

## THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STAGES OF VOCAL WARM-UP EXERCISES IN THE PROCESS OF VOCAL TRAINING

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**Annotation:** This article discusses vocal warm-up exercises, particularly the role of diaphragmatic breathing and the straw technique in vocal training. It analyzes the differences between academic and traditional vocal methods and highlights the teacher's responsibility in selecting and organizing exercises. The study also substantiates the effectiveness of expanding vocal range and integrating innovative exercises into the educational process.

**Keywords:** vocal warm-up exercises, vocal art, diaphragmatic breathing, vocal apparatus, straw exercises, phonation process, low-register exercises, academic vocal methods, traditional vocal warm-up systems, vocal range.

The voice, alongside being a natural means of human communication, serves as the central mechanism of creative activity for a singer. Therefore, protecting the vocal apparatus, strengthening and restoring the vocal cords are essential not only for professional performers but also for beginners learning to sing. Common issues such as vocal fatigue, hoarseness, loss of power, or temporary voice loss often arise from incorrect vocal techniques, poor hygiene, or excessive strain.

It is known that vocal warm-up exercises entered our practice through European musical traditions. Performers preparing for concerts or theatre performances were required to maintain their voices in optimal condition, leading singers to develop various warm-up exercises. Each vocalist even created personal warm-up routines. In traditional Uzbek singing practice, however, the role of the "stage" was fulfilled by wedding ceremonies and public celebrations, where singers demonstrated their abilities. Before performing large and demanding works, singers would warm up by singing smaller pieces in the lower register, gradually raising the pitch and reaching full vocal readiness. This natural progression functioned as a warm-up method. Students learning to sing begin by mastering basic diaphragmatic breathing and vocal techniques, after which they may use small tubes (straws) to control airflow and sound direction more efficiently.

Every instructor historically had their own specialized exercises, a tradition preserved in academic vocal training today. These exercises aid both adolescents and adults in correct voice usage. For this reason, aspiring pop singers often train with academic vocal teachers to learn proper vocal technique and high-register production. This approach has both advantages and disadvantages; however, its strengths include cultivating refined vocal habits and enabling deeper understanding of vocal mechanics. Through such methods, singers can better sense the balance of intraoral pressure and feel the coordinated movement of vocal cords, the larynx, and the soft palate. This study presents step-by-step straw-based (SOVT) exercises and demonstrates their effectiveness compared to traditional breathing and vocal drills. Using the straw helps stabilize lip shape, regulate breath volume, and significantly enhance diaphragmatic breathing efficiency. Vocally, it allows learners to experience airflow resistance more easily, resulting in



more stable tone production. This approach benefits not only specialized vocal students but also beginners as a practical and accessible training method.

In the future, it is expected that, in addition to the straw technique, the use of various other tools will help increase students' interest in breathing and vocal exercises and create opportunities for applying more advanced methods. As shown in the illustration, air should be inhaled slowly through a straw (pipette). During this process, the diaphragm expands maximally, and the movement of the lower abdomen, sides, and waist can be visually observed. At the same time, the hands placed on the waist sense its outward movement caused by diaphragmatic expansion.

In the next stage, while the straw is kept in the mouth, the breath is released slowly. During this moment, the hands placed on the waist feel its inward movement as the diaphragm contracts. In conventional diaphragmatic breathing exercises, learners often struggled to feel expansion and contraction because the shape of the mouth changed and the breath volume varied, leading them to rely more on chest breathing that involved lifting the shoulders and ribcage. In contrast, during straw-based diaphragmatic breathing exercises, the mouth shape remains constant and breath volume becomes more stable. Additionally, the straw creates a sense of "airflow resistance," enabling learners to better control inhalation, retention, and exhalation, and to feel the diaphragm's movement more clearly. For vocal warm-up exercises to be effective and purposeful, the teacher must have a solid understanding of proper methodology, carefully selecting exercises in advance to avoid unnecessary pauses and ensuring a logical sequence. The teacher should avoid repeating the same exercises continuously and instead provide variety. It is also essential that the instructor knows each exercise well and can perform them correctly, including singing and accompanying on musical instruments.

It is well known that maqom performance requires a wide vocal range, and developing such a voice necessitates various vocal exercises. Since music school teachers graduate from different institutions and follow differing pedagogical approaches—and because there is no unified instructional manual for this field—the methods used in voice training often vary significantly. From personal observation, many teachers rely mainly on traditional vocal exercises with children. In the early years of my career, I too applied such methods, which initially seemed effective for students who lacked formal musical training but possessed good hearing and pitch perception. A teacher's ability to select appropriate exercises and organize them progressively is of great importance. Exercises must not be monotonous but should gradually increase in difficulty. The instructor must also demonstrate them competently. This approach is especially crucial in maqom performance, where a broad vocal range is required. As a recommendation, it is advisable to systematize the methodology of vocal warm-up exercises, develop manuals that integrate experiences from various vocal schools, and widely introduce innovative exercises based on straws and other tools. This would benefit not only professional singers but also beginners learning to sing.

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