

Warming Up prior to practice

Promoting Wellness and Injury Prevention for Musicians

VCU School of Music

Presented by Dr. Magdalena Adamek and Dr. Brenda Jackson, , PT, DPT, OCS, CHT

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Musicians and Practice

- Why Warm Up prior to practice?
 - Prepare tissues and mind for practice
 - Prepare instrument for practice



Practice Pitfalls

- Fatigue
- Limited Time
- Pain
- Overuse Injury
- Focal Dystonia



Warm Up Ground Rules

- Purpose is to prepare you for your practice session
- Gradual Warm Up
- Nothing is forced
- Length of warm up depends on your practice session
- Stretches:
 - slow and controlled
 - pain free
 - avoid bouncing
 - Hold stretches for 1-3 breaths

Set an Intention

Check in with yourself

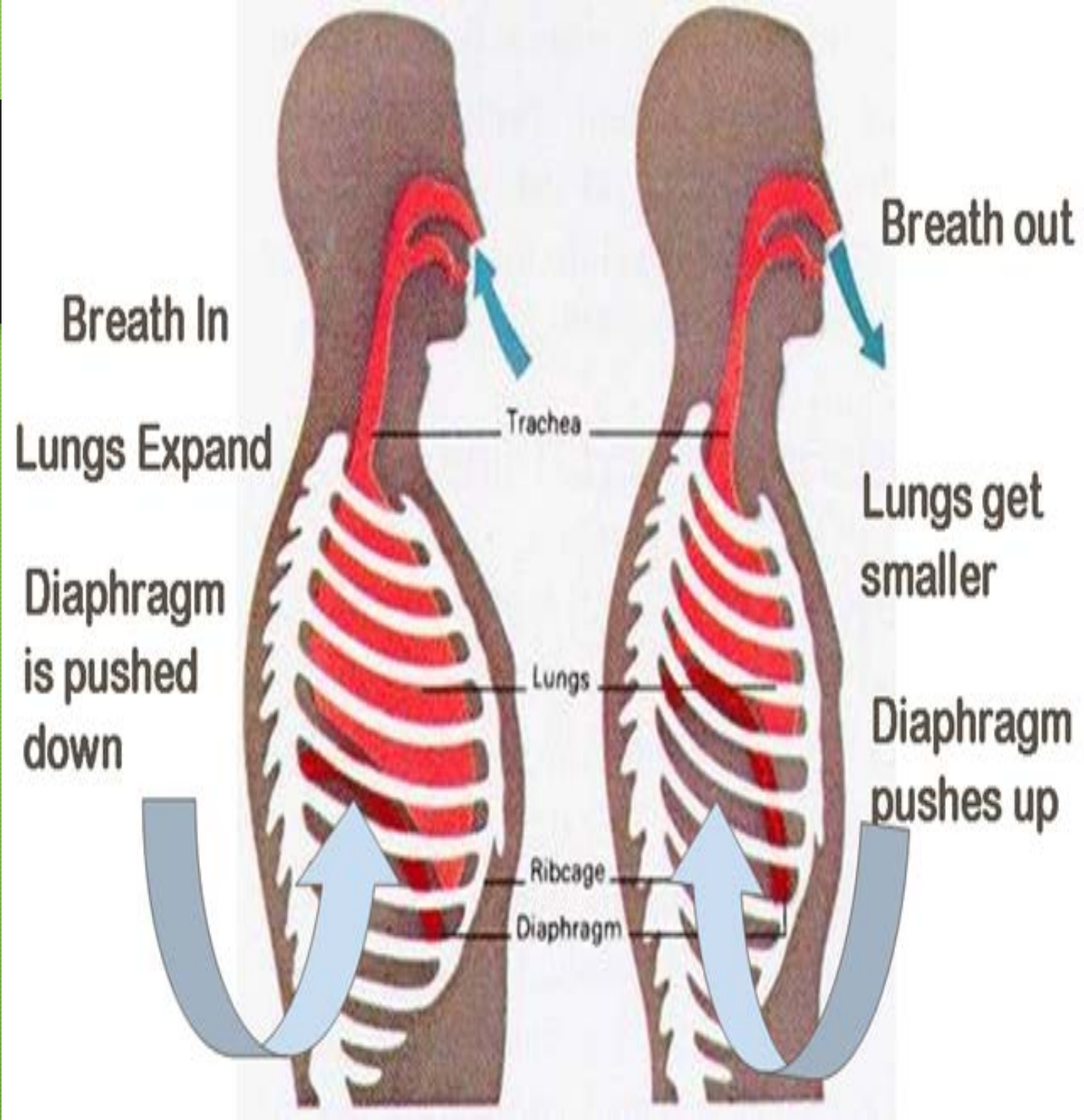
- How are you feeling?
- How much time do you have to practice?
- What will you be practicing?
- Create an intention for your practice session

INTENTION



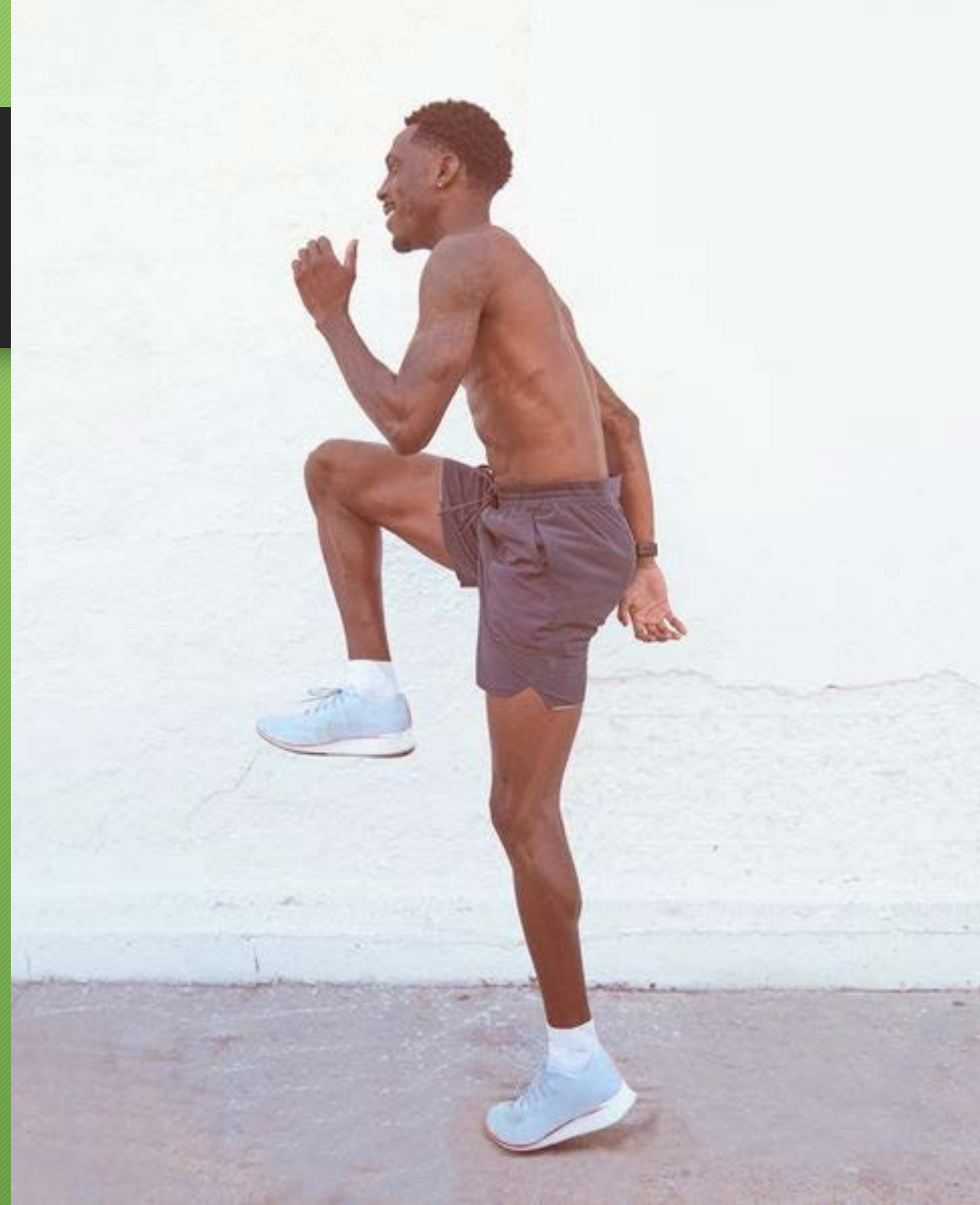
Warm Up with Breath

- Stand upright
- Align head and ear over shoulders
- Pull shoulders back to open chest
- Breath in through your nose for 4 counts
- Allow chest and abdomen to expand
- Hold breath for 4 counts
- Release breath through pursed lips for 8 counts
- Repeat 5 times



Active Warm Up

- Active movements to increase circulation and prepare tissues for practice: Walking
- Stair Climbing
- Chair Squats
- Marching in Place slowly
- Gradually increase height of march
- Gradually increase speed of march
- Add arm raises



Head and Neck Warm Up

Head and Neck
Retraction
Upright Neck
Rotation



Torso and Arms

- Stand and Twist
- Lengthening of the Arms
- Side bending



Chest and Shoulders

- W's: Squeeze shoulder blades together in the back, Inhale and feel chest open. Repeat 2-3 times.
- Stretch across chest. Hold for 1 breath. Repeat with other arm.



Shoulder Blade Circles

- Shoulder Shrugs
- Shoulder Pull Backs
- Shoulder Press down and back
- Shoulder Blade Circles
 - Clockwise
 - Counter Clockwise



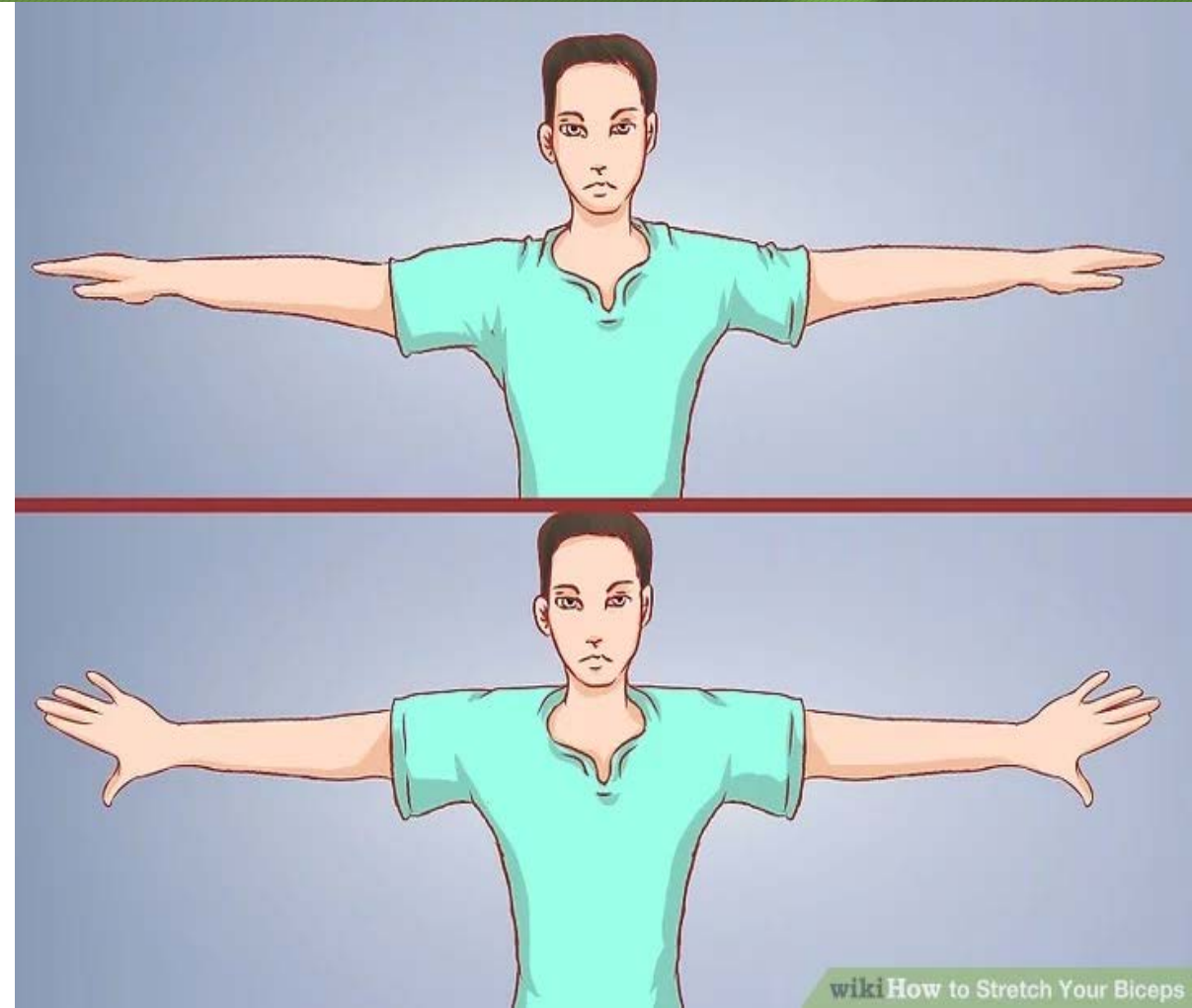
Eyes, Face and Mouth

- Close your eyes. Move eyes around in circles to the numbers on a clock
- Prune Face: Squeeze and hold 3 sec., Relax face and open eyes again.
- Puff Checks: Blow air out. 3x.
- Lip Press- “Kiss” x 3.
- Open Mouth “Ahhhhhhhh” “Ohhhhh”
- Smile, Say “EEEEEEEEEE”
- Jaw: Tongue on soft palate: open and close mouth 6 times



Elbows

- Triceps Stretch
- Biceps Stretch



Forearms and Wrists

- Wrist figure 8's with fingers interlaced
- Wrist Flexion with pronation (palm down and elbow extended)
- Wrist Extension with supination (palm up and elbow straight)

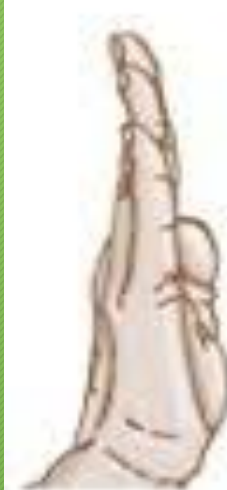


Hands and Fingers

- Spread fingers Wide apart
- Squeeze fingers together with a flat palm
- Thumb tip to finger tip- then wide apart. Repeat to each finger tip.
- Lumbrical Plus
- Hook Fist



There are three ways of making a fist:



Straight



Hook fist



Straight fist



Full fist

Passive Warm Up

- Rub Hands Together
- Gently massage each finger bone and joint
- Gently distract each finger joint away from your hand
- One hand rocks other fingers into hook fist and full fist several times



Review: The purpose of a warmup

- to make your body energized and awake
- to increase blood flow in your muscles
- To loosen up joints
- To lubricate vocal folds (vocalists)
- to help to set a vivid goal for your practice routine

Warmups can prevent injuries

- You need endurance and control over your body as well as flexibility
- Having enough flexibility will help to prevent even most common injuries, such as muscle fatigue, sprains, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, dystonia.

Always Adjust warmup time to your needs

Choose a series of movements that are gentle. Start at a slow to moderate tempo and gradually increase speed and intensity.

The most important thing is to do the warm up well - cultivate a habit of excellence.

Some elements of the warmup routine

arm circles
wrist circles
deep breathing
stretching the hands
shoulder rolls

When in a practice room (or backstage) : Create a vivid goal and be purposeful

- Always know ahead of time what you want to get better with on each day. Match the content of your warmups to the repertoire , or its sections you will be addressing in your practice.
- Be savvy with your warmup, however remember that quality is more important than quantity and length.
- Be mindful that the 'high seasons' in your schedule, e.g. (auditions, juries, recitals) will require longer warmups.

SEVERAL AFFIRMATIONS TO HELP YOU KEEP A POSITIVE STATE OF MIND

<https://themusiciansway.com>

“I’m grateful to be able to make music.”

“I embrace challenges as opportunities to advance.”

“I’m confident in my abilities.”

“I trust in my capacity to grow.”

“I look forward to today’s discoveries.”

“It’s beautiful to practice. I love to practice.”

“I’m fortunate to be able to pursue my love of music.”

“I’m thankful to all the people who have supported my music making.”