

EXERCISES FOR RELEASING TENSION

The Six-Second Relaxation Breath

1. Notice any point of tension in your body.
2. As you inhale, breathe into that point of tension, smile inwardly to yourself and say silently, "Alert mind."
3. As you exhale, relax your jaw and feel a wave of warmth and relaxation flow downward shoulders, arms, body, and legs. Say silently, "Calm body."
4. Pause.
5. Find another point of tension and repeat steps 2 & 3.

One cycle takes a mere six seconds, so you should repeat the exercise many times. Repeated breaths are calming and relaxing, and many students find that doing this breathing for five or ten minutes can be transforming.

To Breathe Through Your Partners Hands

This exercise calls on your imagination to offer a simple, quick way to release tension in neck, shoulders, back, and jaw. It's a good exercise for bypassing familiar experiences and invoking new sensations of relaxation, especially for a student who experiences habitual stress. This exercise requires at least 2 people.

1. Partner A places her hands on partner B's neck, shoulders, back or jaw.
2. Partner B, with her eyes closed, imagines breathing in and out through A's hands. B breathes deeply several times and visualizes that part of her body relaxing. She can give herself mental suggestions to relax that part as in the six second relaxation breath.
3. When Partner A feels the tightness relax under her hands she touches another spot, and B again imagines breathing through A's hands in the new spot.
4. After a while, ask the partners to change roles.

BREATHING EXERCISES

Part One

- Interlace fingers and place hands on the base of the neck (elbows are opened out).
- Bring elbows into parallel (starting position). (The upper body should not be lifting – just a natural and simple opening and closing of the arms and elbows as you inhale and exhale.) Repeat four times or more if needed.
- Leave arms in parallel position henceforth. Tilt the chin down slightly to fully release head and neck. Bring the elbows closer together. Bend slightly from the waist.
- Inhale (feeling the breath in the back ribs). Exhale and let the weight of the arms stretch the neck and back as you drop gently over. Repeat three or four times until you are fully dropped over.
- Release the hands and arms and let them fall to a release.
- Inhale, then exhale and drop over one more time.
- Inhale and then exhale as you slowly roll up the spine one vertebrae at a time (smoothly).
- Inhale when you reach the top after your head floats up to center.

Part Two

- Create a belt with hands under the rib cage. Drop the head as if it were a newborn baby's neck. Inhale. Bring the head up to center and then exhale.
- Do the same thing, but this time with the hands placed on the rear ribs.
- After the third or fourth time of the inhale, lift head, exhale, hands will return to the front of the ribs.
- Breathe in through the straw. Exhale on ssssssss (head is straight). Body is relaxed and knees are always soft (released). Repeat three times.
- On the last ssssssss exhale, allow the student to inhale normally through her/his mouth.

Part Three

- Release jaw side to side
- Stretch facial muscles (all possible contortions of the face in all shapes).
- Wag tongue outside of mouth, side to side in the cheeks, then roll around the teeth one direction, reverse and back to the original direction. Then wag tongue up and down gently feeling the base of the tongue releasing.

**VOILA! YOUR STUDENTS AND YOU SHOULD FEEL RELAXED,
YET ENERGIZED TO SING!!!**