BREATHING INFORMATION SHEET

LAMDA MEDALS

Breathing Techniques

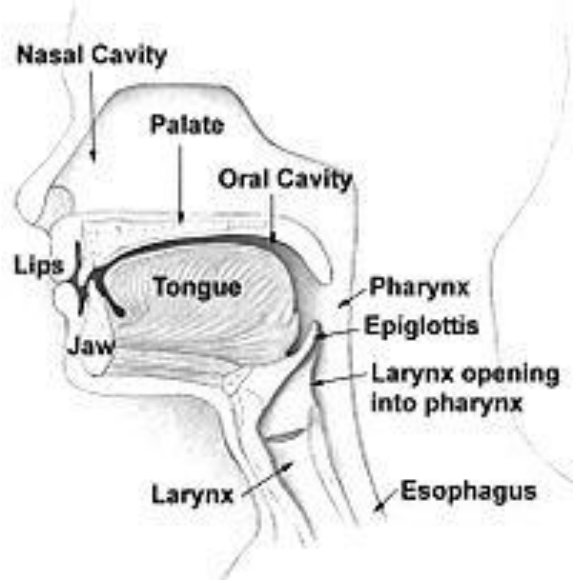
1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Stretch up, with your arms as high as possible and your fingers extended. Slowly flop down from the waist, with your upper body hanging limply over your feet. Let your arms swing loose. Then, gradually grow back into and upright position with your neck and head coming up last and your shoulders relaxed. Shake out.
2. Take a deep breath and blow an imaginary feather gently for as long as you can.
3. You've just turned 100. Blow out all the candles on your imaginary birthday cake.
4. Imagine there is a balloon just above your face and you have to keep it balanced in the same position by blowing gently. Not too hard, which would blow it away, but not so gently that it would touch your face. This exercise helps you to extend your breaths, but also to control the amount you are using at any one time.
5. To use the muscles you use to control your breathing, you must identify and learn how to control them. Lie down with your head supported slightly with a small pillow or a book. Because you are lying down you can concentrate completely on the chest area and your breathing without having to support your spine, legs or any other part of your body.

   Place one hand on your ribs and one hand on the area just below the chest and above the waist or navel. Breathe in, first of all being aware of the movement of the ribs being pulled outwards and upwards by the **intercostal muscles**, then immediately followed by the movement of the **diaphragm** downwards which will make the upper middle part of the abdomen swell. You have created a cavity which is filled with air.

6. Imagine you have a piece of really chewy gum or toffee in your mouth. Chew using all of your mouth and face muscles. Make the movement really big to exercise and warm up these muscles. As you chew, massage your jaw and cheeks with the tips of your fingers, warming the muscles.
7. * Breathe in slowly to a count of 3 and out to a count of 3
   *Breathe in slowly to a count of 3, hold for 3 and out to a count of 3
   *Increase the count slowly to 7
8. Use a drinking straw and blow gently through it to keep a real balloon steady in the air above you.

Use a drinking straw to pick up peas and carry them on the end of the straw to the other side of the room, held in position.

Resonator Techniques



What are my resonators?

The Pharynx (Pharyngeal Resonator)

Is the long, muscular tube which extends upwards from the larynx (voice box), ending at the back part of the oral and nasal cavities. The pharynx can change its shape and size, which affects the quality of the sound produced. It increases in size during a yawn and decreases in size when the throat or neck are tense.

The Mouth (Oral Resonator)

Each part of the mouth plays a role in producing resonance.

- The lower jaw forms the floor of the oral resonator and is attached to the facial bones by hinge joints.
- The tongue lies on the floor of the oral resonator. The movement of the tongue is centered in different areas: the tip (Point of the tongue), the
  Blade (underneath the upper tooth ridge), the front (Underneath the hard palate) the centre, (partly underneath both the hard palate and the soft palate) and the back (underneath the soft palate).

The Nose (Nasal Resonator)

There are two types of nasal resonance:

- When the vibrating column of air passes directly through the open soft palate to the nasal cavity, the English this only happens in 3 sounds – 'm', 'n' and 'ng'.
- When the vibrating column of air does not pass directly into the nasal cavity, but instead pitches onto the hard palate just behind the upper teeth, and the sound vibrations are carried through the bones of the hard palate to the nasal cavities. This type of nasal resonance can be heard in vowel sounds.

Balancing Resonance

Good resonance depends upon achieving a balance of vibration from the pharynx, mouth and nose.

When you practice your exercises, make sure that your spine is lengthened, your shoulders, neck and jaw are free from tension and there is space inside your mouth and an adequate breath force to move the sound forward. It is important that you try not to think about all of this theory when you are performing. You must practice your exercises so that it comes naturally to you.

Finding your Resonators

- Nasal resonator – Say ‘mum’, ‘nose’ and ‘sing’. Repeat the words but this time hold your nose. You should hear ‘bub’, ‘dose’ and ‘sig’ because there isn’t any nasal resonance.
- Hold a yawn in your throat and count ‘one, two, three at the same time. You will hear a sound with too much Pharyngeal (Pharynx) resonance.
- Say the word ‘ahhhhh’ with your lower jaw dropped at its most natural point. Continue saying the sound and raise your lower jaw slowly. As the lower jaw comes up, the lips will move closer together and the tongue might move towards the hard palate. You will hear a sound without much oral resonance.
- Allow your lower jaw to drop at its most natural point and use a mirror to look through to the back of the mouth. If you breathe through your nose and out through your mouth, with your mouth still open, you will see the action of the soft palate.

Exercises

1. Standing with your feet slightly apart and your shoulders relaxed, breathe in and then let the air out on a hum. This makes the **cavity of the nose** work. Do this several times.
2. Now, when you have begun to hum, gradually open your mouth on an aaaa or ahhhh sound. So you have very slowly said the word ‘mar’ ‘mmmmmaaaaaaaaaaaar’. Keep the sound going to the end of your breath. Be sure to open your mouth wide by dropping your jaw. Practice and listen to the sound improve as you get more confident. With this technique all your **resonators** – the **nose**, the **mouth** and the **sinus cavities** are all working together.
3. Look in a mirror and open your mouth as wide as you can. Then allow the jaw to drop in a relaxed way – then close it. Practise opening and closing your mouth like this several times. Repeat number 2, improving the clarity and length of the note and breath.

4. Start on a low note and slide your voice up the musical scale as far as it will go. Then try it the other way round. Practising this technique regularly will help extend your voice at either end.
5. Nasal resonator – Say ‘mum’, ‘nose’ and ‘sing’. Repeat the words but this time hold your nose. You should hear ‘bub’, ‘dose’ and ‘sig’ because there isn’t any nasal resonance.
6. Hold a yawn in your throat and count ‘one, two, three at the same time. You will hear a sound with too much Pharyngeal (Pharynx) resonance.
7. Say the word ‘ahhhhh’ with your lower jaw dropped at its most natural point. Continue saying the sound and raise your lower jaw slowly. As the lower jaw comes up, the lips will move closer together and the tongue might move towards the hard palate. You will hear a sound without much oral resonance.

Types of Breathing -Read and Learn

Clavicular respiration – WHAT NOT TO DO!

Because it is a type of shallow breathing, the ribcage does not allow the lungs to expand as much as they would in deeper breathing.

How do you know if you normally use this type of breathing? Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your abdomen and breathe normally. Which of the two hands rises? If the upper one rises, your breath is clavicular, if the lower one is abdominal. There are people which both hands rise, this means that the breathing is quite deep and could be adequate.

This type of breathing is inefficient because the greatest amount of blood to collect oxygen occurs in the lower areas of the lungs, which implies that you are getting little oxygen. This rapid and shallow breathing results in poor transmission of oxygen to the blood and therefore little nutrients to the tissues.

- **Advantages of clavicular breathing:** This type of breathing provides us with oxygen quickly and can be useful when we have to run to catch the bus.
- **Disadvantages of clavicular breathing:** Oxygen supply is insufficient, and maintained over time can increase stress and make our brain and our body not functioning properly.

Diaphragmatic or deep breathing – WHAT TO DO!

Diaphragmatic or deep breathing, also called abdominal breathing, consists of bringing air to the lower part of your lungs, using the muscles of the diaphragm. You will see your abdomen rise, hence its name.

For many, deep breathing may be strange and unnatural. This may be because in our society it is desirable to have a flat belly, and for this, especially women, tend to retain their abdominal muscles and in turn prevent a deep breath. It also happens because of continued stress and anxiety that maintains clavicular breathing his abdominal contraction may also be due to stress.

- **Advantages of diaphragmatic or abdominal breathing:** This breathing technique allows a complete flow of oxygen to our body, allowing it to function properly. The heart rate goes down as does the blood pressure.
- **Disadvantages of diaphragmatic or deep breathing:** This breathing technique has no disadvantage other than the need to learn it, since many people do not have it automated.

Breathing Techniques

For each of your pieces;

- ✓ Read through ALOUD for each of these aspects; Volume, pace, pitch, breaths, pauses etc
- ✓ Write in the table what you notice; label these changes with the breathing changes you use. If you whisper, do you need to control your voice so the breath lasts longer? If you raise your voice, is there

a large intake of breath beforehand? Do you need to breathe sooner to sustain the volume? Who are you speaking to? Is there one person, a small group or a loud mob?

- ✓ **Emotions.** We breathe differently when we are feeling extreme emotion. When crying our breath comes in small inward gasps; when laughing, our breath is outward. An audible breath may express emotion – despair, resolve, self-control. Try to identify any moments in your pieces where your breathing changes for emotional reasons.
- ✓ **Text.** How is the text laid out? Observe full stops, commas and rhythm. Why has the playwright written like this? How do these rhythms and punctuation force us to breathe? Does that help us create meaning with the piece? Is there little or no punctuation in the piece? What choices have you made in order to make sense of the text? You will need to justify these.