

# I'D DO ANYTHING

The pick-pocket  
guide to singing

**B B C**



*“Consider yourself one of the family  
We’ve taken to you so strong  
It’s clear we’re going to get along!”*

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Welcome to the *I'd Do Anything* musical guide.  
You've seen the programme, now it's time to have  
a go yourself!

Whether you're an absolute beginner, or haven't  
sung in a while, it's never too late to get into singing.

Singing can improve your fitness, boost your  
confidence and, best of all, it's free.

Remember, you can sing anywhere – in the car,  
the shower or when with your friends.

Read on for warm-up exercises, singing tips and  
who to contact if you want to take the next step.

Have fun and keep singing!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Norton" with a stylized flourish underneath.

Graham Norton



# Getting started

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## Posture

To make the best sound:

- Stand up straight
- Place your feet a shoulder-width apart
- Keep your shoulders down
- Make sure your body feels relaxed

## Breathing

Developing good breathing takes practice, patience and lots of concentration:

- Breathe deeply from your lower lungs – imagine a rubber ring is around your waist, breathe in and try to push the ring outwards.
- Avoid raising your shoulders as you breathe in – keep them relaxed and level.
- Relax! Tension will prevent you from making a good sound.

### **A simple exercise to try:**

Lie on the floor on your back with your hands on your stomach. Breathe in (inhale) and your hands will rise. Now breathe out (exhale) and they will lower. In this position it is virtually impossible to breathe incorrectly. Try to breathe in the same way when you sing.

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Singers are like athletes; they need to warm up before they perform.

- Shake out your body to loosen up.
- Slowly stretch your arms up to the ceiling and then reach down to the floor.
- Roll your shoulders backwards and then forwards.
- Very gently roll your head from side to side – never push too hard or you may strain your neck.
- Warm up your voice to avoid vocal cords being strained and damaged.

Follow these steps *gently* each day and you will find your lung strength and capacity will increase:

- Breathe out through your mouth releasing all the air from your lungs.
- Once your lungs feel completely empty, relax your stomach muscles, open your mouth and let the air flood back in. Do this several times.
- Now breathe in again and when you release the air add an “sss” sound. See how long you can hold it.
- Try this again using “shh” and “fff” sounds. This will help to build different vocal muscles.



# Find your voice

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Now you've warmed up, it's time to find out what your voice can really do!

**Range** (the highest and lowest notes you can sing)

- Sing the note that comes most naturally to you.
- Gradually take the pitch up to the highest note you can sing without straining.
- Now take it all the way down to the very lowest note, again without straining.
- You can also try the above with a line from a song, raising or lowering the pitch each time you repeat it. Have a go with:

*"Doe – a deer,  
a female deer"*

## Volume

- Choose a comfortable note and sing 'Ahhhh'.
- Start as quietly as you can and slowly build in volume (but remember to breathe!).
- You can also use sounds from your favourite songs. What about using the 'pah' from:

*"Oom pah pah!"*

## Articulation

- Sing the line below 20 times in a row.
- Focus on making sure each letter and sound is clear every time. It's not as easy as you think!

*"You gotta picka  
pocket or two"*

# Practice makes perfect

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Find out what sort of music you'd like to sing by researching genres, musicians and composers at your local library, or at:

[bbc.co.uk/music](http://bbc.co.uk/music)

If you can't read music, look out for song books which come with a CD of the music to sing along to. This will help you learn the notes.

## Top tips

- Take passages of songs apart and really think about the words and sounds you are singing.
- Listen to yourself. Are you making a good sound? Are you in tune? Train your ears as well as your vocal muscles.
- Try improvising – use a line from your favourite song as a starting point and play with the notes and rhythm.
- Try a tricky song or a difficult note – it may be tough, but this is a great way to develop your technique and range.
- Be brave. How about singing in front of a friend for feedback? You'll probably be nervous at first, but practice makes perfect.



# Consider yourself a singer



Performing with others is a great way to build your confidence and improve your technique... and it's fun too!

Look out for posters advertising local musical theatre groups and choirs in libraries, community centres, music shops or in your local paper – you might even think of placing an advert yourself.

## Useful contacts

Join a choir – [www.choirs.org.uk](http://www.choirs.org.uk)  
Search over 2,000 choirs around the UK.

Making Music –  
[www.makingmusic.org.uk](http://www.makingmusic.org.uk)  
Find a music group in your area on the Making Music website.

The National Youth Music Theatre – [www.nymt.org.uk](http://www.nymt.org.uk)  
Find out about musical theatre workshops for young people.





**Scottish Music Centre –**  
[www.scottishmusiccentre.com/directory](http://www.scottishmusiccentre.com/directory)

Browse this extensive directory for music organisations, venues and choirs based in Scotland.

**The National Operatic and Dramatic Association –**  
[www.noda.org.uk](http://www.noda.org.uk)

Click on the ‘NODA regions’ tab and use the map to find your local NODA headquarters and the groups in your area.

**Sing Up – [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org)**  
Check out Sing Up for ideas and resources to get you and your family singing together, including great songs for car journeys and downloadable backing tracks with lyrics.

### **Top tip**

- You can sing along to more songs from the musicals by listening to BBC Radio 2, including shows such as *Elaine Paige on Sunday*: [bbc.co.uk/radio2/musicaltheatre](http://bbc.co.uk/radio2/musicaltheatre)

# What next?

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If you're thinking of taking your singing to the next level, you may want to consider singing lessons.

Local schools, colleges, libraries or even music shops will often have notice boards where tutors can advertise.

To make sure a tutor is right for you or your child, you should start with a telephone call to find out more about them. Do they specialise in a particular style of singing? Are they experienced at teaching singers of your level? Can they supply references?

## Useful contacts

**Incorporated Society of Musicians** – [www.ism.org](http://www.ism.org)  
Search for tutors vetted by the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

**The Music Industries Association** – [www.mia.org.uk](http://www.mia.org.uk)  
Tips on how to choose a music teacher and other useful contacts.

**LEA Music Services** –  
[www.federationmusic.org.uk](http://www.federationmusic.org.uk)  
Find your local music service.

**Learndirect** –  
[www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)  
or 0800 100 900  
Call the phone-line or search the online database for music courses near you.

**BBC Learning** –  
[bbc.co.uk/learning](http://bbc.co.uk/learning)  
Find courses in your area.

**BBC Blast** –  
[bbc.co.uk/blast/music](http://bbc.co.uk/blast/music)  
Top tips for budding young musicians.

**Radio 2 Music Club** –  
[bbc.co.uk/radio2/musicclub](http://bbc.co.uk/radio2/musicclub)  
Listen to Radio 2 sessions and find upcoming events.

**Radio 3** –  
[bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://bbc.co.uk/radio3)  
Discover music, drama and events on Radio 3.



## The BBC Performing Groups

The BBC Singers, Britain's only full-time professional choir, and the five BBC orchestras perform around the UK throughout the year. They also provide the musical backbone to BBC events such as the BBC Proms. You can listen to their concerts regularly on Radio 2 and Radio 3. They run fun, free music activities for people of all ages and musical abilities.

Visit their websites for more information about the groups and to find workshops, events and performances in your area:

[bbc.co.uk/orchestras](http://bbc.co.uk/orchestras)  
[bbc.co.uk/singers](http://bbc.co.uk/singers)



## Funding musical talent

The BBC Performing Arts Fund is a charity dedicated to supporting aspiring new musical talent.

Previously called the Fame Academy Bursary, the fund was set up in 2003 to support potential talent through different music schemes. The charity is funded by voting revenue from BBC shows including *I'd Do Anything*.

Over £2 million has so far been awarded for Musical Theatre, Urban Music, Education Bursaries and Instrument and Equipment Awards.

To find out more about the awards and how you can apply for a bursary, visit:

[bbc.co.uk/performingartsfund](http://bbc.co.uk/performingartsfund)

It's never too late to get into singing.  
This guide gives tips and advice  
on how to get started.

Published by BBC Learning –  
Room MC4 A2, 201 Wood Lane,  
London, W12 7TQ

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and the *I'd Do Anything*  
production team.

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Design: Red Stone design

