**Welcome to Being in Voice with Flloyd Kennedy, training for the speaking voice.**

Here are some easy to follow and easy to do exercises to maintain and tone up your voice up as you build your power, range, flexibility and clarity.

Use the exercises for regular practice, and as warmups before you speak publicly, whether you are teaching, acting, making a pitch or presenting a seminar.

Play with your voice and explore your vocal potential without strain or pain. Enjoy BEING creative IN your VOICE.

[www.being-in-voice.com](http://www.being-in-voice.com)

**Being in Voice**

means sharing your thoughts, ideas and feelings by means of a sound, healthy, audible and interesting voice.

You ARE interesting, so there’s no reason why you shouldn’t SOUND interesting.

Working with your voice is a creative action, not a technical exercise; it’s about expression, not projection.

When you use your voice, you express yourself and, in doing so, you communicate something of yourself to the world beyond yourself. You invite your audience to see the world the way you see it, you share the world of ideas you are expressing.

Your voice is an amazing instrument. It is you, audible

Your voice is your body, imagination and intellect all together at once.

Your voice is physical, and your support for your voice is ALL of you, ALL of the time.

Working on your voice is not just working on your whole body; it is working on your whole self.

**What is Voice?**

When you speak, sound vibrates throughout your body. Whatever your body is doing affects how you sound. The more vibrations you create, the more voice you have.

Sound waves are conducted well by less dense substances. Air, for example, is a great conductor or sound. Wood is pretty good too. But concrete is not. The human body is made up of a huge variety of substances, some of them better conductors of your sound than others.

Bone is a good conductor, but tensely constricted muscle is very bad. Floppy muscles aren’t very good conductors, but engaged muscles are. The more flexible your muscles are, the more space they can create inside your body, and the more full-bodied you will sound. So it is important to understand, and to be responsible for what is going on inside your body.

Tense, or constricted muscles not only limit the vibrations that you can create, and therefore share, they also limit the amount of space you can create in your body. For example, a tense, tight jaw keeps your mouth cavity small, and stops your sound vibrations from flowing freely out into the room to be shared with your listeners. Tense shoulders, neck and abdomen all contribute to limiting the volume and the quality of the sound.

Your spinal column needs to flow through the centre of your back in its natural curves – but not overly curved – so that your rib cage has maximum potential for movement as your lungs expand and contract, and so that your core muscles have optimum room for maneuverability.

Practise the posture exercise whenever you can. Do it with awareness, so that you notice whether or not you have your knees soft or locked, whether you have your weight more on one foot than the other. Notice if your shoulders are slumped forwards, or tightened back, and relax them. Make sure your head can move easily from side to side as you gaze out towards the horizon.

There is no right or wrong. There is only what you notice. It is the noticing that is important. When you know what you are doing, you can leave it alone, or change it. You have a choice.

When you have trained yourself to notice any unnecessary tensions in your body, you are in a position to relax them away. When you know, from the inside out, what it feels like to stand well, balanced and centred, you are able to take that feeling with you into sitting, walking, running, dancing – living your life.

**How Voice Works**

***Voice requires 4 elements:***

1) A want, or a need to express yourself;

2) Air (breath) inside the body, providing air pressure beneath the vocal folds within the voice box (larynx);

3) Vocal folds parallel to each other, touching, just enough energy in them to require the air below to push them apart. **Vocal pitch\*** is decided here.

4) Different spaces and substances of the body to provide resonance. **Resonant pitch\*\*[[1]](#endnote--1)+** is decided here. It is the combination of vocal pitch and resonant pitch that make up the sound of the voice

A HEALTHY VOICE is a voice created by air flowing – not pushed – between the vocal folds. The flow of air needs to be in the form of a consistent supply of air pressure in the lungs. The consistency of supply is enabled by the powerful muscles between the ribs, and by deep core muscles in the abdomen, working with the diaphragm.

\* Vocal pitch means how high, or low (especially in singing, but also in the tune, or intonation of your voice). Think of how your voice gets higher when you are excited, or lower if you are unhappy.

\*\*+Resonant pitch determines the colour, or quality of your voice. Think of a rich, dark, chocolaty voice, or a fine, bright, silvery voice. You can have them both, or any colour or quality in between.

**How Speech Works**

***Speech requires 5 elements:***

1. to 4. from **How Voice Works**

PLUS

5. An agile, flexible set of articulators (lips, tongue, teeth, jaw and palates) to shape the vocal sound into speech sounds (phonemes) that combine into words that are combined into phrases, sentences, paragraphs.

Clear, articulate SPEECH occurs when the changing shapes inside the mouth and throat shape the VOICE into clearly differentiated speech sounds. These changing shapes are caused as the mouth opens due to movement of the lower jaw, or the lips change shape or position, or the tongue moves into different positions within the mouth, in close or distant proximity to the teeth, the teeth ridges, the hard or soft palate, or the soft palate itself moves higher or lower. These movements happen in a range of combinations, allowing for a huge range of speech sounds.

**Improve Your Voice to Improve Your Speech**

Working on your voice is the only way to improve your speech. Train yourself to adjust your body as you speak, be aware of unnecessary and inappropriate tension in the body that may impede your freedom of movement and that certainly reduce the range of tone and colour in your vocal sound.

Learn how to open yourself up to a full-bodied, generous vocal sound, first with the Mini Vocal Warmup, then extending it into the Vocal Maintenance and Advanced VoiceWork programs.

As your voice grows, you improve your clarity of speech by training the specific organs of articulation (lips, tongue, teeth, jaw and palates) to be flexible, powerful and agile.

However, a well-balanced voice, or vocal sound is essential in the first place, to have a great range of vocal qualities and colours and tones available to be shaped into speech sounds.

A sound voice expressing clear speech requires an open, mobile, relaxed and alert person (i.e. body and mind) – not sitting hunched or cramped. It also requires clarity of thought. In other words, know your subject, and care about it as you speak.

**Preparation**

Before you begin to warm up your voice, warm up your whole body. Start bouncing gently on your feet, then hop, move your arms about, jog or dance about for a minute or two.

Listen to the audio files **Being in Your Body** as Flloyd takes you through the process of aligning your spine, [Posture; Spinal Roll] balancing your whole self in relation to gravity, so that you stand, sit and move with ease.

Do this a couple of times a day for a few weeks, and you will gradually accustom yourself WITH FULL AWARENESS to the physical sensation, from inside your body, of standing well. When you stand with ease, you move with ease and you speak with ease. Being aware of your physical state puts you in control of it.

Practise **Being in Your Breath** until you are comfortable that your breath flows easily, your shoulders and upper chest stay free and relaxed, and your lower abdominal muscles are the ones supporting your voice.

Learn the **Mini Vocal Warmup**. Practise each element separately until you are comfortable with them, then work through the whole warmup with Flloyd. The warmup takes less than a minute, great for getting your voice warm and lively first thing in the morning, or for getting focused just before a presentation. Or you can extend each element and number of repetitions until you are doing a 10 minute warmup, which is when you will start to build muscle tone and extend your range.

**Being in Your Body**

**Standing**: weight evenly distributed over both feet, spine flowing up, loose shoulders, eyes looking straight ahead

**Sitting**: hips and lower back supported by back of chair, feet flat on the ground (or on a stand), thighs parallel to the floor, loose shoulders, eyes looking straight ahead

**AUDIO FILES: alignment.mp3**

**rolldown.mp3**

**Being in Breath:**

Relax your jaw: Drop the mouth open till 2 fingertips can be placed, one on top of the other, between the front teeth.

Allow a silent, quick breath in through your mouth – wait – allow it out – wait

Repeat several times, noticing how easy it is, how you don’t need a lot of air to go in each time, and how the air goes in and comes out silently through an open throat (If your throat gets dry, swallow and refresh it any time you like!)

This exercise is designed to help you recreate the circumstances of your natural, autonomous (unconscious) breathing process, but in a state of awareness (mindfulness) so that you can build on it.

**It will feel artificial at first, because it is different to the way we breathe in when we are conscious (aware) of breathing in**.

Normal breathing happens because the body allows air to drop into the lungs, and to flow out again, silently, easily, quickly. It also works this way when we pant. When we "take" a breath - i.e. consciously - we suck the air in forcefully, and often noisily, using muscular effort that makes us feel we are doing something, but which doesn't actually add to the effectiveness of the breathing process. By learning how to ALLOW the breath to DROP into the bottom of the lungs, we learn how to recreate the circumstances of normal breathing, but with awareness. Then we can work with the appropriate muscles to build their power and flexibility so that we can utilize a more powerful, consistent supply of air pressure when we need it for powerful moments of expression.

These exercises will also help you to become aware of how your breath creates sound in a number of different ways. One way is by creating the sound of friction (a hissing sound) as the air is squeezed through a narrow space in your mouth. For example, the F sound is created when the air has to get through and around your teeth, because your top teeth are in contact with your bottom lip, leaving very little space for air to pass through. Another way sound is created is when your vocal folds are drawn parallel, and the air pressure building up beneath them makes them puff apart, causing sound waves – i.e. voice. Your challenge is to allow the breath to do its own work, while you place your lips, tongue, teeth, jaw and palates into the appropriate positions, with minimum effort and maximum clarity.

**Sounding the Breath (making voice)**

adapted from Tim Smith’s Vocal Alchemy (www.vocalalchemy.com.au)

a) check your posture, relax your jaw, slip two fingertips between your front teeth to measure the appropriate gap, flop your tongue loosely over the bottom lip,

b) allow a little breath in, silently - wait – allow it back out - wait. (repeat 4 times)

[Notice how open your throat is, without any effort involved. Notice how the air goes in and comes out easily through the open throat]

c) allow a quick, silent breath in – wait – keep throat open as you gently allow breath to flow out through the open throat for 4 beats. Repeat 4 times

d) allow a quick, silent breath in – wait – vocalize the breath for 4 beats at it flows back out. The sound you will make is the sighing sound, very floppy and relaxed. (repeat 4 times).

**AUDIO FILES: bibintro.mp3**

**bibexercises.mp3**

***I am my voice***

***Where my voice is***

***I am.***

***My voice sounds within me, and without me –***

***But never without***

***Me.***

***It sounds before me, and***

***Behind me***

***And where I am***

***My voice is.***

***My voice, moving through time and space***

***Becomes part of you.***

***The space of this room bends my sound voice back to me***

***As sound gives way to silence.***

***I am my silence.***

***Where my silence is***

***I am***

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1. [↑](#endnote-ref--1)