



Vocal Music Virtual Learning

MS Honor Choir

Vocal Technique:

Proper Posture

May 8, 2020



MS Honor Choir
Lesson: May 8, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:

How can we line up our body to help us produce a powerful singing tone and keep us tension-free?



Warm-Up Activity

Stand tall and take a deep, full breath. Remember what we practiced earlier this week, and tried to fill your lungs all the way down to your diaphragm. Count to 4 as you breath in, so that your lungs don't finish filling up until count number 4.

Now, curl up into a ball on the floor, and attempt to do the same thing. Are you still able to take the same breath?



Second Warm-Up activity:

Now, a similar idea. Sit in a kitchen chair and try and keep your spine tall and your rib cage lifted up. Take another deep, 4-count breath.

Now slouch forward and feel your ribs collapse into your torso. Try and take that same breath again. How did it feel?



Quick Review

This week, we have focused on two really important aspects of your vocal technique: **breathing** to supporting your sound and helping the vocal tract to shape your **singing tone**.

Today, we will explore how the rest of your body can help or hinder those two processes.

We are going to learn about proper **posture** for singing!

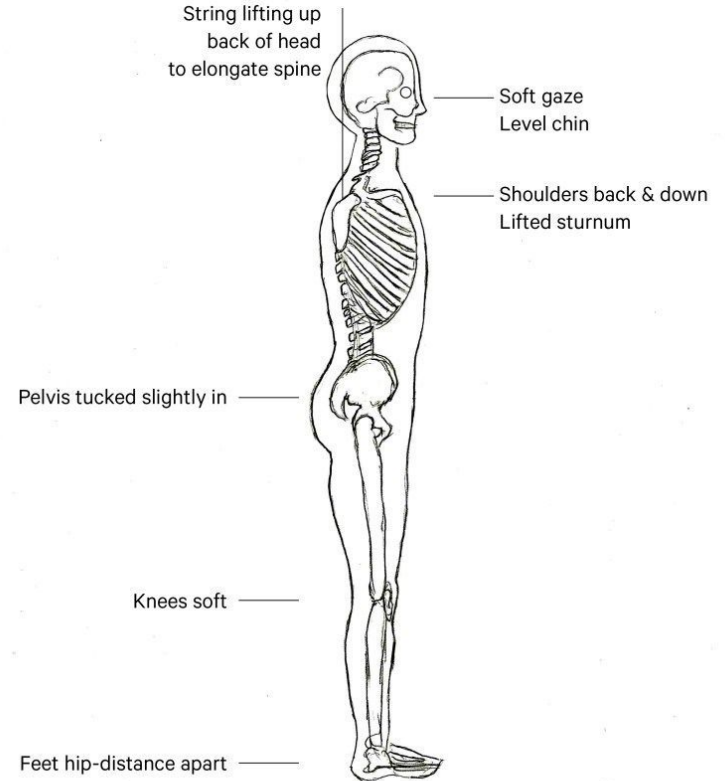
Body Alignment

There are many different parts of your body that work together to set the foundation for your singing. For all those pieces to work together, we need to line those different parts together. The body parts we are going to focus on include:

- The feet
- The knees
- The hips
- The rib cage
- The shoulders
- The neck
- The head

Body Alignment

Here is a diagram of a body completely aligned for good singing. This is going to allow this person to take the deep breaths needed, use that breath to support the singing sound, and prevent tension from creeping up in the neck, shoulders or head. Let's break down those components



The Feet

Feet should be shoulder-width apart from each other. Your weight should be evenly distributed on both feet, and balanced between the balls and heels of your feet.



The Feet

Reason this is important

Your feet are the stable base upon which the rest of your body anchors. Keeping your weight distributed evenly helps to line up the rest of the body and prevent your shoulders and neck from doing crazy things.



The Knees

Keep your knees slightly bent, or “soft”, instead of set and locked back in place.

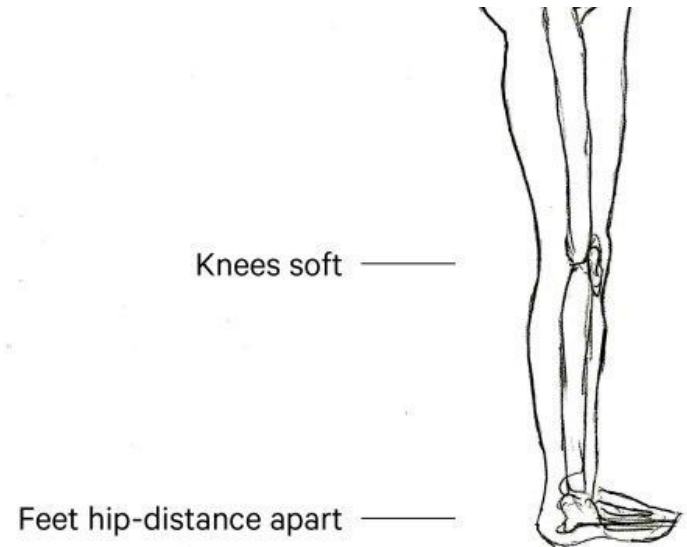
On the other side, try not to keep them too bent, to the point it feels like you are squatting!



The Knees

Reason this is important

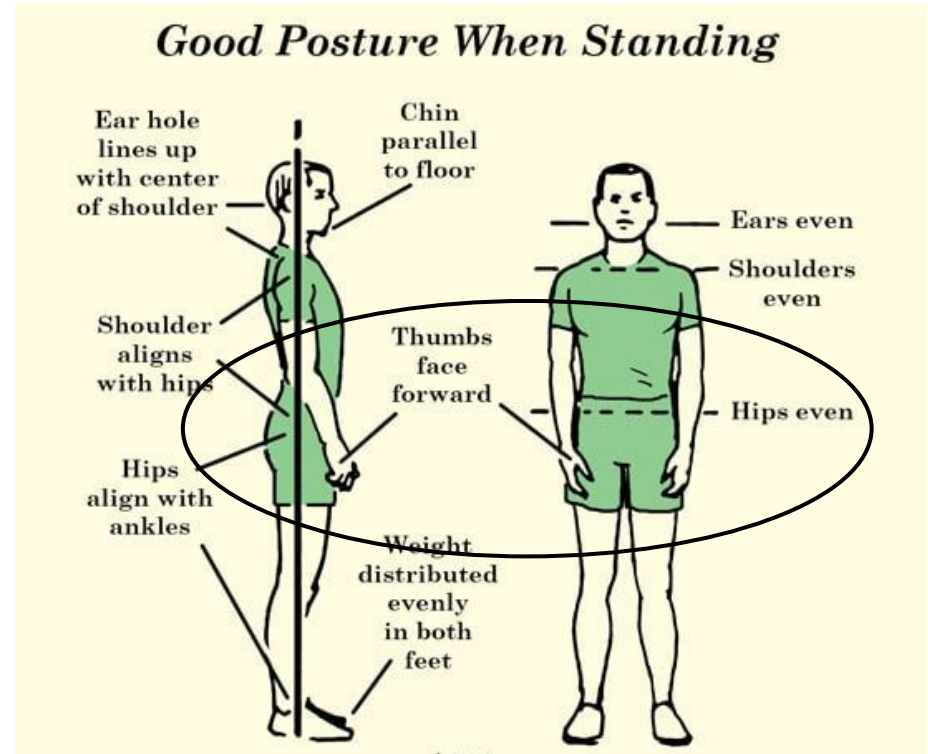
Locking your knees in place can disrupt the blood flow as it travels through your body up to your brain. Standing this way while trying to sing can lead to a singer feeling light-headed or even passing out!



The Hips

Your hips should be evenly set above both feet, without one hip jutting off to one side or the other.

Your pelvic bone should be very slightly set forward, such that your rear end is not jutting out.

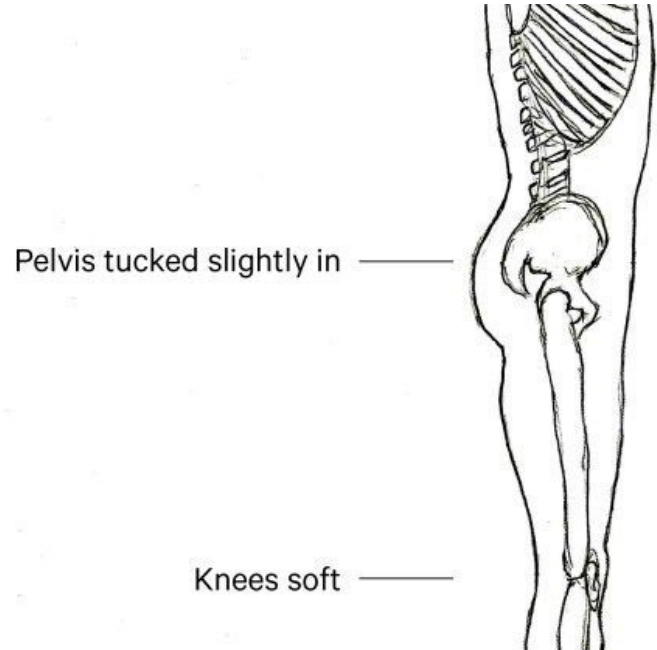


The Feet

Reason this is important

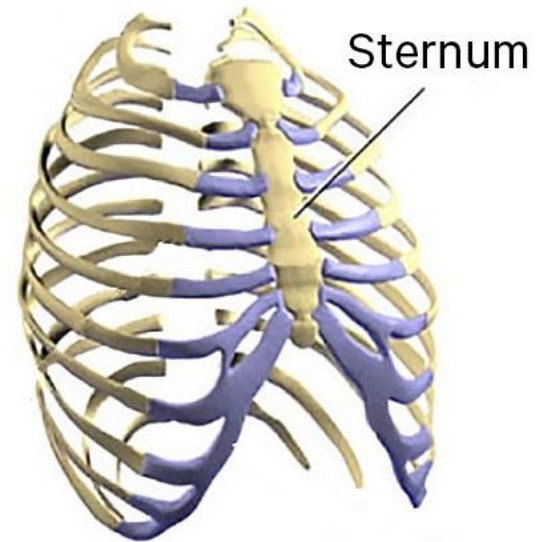
Keeping your weight over both hips helps provide a strong base for breathing and engaging your core muscles for singing.

Keeping your pelvis tucked in prevents tightness in your back and neck.



The Ribcage and Sternum

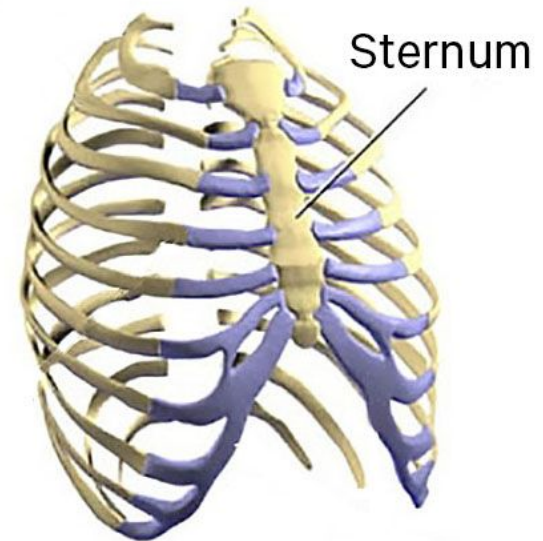
The sternum or breastplate is the firm-feeling bone right in the center of your chest. It connects to the ribcage, which then wraps around all of your essential organs in your torso, protecting them.



The Rib cage and Sternum

As you stand with tall posture, your sternum should feel slightly lifted, like you may do subconsciously when you are feeling really proud of yourself.

This should allow your ribcage to feel open and relaxed.



The Rib cage and Sternum

Reason this is important

Like we talked about in the breathing lessons, your rib cage is an important part of the breathing process.

Your sternum and ribs must be lifted up and open to give your lungs room to inflate fully with air.

String lifting up
back of head
to elongate spine



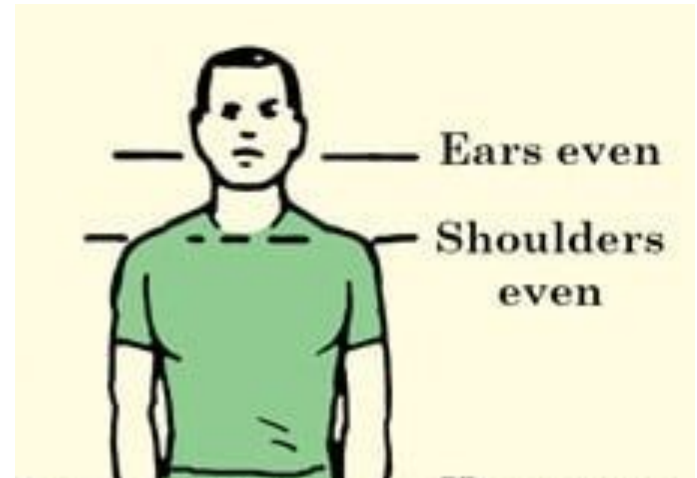
Soft gaze
Level chin

Shoulders back & down
Lifted sternum

The Shoulders

Your shoulders should be rolled slightly back, so they are proud and not slouching down. They should match at an even height with each other.

This should allow your arms to rest gently at your side.



The Shoulders

Reason this is important

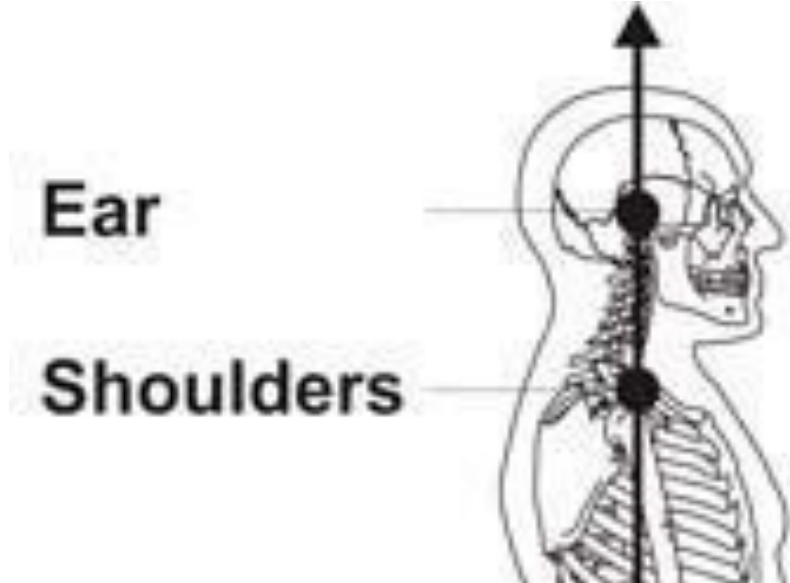
Shoulders that are slouched down or forward can take your ribcage, neck or head out of alignment, taking away your breathing power or putting tightness into the singing muscles in your neck and head.



The Neck

Your neck should be tall and straight, allowing your head to rest over the center of your body.

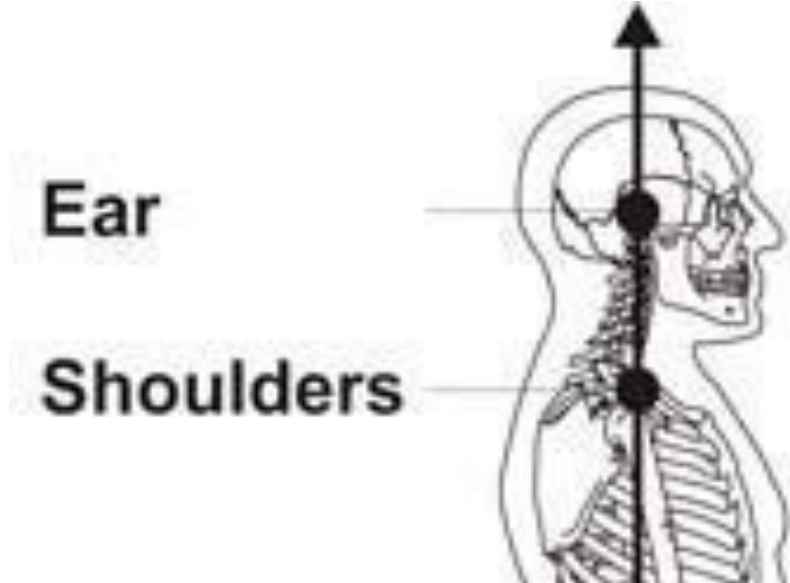
This should line your ears up with your shoulders.



The Head

Your head should be resting easily at the top of your neck, lined up over your shoulders.

It should not be leaning to one side or the other, or reaching forward or backwards.



The Neck and Head

Reason this is important

Your neck and head house the vocal tract. If they are lined up properly, it gives your larynx and resonators the best chance to produce a healthy and powerful singing tone.





Posture Activity!

Let's see if we can put it all together! Bending at the waist, dangle your upper body down and relax your arms so your hands drop to the floor.

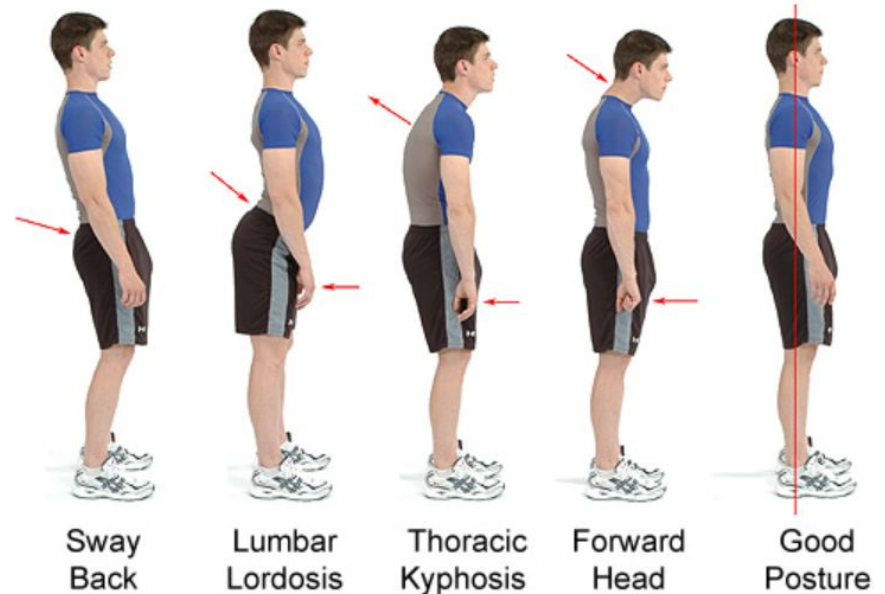
Now, slowly raise yourself up again, one vertebrae at a time, until you are all the way back to standing.

As you line your body back up, do a full body check: are all of your body parts set in the places they should be to support healthy singing?

2nd Posture Activity!

Try recreating all these different postures on your own. Have some fun with it!

As you place your body into each shape, feel for how tension is added back into your body in different places. Which of these is least comfortable for you?

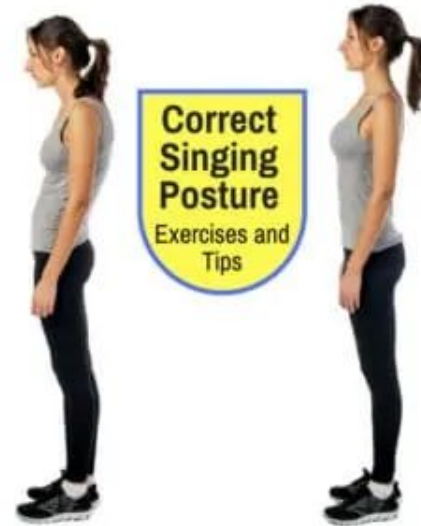


Extension Activity

[Click on this link to visit Musicaroo's website page on singing with proper posture.](#)

Read through the article and summarize what you learned.

Then, try the posture exercises they describe in the article at home!



2nd Extension Activity

Watch this video of Voces8 singing Ben Fold's "The Luckiest" and study their posture. How do they do aligning their bodies to support their singing?





Additional Activity for add challenge

Record yourself singing the same song four times. Feel free to pick a song that has a karaoke track on YouTube so you have some back-up.

For each of the four performances:

1. Standing, but with slouched, bad posture, like in the 2nd posture activity
2. Standing tall with excellent posture
3. Sitting, but with slouched, collapsed posture
4. Sitting, but with tall excellent posture. Everything from the waist up should feel just like your good standing posture, and your feet should be flat on the floor.



Additional Activity for add challenge

Now listen to each recording. How do they sound different? How do they sound the same?

Did the different performances feel any different? Why or why not?