

The Secrets to Singing High Notes

In this article I am going to show you how to sing high notes without straining your voice or suffering embarrassing breaks. I struggled for a very long time when I was developing my voice. I can now sing in a much wider range and I actually look forward to singing high notes! **I am going to show you the Do's and Don'ts and take you through a system that you can apply to develop your own voice.**

The Major Reasons Why You Can't Sing High

- [Wrong Information](#)
- [Too Much Weight In Your Voice](#)
- [Using The Wrong Amount Of Air](#)
- Fear

There is a lot of information available online from a variety of teachers that promise to show you how to sing high. Private singing teachers are also a great source of expertise in this very specific singing topic. Unfortunately while there is a lot of great and useful information there is also a lot of bad advice and teaching in the industry. Unfortunately I didn't get the right information and teaching early on in my development. I actually lost range in the higher part of my voice because of the techniques my teacher taught me. The title of singing teacher or vocal coach brings with it an expectation of trust. My advice to you is don't blindly trust a teacher or expert. **Experiment with techniques and ideas and find what works for you.**

Carrying too much weight into the higher part of your voice is another major reason why singers struggle to sing high. **So what is vocal weight?** The lower part of your voice (chest voice) has a different vocal structure than the higher part of your voice (head voice). When you are singing low notes your vocal cords are quite "slack" which allows vibration over most of the vocal cord. This gives it a "meatier" tone. There are **"singing muscles"** which co-ordinate this vocal cord position. The problem that I had and many other singers have is trying to maintain this vocal cord position into the higher part of the voice. The muscles and cords cannot maintain this position for long without resorting to raising the larynx. The larynx is the bump you can see in your neck. **You are carrying too much weight up if you see the larynx rise when singing higher notes.**

The wrong amount of air can make it very hard to sing high notes. Too little air and your voice will sound weak and unsupported. Too much air will cause your vocal cords to be put under too much pressure and strain will occur. Many coaches advise that you don't need as much air when you sing higher because there isn't as much vocal cord surface to vibrate. This is only partly true. When a student hears this advice the first reaction is to cut the amount of air that they usually sing a note with. This usually results in a weak head voice, or a flip into falsetto. While it is true that high notes require less air to pass over the cords to create sound, this is not something that you need to control. It will happen automatically. **You need to maintain the same amount of air throughout your entire range.** The vocal cords will naturally "zip up" limiting the amount of air that can pass through. By maintaining the same amount of air you will create the right amount of pressure behind the cords to allow a bigger and more focused sound in the head voice. **Here's a tip:**

Do a series of strong "SHHHH" sounds before you attempt to sing a high note.

Are you afraid of heights? I know I certainly am. This fear is also very prominent in singing. This fear of singing high usually comes from past experiences which we use as reference points. Perhaps you feel strain every time you sing high. Maybe your voice breaks as soon as you sing high. **Does your voice end up sore after singing high notes?** I know I have certainly experienced all of those painful moments. What happens if you continue to struggle with these problems is you develop a fear of singing high notes. Basically you will start to tense up as soon as you know that "high note" is coming, giving yourself no chance of hitting the note. I see this problem on a daily basis. The earlier you can get over this fear the better. You need to give yourself new reference points to reprogram your brain. You can do

this by doing specific exercises which I will share in this article.

How To Sing High Notes

Okay so we have now determined what has been holding you back. You know the wrong things to do, so now let's discuss the right things to do. **The secret to singing high tension free notes is accessing the head voice.**

What Is The Head Voice?

The head voice is one of your **vocal registers**. You have three main ones:

1. Chest Voice (Lower notes)
2. Mixed Voice (Middle part of your voice)
3. Head Voice (High Notes)

It is called the head voice because the sound vibrates (resonates) in the cavities of your head and nose. It is the most foreign part of your voice to develop and experience because it is rarely used in speech. When we speak we do so using the chest voice and occasionally the mixed voice. This is also the reason why most singers drag the chest voice up too high. It is a familiar part of the voice and the brain sends signals to take it higher.

How To Access Head Voice.

Experiment 1: Imagine you are at an amusement park with a child, or playing with a small child. Think of the sound you make when going down a slide for example. **"WEEEEEE"**. Now I'll bet that you have done this at least once in your life and not even thought about it in terms of "a high note" but that is essentially what it is. You are accessing head voice.

Experiment 2: Imitate someone (possibly a woman if you are a guy) calling out to someone they know. **"YOU HOOOOOO"**. See if you can make that sound in a feminine "hooty" way. This example again accesses your head voice.

At this stage you may be thinking that the sound is not very impressive but that can be developed with some experimenting with resonance.

What Is Resonance?

Resonance is a fancy word for describing where the **sound vibrates in your body**. There are 3 major resonating areas:

1. Chest
2. Throat
3. Head

These areas can be isolated or combined to change the tone in every part of your range. You can get a brighter/lighter chest voice by adding some head resonance. You can also get a bigger/meatier head voice by adding some throat resonance. I am going to share with you some exercises on adding "oomph" to your head voice shortly.

3 Secrets For Developing Head Voice

1. [Moving Through Your Mix](#)
2. [A Low Larynx](#)

3. Relaxation

Your mixed voice is the gateway to your high notes. Establishing vocal cord connection during your transition into mixed voice will allow you to continue up into head voice. This is a complete article in itself so I will include a link at the end of this article for singers wanting to know more.

Keeping your larynx low as you ascend will help you transfer into head voice. A rising larynx is a head voice killer! As I have already discussed, this will cause your voice to become incredibly heavy. I'm sure you have experienced the "break" or "flip" into falsetto as a result of this. To maintain a low larynx you must practice singing in front of a mirror. This will give you a visual aid. The exercises I suggest next will help your voice re-coordinate to allow a rested low larynx.

Relaxation is so important when you sing, not just when singing high notes but singing in any part of your range. Muscle strain will cause you many problems in your quest to sing high notes. The muscles in your neck, face, and abdomen all work together to create your voice and also limit its potential. Some areas to watch for tension:

- [Abdomen](#)
- [Shoulders](#)
- [Neck](#)
- [Jaw](#)
- [Tongue](#)
- [Lips](#)

How to discover and release this tension is the topic for another article. Again, using a **mirror** will help you become aware of your tension areas.

Exercises To Develop Head Voice

The following exercises are recommended for discovering and developing your head voice. I suggest you start with:

- [Liproll arpeggios](#)

This will help you drop the weight from your voice. A liproll is a silly sound. Imagine making the "**BRRRR**" sound when you are cold and adding a dopey "**UH**" sound at the same time.

- [Liproll to Vowel Arpeggios](#)

This will help you drop the weight and help with muscle coordination as you sing a vowel directly after the liproll. Your muscles have memory and will learn the new position.

- [Exercises on "GI" "GO" and "WI"](#)

These exercises help with keeping the voice connected as you ascend. They are also very effective for keeping your larynx low.

- [Nasality exercises "NAY" "NYA"](#)

Nasality is a great way to add some focus and brightness to your head voice. These specific exercises incorporate some throat resonance which changes the tone from "Hooty" to "Edgy".

I demonstrate all of these exercises in my course ["What I Didn't Learn From My Singing Teacher But Wish I Had"](#).

By learning how to sing high notes by discovering and developing your head voice you will be able to

eliminate strain, drop the weight from your voice and lose the fear of singing that plagues so many singers.

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