



S A V V Y S I N G I N G

SINGING BOOTCAMP

FOR YOUR VOCAL JOURNEY

by Savannah

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Welcome



Hi, I'm Savannah! I've been singing professionally for over a decade, but truly as long as I can remember, whether that's been in studios recording music, in music school, working as a private vocal coach, performing live, or the early days in my bedroom in Indiana.

What started as a passion turned into a career shaped by Gary, IN vocal experts (where Michael Jackson & The Jackson 5 got their beginning) and music industry-leading Recording Academy vocal coaches in California. I've had a deep commitment to understanding the voice as both an instrument and an extension of identity.

This eBook was created for beginner singers, professional performers, and creators, whether you're just starting out, rediscovering your own voice, or just want to try it for fun. The tools here are simple, real, and professionally backed.

Welcome to your vocal journey.

- Savannah

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This guide takes you through everything in order, vocal health, breathing, warming up, advanced exercises, scales, and choosing what to sing. You don't need a studio or fancy gear to start. Here's the simple kit that covers every exercise in this book.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A reusable **water bottle** with room-temperature water (cold water tightens the cords)
- A quiet, **private space** where you can make sound freely
- A **mirror** to check your posture and spot jaw or neck tension
- A **keyboard or free piano/pitch app** on your phone to find your starting notes
- A **voice recorder** (your phone's voice memo app works perfectly)
- Optional: a **humidifier**, herbal tea with honey, and a wide drinking straw for straw exercises

Your Voice Is a Car

You wouldn't see a pro athlete walk onto the field without stretching first, right? Your voice is no different. It's a muscle, and it needs time, care, and the right environment to function at its best. It's also like a car! To get to where you want to go vocally, you need to make sure that your "car" (AKA your voice) is in great working shape. So how do we get there?

Hydration is your training fuel

Drink room-temp water throughout the day. Cold drinks tighten your cords, and dehydration can leave your voice dry and scratchy before you even start.

Stretch your vocal muscles

Gently roll your neck, massage your jaw, and loosen your shoulders. This relaxes the areas around your vocal cords and relieves tension.

Protect your environment

Avoid dry air, smoke, cold air, and whispering, whispering strains your cords more than soft speaking. Use scarves, showers, and steamers.

Rest is recovery

Athletes don't overtrain, and singers shouldn't oversing. Give your voice time to reset after heavy use.

HYDRATION CHECKLIST

Warm-ups work way better when your cords are hydrated, it's like oiling your instrument before playing it!

- ☐ Drink water before you warm up
- ☐ Limit caffeine & dairy
- ☐ Always keep water nearby + sip continually
- ☐ Drink herbal tea with honey (throat coat)
- ☐ Limit overly salty snacks/meals
- ☐ Eat hydrating fruits
- ☐ Use a humidifier in dry climates
- ☐ NO drinking alcohol or smoking

STRETCHING CHECKLIST

Stretching before singing is essential. It's like tuning your instrument before the performance!

- ☐ Roll shoulders back slowly
- ☐ Stretch your neck side to side
- ☐ Release all jaw tension
- ☐ Stick tongue all the way out, then release
- ☐ Stand tall and align your posture
- ☐ Loosen your arms and chest
- ☐ Lightly roll your spine (cat-cow style)
- ☐ Relax your hands and wrists

WHY IT MATTERS

Your vocal cords (also called vocal folds) are two small bands of muscle and soft tissue inside your larynx, your voice box. When you sing, they come together and vibrate hundreds of times per second. Like any muscle, they work best when they're hydrated, warm, and rested, and they're far more prone to strain and injury when they're dry, cold, or tired. Treating your voice like an instrument that needs care is the single biggest thing that protects it over a lifetime of singing.

TERMS TO KNOW

Vocal cords (vocal folds). the two small bands of muscle in your throat that vibrate to create sound.

Larynx. your "voice box," the structure that houses the vocal cords.

Hydration. keeping your cords moist from the inside; it takes hours, so you drink early, not right before you sing.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **water bottle** kept within reach all day
- Optional: a **humidifier** for dry rooms or winter air
- Optional: **herbal tea with honey** (a "throat coat") and a **scarf** to keep your neck warm

Breathing: Gas That Revs the Engine

Find a quiet space to practice breathing. Lay down on your back or sit up straight with your hand on your belly.

Then, take a deep breath through your nose and allow your belly to rise. Place your thumbs on each side, of your diaphragmatic sides. Feel this area expanding as you inhale, this is how singers engage the diaphragm. This is your engine.

Next, exhale on a "ssss" or "shhh" sound, like letting air out of a balloon. Time yourself and see how long you can stretch each breath.

After that, repeat 5-6 times, trying to keep the sound smooth and steady. This is how you build compression and control, two key ingredients for powerful, supported singing.

Finally, practice taking deep breaths standing up, and apply this while speaking or humming softly to develop muscle memory.

BREATHING EXERCISE CHECKLIST

Breathing exercises are crucial for singing. It's like charging your battery before the show!

- ☐ Inhale through nose (4 counts)
- ☐ Slowly blow the air out like a hiss (8 counts)
- ☐ 4-7-8 breath: Inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8
- ☐ Use your diaphragm, not your chest
- ☐ Place hands on ribs + feel them expand
- ☐ Pretend you're sipping air through a straw
- ☐ Keep shoulders down and relaxed
- ☐ Repeat until your breath feels steady

A LITTLE HISTORY

Breath support is the foundation of nearly every great singing tradition. The Italian bel canto school, which shaped Western singing from the 1600s onward, built entire techniques around controlled, low breathing. Modern voice science agrees: steady airflow powered from the diaphragm, rather than force from the throat, is what lets you sing strong, long, and without strain. Master your breath and you've mastered the most important part of singing.

TERMS TO KNOW

Diaphragm. the large dome-shaped muscle beneath your lungs that powers your breath; your "engine."

Breath support. using steady, controlled airflow to hold notes and sing with power.

Compression. the gentle, even pressure of air you build to keep a note steady.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **quiet space** where you can lie down or stand comfortably
- Optional: a **yoga mat** for floor breathing exercises
- A **timer** (your phone) to track how long you can sustain each breath

Humming & Exercises: Warm Up the Car

First, start with a light hum using an "mmm" sound. Think of it like warming the pan, gentle & controlled.

Then, shift to "ng" (like in the word "sing") to gently buzz the cords together, and engage your resonance!

Next, try short, buzzy exercises like "mum," or "bub," on one steady note. This helps release tension, and centers your tone placement.

After that, test open vowels like: "a, e, i, o, u" and "nae nae" or "yah yah yah" in your mid-range.

Finally, repeat each one 2-3 times. This is your daily vocal foundation, it keeps your tone balanced and your voice warm, without overdoing it!

VOCAL WARM-UP CHECKLIST

"Your voice is like a car in the winter, you need to warm it up!"

- ☐ Try lip trills/bubbles and humming
- ☐ Say "Nnnn" and slide from the deepest part of your range to your lightest
- ☐ Do the same with "Gee" and "Nay" for tone placement
- ☐ Make a sound like an ambulance, these are "sirens", slide forward & back on your vocal range

WHY WARMING UP MATTERS

Singers have warmed up for centuries, but today we understand exactly why it works. Gentle humming and buzzing send blood flow to the vocal folds and ease them into motion, lowering the risk of strain, the very same reason an athlete stretches before a game. Exercises like lip trills, humming, and straw phonation are known as semi-occluded vocal tract (SOVT) exercises. Voice scientists have shown them to be among the safest and most effective ways to warm up, because the slight back-pressure they create helps your cords vibrate efficiently with very little effort.

TERMS TO KNOW

Resonance. the warmth and richness your tone gains as sound vibrates through your throat, mouth, and face.

Lip trill. the "motorboat" bubble sound made by blowing air through loosely closed lips.

SOVT exercise. a semi-occluded vocal tract exercise (like humming or straw phonation) that warms the voice gently and safely.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **mirror** to watch for relaxed lips, jaw, and shoulders
- Optional: a **wide drinking straw** and a cup of water for straw phonation

Advanced Exercises: Hit the Gas Pedal

So you've warmed up the car! You've got gas in the tank. Now it's time to test what the engine can really do. Advanced exercises are where you go from "I can sing" to "I can sing with control, range, and power" but only if you build the foundation first. Skip Phase 1 & 2 and you'll blow the engine. Trust me.

VOWEL SHAPING

Pick one note in your mid-range. Sing it on an "ah" or "oo" vowel.

- ☐ Pick one note in your mid-range. Sing it on an "ah" or "oo" vowel
- ☐ Hold the note for 10 seconds. Smooth, no shaking
- ☐ Push to 15 seconds. Then 20. Then 30
- ☐ While sustaining, add dynamics, start soft, get louder, get soft again (this is called a "messa di voce")
- ☐ Why this matters: stamina. When you can hold a note clean for 20 seconds, a 3-minute song stops feeling like a workout
- ☐ Finally, do this on 3 different notes: low, mid, high

SCALE RUNS

Don't fight the shift. Smooth it out. Notice where your voice shifts gears, that's your passaggio (the bridge between chest and head voice)!

- ☐ Start with a 5-note scale (C-D-E-F-G-F-E-D-C) using "gee," "mum," or "nah"
- ☐ Sing it slowly. Focus on connection between each note
- ☐ Speed up gradually. Don't sacrifice control for speed
- ☐ Move up half-steps (C, C#, D, D#) until you reach the top of your comfortable range
- ☐ Come back down. Notice where your voice shifts gears, that's your passaggio

SUSTAINED NOTES

When you can hold a note clean for 20 seconds, a 3-minute song stops feeling like a workout.

- ☐ Pick one note in your mid-range. Sing it on an "ah" or "oo" vowel
- ☐ Hold the note for 10 seconds. Smooth, no shaking
- ☐ Push to 15 seconds. Then 20. Then 30
- ☐ While sustaining, add dynamics, start soft, get louder, get soft again (this is called a "messa di voce")
- ☐ Finally, do this on 3 different notes: low, mid, high

TERMS TO KNOW

Passaggio. the transition zone where your voice shifts between registers; smoothing it is a key advanced skill.

Chest voice. your lower, fuller, speaking-like range that resonates in the chest.

Head voice. your higher, lighter range that resonates up near the head.

Messa di voce. an Italian technique of swelling a sustained note from soft to loud and back to soft.

Dynamics. how loud or soft you sing, and how you move between the two.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **keyboard or pitch app** to find and check your starting notes
- A **voice recorder** to hear whether your sustained notes stay steady

Scales + Stamina: Building Endurance

Athletes build strength through repetition. Same with singers. Scales are like your vocal gym sets, they help you build muscle memory, tone placement, and breath awareness all at once.

Start with 3-note scales (Ex: C-D-E-D-C)

Use a soft, supported sound like "gee" or "mum." Focus on smooth transitions.

Move to 5-note scales (Ex: C-D-E-F-G-F-E-D-C)

Use sounds like "nah" or "yay" and try to keep your airflow consistent, not forced.

Go one step up each time (C, C#, D...)

But stop where your voice feels tired. Don't push, it's about control, not range yet.

Track your progress like reps or mileage.

Over time, your voice will move smoother and stronger. Scales are your vocal conditioning.

WHY SCALES WORK

Scales feel repetitive on purpose. Every time you run one, you're teaching your voice a pattern until it becomes automatic, the same way a pianist drills finger exercises. This is called muscle memory: with repetition, the right placement and breath start to happen without you thinking about it. That's why singers who practice scales daily sound more consistent, expand their range safely, and tire out far less during a full song.

TERMS TO KNOW

Scale. a set of notes played or sung in order, stepping up and back down.

Half-step (semitone). the smallest distance between two notes, like C to C#.

Range. the full span of notes you can sing comfortably, from your lowest to your highest.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **keyboard or free piano app** to play your starting note for each scale
- Optional: a **metronome app** to keep your tempo steady as you speed up

Repertoire: Time to Drive

Repertoire is WHAT you want to do with your voice, what you want to sing, and where you want to go. Do you want to sing Pop, Opera, R&B, or Country? There are endless possibilities.

Think about your vocal tone and goals

Consider your natural ability and long-term goals. From this, you'll start to develop an idea of where you're wanting to guide your voice.

You may already have material in mind

Singing the national anthem, performing in choir, or practicing your own original music, all of this counts as repertoire.

Study it once you've chosen

Notice how the artist breathes, delivers emotion, and shapes their vowels. If it's your own music, think about how you'd approach each tone and inflection.

Practice it weekly after your warm-up

Focus on pitch, stability, support, and storytelling, not chasing specific notes.

Singing is 70% mental, 30% technique. The biggest thing that can get in the way of a great performance is your own thoughts. Don't stress about certain notes, focus on pitch, stability, support, and storytelling.

TERMS TO KNOW

Repertoire. the collection of songs or pieces you choose to learn, practice, and perform.

Phrasing. how you shape a line of a song, where you breathe, swell, and pull back for feeling.

Tone. the unique color and character of your voice, what makes you sound like you.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A **voice recorder** to capture your run-throughs and listen back
- Your **lyrics or sheet music**, printed or on a screen
- Optional: **backing tracks or instrumentals** of your chosen songs to practice with

Final Music Notes

This is the beginning of something beautifully exciting for your voice. You now have the same toolkit professional singers use.

But knowing what to do and doing it daily are two very different things. The ones who grow are the ones who show up, every day, for even just 10 minutes, for years.

THE SIX NON-NEGOTIABLES

- 1 Drink water before you sing. Always.**
Hydration takes hours to reach your cords, drink at the START of the day, not right before you perform.
- 2 Stretch and warm up.**
10 minutes. That's it. Run through the Hydration, Stretching, Breathing, and Vocal Warm-Up checklists.
- 3 Sing something every day.**
Even if it's humming in the shower. Use it or lose it.
- 4 One full scale workout.**
15-20 minutes. Take it seriously.
- 5 One full song.**
Sing it all the way through, like a performance.
- 6 Record yourself.**
Voice memo. Listen back. Take notes. It's uncomfortable, do it anyway. It's the single fastest way to improve.

@THE SAVANNA HARRINGTON

Thanks for following along.

Show up daily, even for 10 minutes, and your voice will reward you for
it.

GET THE FREE DAILY CHECKLIST