

Standard Support & Projection Support (Student)



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 sure you're confident in your understanding of the vocal support system.

It is 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 overtime 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 they 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

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Closed mouth:

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

Support Exercises

Once you've got the hang of locking breath away and the sensation of support, consistently remind yourself to comfortably lock your voice and engage their 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 legs and abdominal muscles

Singing is such a physical and personal act so figure out how it feels for you and what mental triggers you like to use. Singers will often come up with their own great mental triggers, you can think of whatever you want as long as the sensation is correct.

(Anchoring is a support technique specifically for belting, see "Anchoring" sheet in the technique folder on the "Student Extras" section of the website.)