

VOICE ACTING

Breathe Correctly At The Mic: Does Your Stomach Go IN Or OUT When You Inhale?

By **Susan Berkley**

Voice Talent and Coach
The Great Voice Company



There is so much conflicting, and often confusing, information about the correct way to breathe for voice over work.

- Should your stomach go OUT or IN when you inhale?
- How much breath do you actually need?
- And where the heck is your diaphragm anyway?

If you've ever taken a Pilates or a yoga class or studied martial arts, you've learned, I'm sure, some very specific breathing techniques for that discipline.

Singers are taught about breath support and how and when to inhale. My singing teacher taught me to inhale with little sniffs through the nose and how to squeeze certain muscles for support.

No wonder it's so easy for a voice talent to get confused!

RUNNING OUT OF BREATH?

Well, it turns out a lot of voice talent are breathing incorrectly and its giving them trouble when they audition and record. They run out of breath easily and their voice doesn't sound as good as it could.

Our Career Launcher program coach **Rose Tamberino** calls this 'Reverse Breathing' and offers these suggestions:

1. Diagnose the problem

To find out if you're a Reverse Breather, put your hand on your diaphragm, just under the rib cage, and take in a deep breath.

Notice what your hand is doing. Does it push OUT or go IN, like you are sucking in air? If your hand goes IN, you are "reverse breathing."

2. The "One to Ten" exercise

Lay flat on your back with your hand on your tummy and relax. Notice how your hand

moves up and down as you breathe normally.

It is impossible to "suck in" and breathe incorrectly while lying flat on your back. Breathe in, exhale and count "one, two, three, four ..."

After a few days you will begin to be able to count higher and higher until you can reach a count of 10.

3. Start your inhale with an exhale

An acupuncturist recently taught me to contract my lower abdominal muscles and exhale through my nose and then let the inhale happen naturally as my abdominal muscles relaxed.

She stressed that we should only inhale or exhale through the nose, never through the mouth.

4. Practice makes perfect

While practicing voice over, try to remember to take a conscious breath with a relaxed, gently expanded tummy before you speak each phrase. Eventually the muscle will remember, and you will be breathing correctly without thinking about it.

ABOUT SUSAN

*Susan Berkley is a top voice over artist and founder of **The Great Voice Company**, devoted to teaching great voices around the world how to become successful voice over talent. She is the telephone voice of AT&T and Citi, author of **Speak To Influence: How To Unlock The Hidden Power of Your Voice**, and a persuasive speaking expert. A frequent media guest, she has been featured on ABC news, CNBC and in the New York Times. Through her Bootcamps, coaching programs and courses, she shares how to experience and enjoy the freedom and flexibility of the voice over lifestyle and create a home-based business. A free audio report, **7 Proven Performance Principals For VO Success**, is available at her website.*

Email: info@greatvoice.com

Web: www.greatvoice.com