

**It may seem strange that something that comes as naturally to most people as singing requires training. When people want to learn how to play an instrument they know that finding an instructor is an important part of their musical education. But for some reason, when it comes to taking voice lessons, many people hesitate. It's a shame that most people have no idea how to sing properly or use their voice the way it was intended – as a lovely instrument to be enjoyed and played. Whether your goal is to become a professional singer or just learn more about what your voice can do, singing lessons are well worth the investment. Most people don't know it but most professionals from every music genre (Broadway, Pop, Jazz and Opera), take voice lessons and have a vocal coach they go to on a regular basis. You should too! Here I have answered some of the questions that people ask when considering vocal coaching. If you've thought about taking lessons, you probably fall into one of three categories.**

*"Singing just comes naturally to me- I sound good anyway. If it ain't broke..."* This is, unfortunately, the attitude of most budding singers around. People think that a natural ability in something is enough. We learn to do most things by imitating what we see or hear others do. However, with singing imitating can be a dangerous thing. Without truly understanding what happens when you use your voice, trying to replicate Christina's runs or Alicia's chesty high notes will cause you damage. So even if you are lucky enough to be happy with the sound of your voice, it's still a good idea to go to someone who can help point out your bad habits, and give you tips that could help keep your voice in good shape for longer. Plus, you'd be surprised, your voice will become stronger, and you'll be able to sing more easily and sound even better than you do now!

*"I think I'm quite good, but sometimes I can't do the things that I want to and I want to get better."* Wanting to improve is the perfect attitude for success at any skill. Singing lessons can help you to explore and understand your own voice, and help you to figure out how to do the things that you want to do in a comfortable way, without harming your voice. A teacher's job is to guide you in the discovery of your full potential. Often, I've seen students discover that they can do things they'd never thought they could, simply by putting into place the basic rules of good singing technique. When you've got a good strong foundation, all it takes is practice and you'll find that that your voice will start to blossom and grow.

*"I'm not very good, and I don't know if I'll ever be any better."* Anyone can improve on what they have. We don't all sound like professional singers, but we each have our own unique voice, that is just ours. Making the most of what we have is part of what the singing coaching process is about. Understanding our own limits, and learning to love our own voices is vital, and confidence is 90% of the battle to making you a better performer. Taking the plunge and getting some lessons is the starting point to your vocal journey of discovery. And who knows where that will lead! Singing lessons can help anyone, no matter what their skill or confidence level.

## **5 tell-tale signs you need vocal lessons**

1. *"I get hoarse after performances regularly."* If you're getting hoarse after singing, then the way you're singing is causing the hoarseness. It's mostly caused by common bad vocal techniques that are easily corrected with vocal lessons.

2. *"High notes are tough for me. I really need to push hard to reach them. I feel like I'm screaming to get them."* Well, you feel that way because you are. But that's the only way most of us know how to reach them. This yelling we do to reach high notes has a lot to do with the hoarseness. Vocal training teaches you how to access higher notes in your range in a safe way that eliminates all of the strain and pushing.

3. *"I'm always pretty comfortable. I seldom need to strain for high notes. I know they keys I'm comfortable in so I just stay in those keys."* Then that means you have limited range and you're simply compensating for it by always playing it safe. It may sound great but you're severely limited. Chances are you either pass on a lot of songs because the key is too high, or you're lowering the song key until it fits in the limited area you're comfortable in. Vocal training increases your range and allows you much more freedom of expression.

4. *"I'm always out of breath. I can't finish phrases without having to breathe in the middle. I can't hold notes very long at all either."* Improper breathing is the problem there. Most people just breathe incorrectly for singing. This is totally reversible and easily corrected with vocal lessons

5. *"My voice gets tired quickly. I can't sing very long before it starts to give out on me."* Lack of vocal stamina is a very common issue and, a very important one if you plan on taking your singing to the next level. Yet many people would have a hard time lasting through even 3 or 4 songs. Increased vocal stamina is another benefit of taking vocal lessons.



## Benefits of taking voice lessons for singers

**Weekly, one-on-one attention.** You may learn some good singing technique in a choral group, but the improvements you make in private lessons will be much more specific, noticeable, and consistent. Think of the voice teacher like a personal trainer. They are there to strengthen your vocal muscles, improve your technique, and heighten your endurance, all the while targeting specific things that YOU need to work on. Lessons will be tailored around each student's specific vocal needs and goals. You will receive assistance in preparing for auditions and performances (solos, musicals, show choir, solo competitions, auditions, talent competitions and in some cases college auditions and professional engagements).

**Receive Feedback from a professional.** One important reason for taking lessons with a reputable voice instructor is the invaluable feedback that he or she can provide as an expert listener and observer. There are countless areas in which a singing teacher's feedback can make a world of difference for a singer. Voice teachers are unique from all other music instructors in that they can hear what their students generally can't. If the tone that a violin student achieves is shrill or "squeaky", for instance, the musician him- or herself can generally hear this unpleasantness and, with the help of a violin teacher and some practice, correct the problem over the course of time. However, because the voice originates inside one's own body, a singer can't necessarily be objective about his or her own voice. An untrained singer doesn't always have an accurate assessment of his or her tonal quality. Therefore, a breathy, throaty or nasally tone might sound good to oneself, yet be unpleasant to the ears of listeners. A singing instructor can help a singer become more aware of the quality of his or her voice and aid him or her in achieving better tone.

**Develop a strong singing foundation by learning proper vocal technique.** Reach your full potential as a singer! Learn about breath support/control, correct posture for singing, relieve tension in throat, jaw, tongue, lips and body as well as many other skills with our straining your voice. By learning and putting this technique into action, you will have a better, more consistent tone quality, your range will expand (likely both high and low), have more vocal control and stamina, and your resonance and projection will increase with consistent study and practice. This will help you to develop your own personal style. Singers will also learn about and experiment with several different styles of music

**Increase Confidence.** Most of us lack confidence, or bury away our 'inner voice' from time to time. Singing in front of someone is deemed to be one of the most terrifying things you can do! Having singing lessons can be a great way to gain general confidence in a fun and expressive way. You'd be amazed what positive effects it can have on your self-esteem. By learning to use your voice properly, and letting go of your inhibitions within a comfortable and fun environment, singing lessons can be a massive confidence-booster. The better your technique, the more confident you are as a performer and an auditionee. More confidence means stronger performances and better auditions, which means more roles or solos.

**Prevent/Eliminate Bad Habits.** A voice teacher will diagnose your basic issues in how you produce sound, without passing judgment on your style and help you to make the necessary corrections. Voice lessons can help you develop your voice in a way that is appropriate for your vocal type and applicable to every style of singing. Good vocal technique (the way you use your voice) allows free and clear singing throughout your range. It doesn't matter if you sing high or low notes, soft or loud notes, you want to sing with the same easily used voice you speak with, singing with total vocal freedom throughout your entire range, with a consistent sound and feel. Good singing should be (and can be) that easy.

**Vocal health is vital.** The demands on young singers with high performance rates can lead to vocal blow out without the tools gained in voice lessons. Natural talent must be added to with the knowledge of self and vocal health. Voice lessons are about training to master your voice in this way. By establishing proper technique, you can avoid developing serious vocal issues such as nodes/ nodules, polyps, cysts, lesions/scarring, hemorrhages, dysphonia, vocal swelling/edema and partial vocal paralysis. These conditions often require long periods complete vocal rest, vocal surgery, and vocal rehabilitation/therapy. Yikes!