw

Massage below the cheekbones, then let the jaw hang loosely on a silent "ah".

Tongue

Stick the tongue gently forward, then relax it behind the bottom teeth. Repeat without pulling the jaw.

Neck

Slow head turns left and right. No circles. Keep the motion easy and small.

❏ THE RULE: If a note only works when your jaw locks, chin rises, shoulders lift, or neck veins explode, the coordination is not ready. Reduce volume or pitch and rebuild it cleanly.

Semi-Occluded (SOVT) Warm-Up Sequence

SOVT exercises partially close the vocal tract and can make phonation feel easier and more efficient. Use this sequence every session before singing full vowels.



Parts 3–4: Onset, Pitch & Resonance

Part 3: Control the Start of the Note

The **onset** is where airflow and vocal-fold closure meet. Too much of either direction wastes control. Train balanced onsets before adding dynamics or range.

Breathy

Too much air escapes before the tone organizes. Repeated uncontrolled breathiness spends air fast and weakens pitch stability.

Pressed

The note starts with a hard squeeze. May feel powerful, but the neck and throat often work harder than the sound requires.

Balanced ✓

Air and closure arrive together. The note starts cleanly without a burst of breath and without a hard attack.

1 VVV → AH

Sustain VVV gently, then open into AH. Keep airflow and volume unchanged. 5 reps on comfortable pitches.

2 ZZZ → OH

Use ZZZ to feel steady vibration, then open into OH. Keep jaw loose; avoid a second push when the vowel opens.

3 MUM 1-3-5-3-1

Sing lightly on "mum" over a five-note pattern. Medium-soft volume. The consonant organizes the start without attacking the note.

Part 4: Pitch Is a Listening Skill First

Before you can correct pitch, you need to hear where the **center** of the note is. Do not use a tuner as the driver, use it as a mirror while your ear learns the target.

01

Match One Note

Play one comfortable piano note. Listen first. Hum it. Then sing it on AH. Hold for 3 seconds without sliding around.

02

Slide Into Center

If matching is difficult, start slightly below and glide slowly upward until the beats between your voice and the reference disappear.

03

1 – 3 – 5 – 3 – 1

Use lip trill, then "mum". Move by semitone only while every note remains easy and centered.

04

5-Note Scale

Sing 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 at medium-soft volume.

Record it. Listen back before moving to the next key.

05

Sing the Lyric

Return to one real line from a song. Keep pitch accuracy while adding words, dynamics, and emotion.

❏ DO NOT USE VIBRATO TO HIDE THE NOTE. Practice straight tone first. Your ear still has to learn the center before vibrato is layered on top.

Part 5: Resonance, Registers & the Transition

Chest, head, and mix are useful coaching labels for coordination and sensation, not literal places where the sound lives. The goal across all register work is **continuity**: a voice that moves through its range without sudden breaks, flips, or forced shifts in quality.



Lower / Chest-Dominant

Usually feels speech-like and substantial. **Do not drag the same heavy setup upward** just because it sounds powerful down low. The weight has to reduce as pitch rises.

Bridge Drill – NG → AH: Glide on NG through the transition, then open into AH without increasing volume. If the vowel breaks the coordination, return to NG.



Upper / Head-Dominant

Often feels lighter and more resonant. **Light does not mean weak.** Efficient high singing can still be intense without being physically heavy.

Bridge Drill – Hum → Vowel: Hum a 5-note scale, repeat on a vowel, then sing the same notes with a lyric. Transfer ease instead of starting over.

Transition / Mix

The goal is continuity. As pitch rises, reduce unnecessary weight and let the vowel and resonance strategy change instead of pushing harder through the passaggio.

Bridge Drill – WOO Siren: Soft "woo" from comfortable low to comfortable high and back. Keep the sound connected. Do not widen the mouth to force the top.

❗ WHEN THE VOICE "FLIPS": Do not punish the break. Reduce volume, use a semi-occluded sound, slide through the area, and repeat until the transition becomes predictable. A crack is information, not failure.

Parts 6-7: Vowels, Diction & Dynamics

Part 6: Vowels Carry Tone, Consonants Carry Clarity

If the vowel changes shape randomly, pitch and tone become harder to control. If consonants disappear, the listener loses the lyric. Train both simultaneously.

Vowel Line

On one comfortable note, sing **EE – EH – AH – OH – OO**. Keep the breath steady. Make each change with the tongue and lips, not by throwing the jaw around. Repeat 5 times, then use a 5-note scale.

Diction Line

Speak then sing: **MEE – MAY – MAH – MOH – MOO**. Make the M clear but short. The vowel gets the sustained sound. Do not bite the consonants. Keep the jaw released.

Lyric Drill

Speak one line as dialogue. Then sing it. Exaggerate consonants once, perform again at 70% of that articulation. Sing the melody on one neutral vowel, then restore the words while keeping the same legato line.

Part 7: Dynamics Without Losing Control

Louder is not the same as more emotional. Train intensity as a **controlled choice**, not a default reaction to feeling the song.

50%

Technique Mode

Easy coordination. 5-second sustain on one comfortable note, stable pitch, vowel, and airflow from first second to last.

70%

Rehearsal Mode

Emotion enters. Soft, medium, soft on one note. Do not let chin rise or vowel spread as volume changes.

100%

Not the Default

Maximum effort is not a technique. One-breath phrase at 50%, 70%, and 90%, use the same breath plan each time.

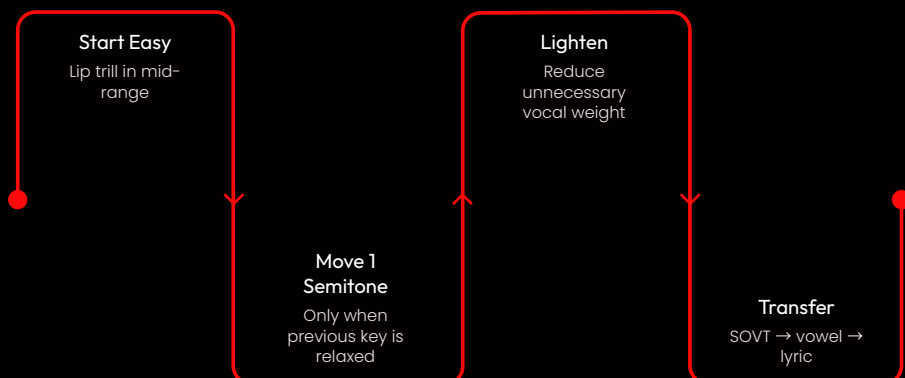


THE AIRFLOW TRAP: When singers want more volume, they often dump more air. More air can actually make control worse. Build intensity with efficient closure, resonance, vowel strategy, and breath management, not just pressure.

Parts 8–9: Range & Performance

Part 8: Build Range Without Chasing It

Range is a result of coordination. The goal is **usable notes**, not a screenshot of the highest note you touched once. Work upward only when the previous key is relaxed and repeatable.



High Notes

Use less force than you think. Keep the breath stable. Allow the vowel to adjust. If the neck takes over, step down.

Low Notes

Do not shove the larynx down. Keep speech-like clarity. Stop when pitch becomes fry-only unless fry is the artistic goal.

Range Rule

Your practice range ends where good coordination ends. Build from the edges gradually over **weeks**, not in one heroic session.

Part 9: Performance - Technique Has to Disappear

The audience should hear intention, not exercises. Use this five-step framework before every serious take.

01

Speak the Lyric

Say the line like you mean it. Decide who you are talking to, what you want from them, and which word carries the message.

02

Mark the Breaths

Choose inhale points before the take. Planned breathing lets emotion stay consistent instead of being interrupted by panic breaths.

03

Sing at 70%

Do one controlled pass before the full-energy take. If the 70% version already strains, the 100% version will not fix it.

04

3 Emotion Passes

Record the same phrase as intimate, angry, and exhausted. Keep pitch and breath stable while changing color and intention.

05

Mic Distance

Start around a hand-span from the mic. Move slightly closer for quiet detail and back on explosive notes. Turn slightly off-axis for hard plosives.

❏ THE BEST TAKE IS NOT ALWAYS THE CLEANEST TAKE. A tiny crack with real emotion can be worth more than a sterile perfect note.

Vocal Health, Daily Routine & 7-Day Bootcamp

Vocal Health Rules

- Warm up gradually — start easy, not with your loudest chorus or highest note
- Hydrate normally — regular hydration beats panic-drinking before a take
- Rest between hard takes — reset with easy humming or silence
- Do not train through pain — pain is not strength, stop and reset coordination
- Limit throat clearing — try a sip of water, swallow, or gentle hum instead
- Track fatigue — log how the voice feels before and after; your routine should leave tomorrow possible

⊗

STOP AND GET QUALIFIED HELP IF:
You have persistent pain, repeated voice loss, or a voice change that does not resolve with normal rest. A vocal coach teaches coordination; an ENT or voice-specialized speech-language pathologist evaluates medical voice problems.

The 15-Minute Daily Vocal Routine



Final Practice Exercise: 7-Day Vocal Bootcamp

One week. One short recording every day. The goal is measurable control, not maximum range.

D1 Breath Baseline

Record a 20-second sustained hiss and one spoken lyric phrase. Note shoulder movement, gasp points, and where air runs out.

D2 Onset

Do VVV-AH and MUM exercises. Record the same lyric with clean starts, no breath dump, no hard attack.

D3 Pitch

Match 10 single notes, then record a 5-note scale and one melodic phrase. Listen back without effects.

D4 Register

Use lip trills and WOO sirens through your transition, then sing the difficult section of a song at 70% volume.

D5 Vowels + Diction

Run EE-EH-AH-OH-OO, then speak and sing one lyric until every word stays clear without jaw tension.

D6 Dynamics + Emotion

Record the same phrase three ways: intimate, neutral, intense. Keep breath plan and pitch stable in all three.

D7 Full Take

Warm up 8 minutes. Record one full performance. Compare with Day 1: breath noise, pitch center, tension, diction, range, and emotional control.

☑ PASS THE WEEK WHEN: Your inhale is quieter, the shoulders stay calmer, notes start cleaner, pitch settles faster, register transitions need less force, lyrics are easier to understand, and you can add emotion without losing technique. Repeat the week using a harder song only after the easier version is controlled.