

Support: Standard & Projection

In contemporary singing, projection is an absolute necessity with belting being a standard technique expected of all trained singers.

In order to have healthy projection, good support is key so make sure you understand support fully before working on projection and never start belting training unless you're super confident in your understanding of the vocal support system.

Once you feel comfortable with diaphragmatic breathing then move straight onto breath support. It's important with all support exercises/techniques that you keep your shoulders, throat and head relaxed!

Exercises for Locking Breath in Place

Hiccup:

Cough/Laugh, feel the belly bounce.

Recreate that belly movement without coughing/laughing, it should feel like a hiccup.

Now every time you breathe in add a little hiccup at the end and hold on to the hiccup sensation as you sing/exhale.

Always remember to stay relaxed, we're looking for stability NOT tension!

Imagine the air is lead:

This is a great visualisation to help you take the air right to the bottom of your lungs and then keep it there as you exhale/sing.

Imagining the air is heavy like lead as you're singing stops you releasing too much breath into your sound.

Fill the bowl:

Imagine there is a big empty bowl under your lungs and you're filling it up as you breathe in. When it's full put a lid on it and put a weight on top of the lid. Keep the lid of the bowl weighted down as you sing, indirectly keeping the air in the lungs and away from the voice.

Exercises for Becoming Aware of the Sensation of Support

Cough:

Hand on stomach

Cough and feel the muscles engage

Repeat a few times

Create the same sensation without coughing

Sing staccato 'hah' whilst engaging the stomach muscles each time

Closed mouth:

Try shouting with your mouth closed, this really engages the stomach muscles that support the voice making the feeling very obvious.

Support Exercises

Once you've got the hang of locking breath away and the sensation of support, just consistently check in with yourself to comfortably lock in your breath and engage your stomach muscles accordingly. For most standard singing simply locking the breath away is enough to support the voice but any large interval leaps or forte projection, extra support will be needed.

Mental triggers for breath support are my preferred method of engaging the extra support when needed. It is important with all support exercises/ techniques that you keep the shoulders, throat and head relaxed.

Bear on Diaphragm:

Imagining a weight bearing down on the diaphragm (lid of bowl) with the intensity according to the support needed

Compress Ball:

Imagine a ball inside your stomach and imagine SLOWLY compressing the ball, the muscles should engage naturally

Push feet into floor:

Imagine trying to push your feet through the floor, it will engage your leg and abdominal muscles

Singing is such a physical and personal act so may come up with your own mental triggers to help you feel all these different sensations, which is awesome!