

Voice Lessons Introduction

Welcome to voice lessons. Your vocal training will fill in your voice (giving it more depth), give you greater volume, and increase your range. We will be working on your breathing, enunciation, and chord development. The method I use builds voices, as opposed to just vocal coaching. Therefore, you will be given vocal exercises (vocalises) which you will be asked to practice every day.

It is important to understand that your vocal chords are muscles. We will be building these muscles just like you would build other muscles in your body. Because of this, there will be times when your voice may ache or be tired. If, after a vocal exercise, your voice is tired or aches, take a drink of water and give your voice a rest before continuing your practice. I will never give you a vocal exercise that will hurt your voice. There are things built into the exercises (like the squeeze or the “funny voice”) which protect your voice.

It is very important that you not over-sing. This is the difference between voice lessons and piano or other lessons. In piano lessons, you might drill a certain passage several times. In voice lessons, you practice **only** what is on your voice lesson tape and you practice **only one time** per day. On the day you have your voice lesson, do not practice. Your lesson counts as your practice for that day. Like any exercise program, we will be slowly building up your voice’s stamina. Therefore, the vocal exercises will slowly get harder and we will add a few more. The vocal exercises, if done properly, do not hurt your voice. If at any time while doing the voice exercises you experience a sharp pain (as opposed to an ache), stop immediately. You are doing it wrong. (The exercise expression “No pain, no gain” does not apply to voice exercises. Since you will be exercising muscles which have probably never been exercised, your voice might feel tired, a little scratchy, or briefly ache a little, but not hurt like with a sharp pain.)

Sometimes, you might feel like you are “spinning your wheels” and getting no where in your progress. Keep doing your vocal exercises. Remember that slow and steady wins the race. I promise that eventually you will have a voice change. Voice changes happen periodically throughout your training.

The vocal exercises you will be given will almost always sound terrible. Don’t panic! Vocal training is a many-layered process. Most songs will require more than one vocal exercise. So, when I have you sing a beautiful song in a hideous vocalise, this is just one step on the way to making the song sound beautiful in the end.

Voice lessons require patience. We will often take months on just one song. Sometimes the songs we work on will not be performed at the recitals. Some songs are simply intermediate steps to your next song.

We will begin by working one blend in your voice. There are countless blends we can work in your voice. Eventually, we will work more than one blend at a time. Some of the blends may not be your preference. (This may be because they are an intermediate step to another blend.) In the end, you will want to know how to do a lot of different blends so that you can pick the blend you like the best for a particular song.

It is important to understand that vocal development involves more than just singing a lot and chord development. Breathing and diaphragm development are important elements in your vocal training. There will be times when breathing and diaphragm exercises will be added to your lessons. They are as important as the vocal exercises.

I hope you enjoy your experience in voice lessons and if you ever have any questions don’t hesitate to call.

– Dorothy Brown
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