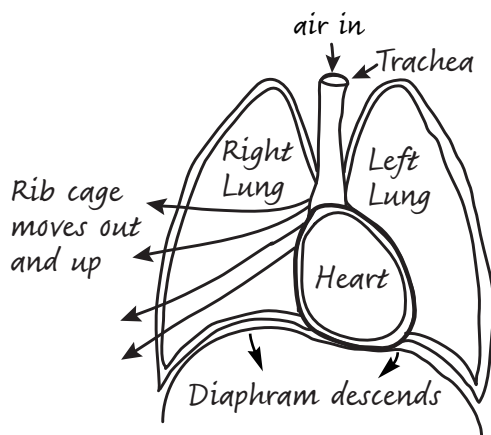


Breathing: the power supply

Breathing is obviously important for singing but can often become clouded in mystery and terminology. Breathing for singing is an extension of what we are doing naturally every day in order to stay alive.

- Lie on the floor with a book placed under your head. Place one hand on your rib cage and one on your lower abdomen. What do you notice? Observe your breathing pattern.
- When you breathe in, the rib cage and the lower abdomen move out and as you let the air out they return. Watch your lower abdomen go up and down and listen to the breathing pattern of your body.



The science of breathing

The diaphragm is shaped like a parachute and is a large, dome-shaped layer of muscle. It is situated just under the rib cage and helps in the breathing process. As you breathe in, the ribs move out and up and the diaphragm tightens and lowers, creating a vacuum in the lungs which expand as they fill with air. At the same time the lower abdominal area is pushed out slightly (which explains why it is uncomfortable to sing after a big meal!). As you let the air out, the diaphragm relaxes upwards and the rib muscles relax, which in turn help the lungs send out the air.

top tip When you breathe in, the rib and abdominal area expands and when you breathe out the rib and abdominal area contracts. Sometimes this can be confused so that the opposite is happening!

Try this

You can do this exercise lying down on the floor or standing up. Put one hand on your lower abdominal muscles (tummy area) and one hand on your lower ribs. Blow out the air. Next, breathe in deeply (through the nose is good) and feel your body expand out and round. Let the air out on an 'sss' sound making sure the 'sss' is strong and with an even intensity – you will feel the lower abdominal muscles contract/tighten. When you get to the end of the breath, relax your lower abdominal muscles and let the air in again. Repeat the process.

One of the singer's greatest fears can be running out of breath. However, it is important not to hold onto the breath or over breathe as the body and the voice can become tense and tight. Allow the breath to flow – don't save it!

Sleep little baby

From now on, you should breathe where there are rests in the music. Breath marks (✓) are only given when there is no rest. You may have noticed in this piece that the time signature changes several times. Don't let it put you off – just keep counting silently.

fact file

Legato = smoothly

☺ = pause

Pam Wedgwood

Peacefully ♩ = 74

6 *p legato* *mp*
It's time to sleep, lit - tle ba - by, sleep. Lay down your

10
head lit - tle ba - by do not weep. May God pro - tect you and guide you on your

13 *p*
way, And may the sun shine up-on you ev - 'ry day.

18 *p* ✓ ✓
Hush now, hush now, close your lit - tle eyes When dark-ness

24 *mp*
falls and the nights are long, When stars are shi - ning bright - ly clear and

27 *mp*
strong, I'll al - ways keep you safe - ly by my side, Then dawn will

30
break and your eyes will o - pen wide. Hmm Hmm

35 *poco rit.* *pp* ☺
Hmm