

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THEATER WARM-UPS



Below are energizing and creative theater warm-up exercises, which can develop your physical and vocal expression skills and are also fun to do.

To engage in them on your own clearly and safely:

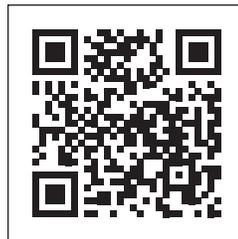
- Watch the video introduction at the link below
- View and follow the video demonstration and/or
- Read and follow the steps for each warm-up.

Responding to Questions and suggested Extensions will help deepen the experience of each exercise.

The warm-ups are arranged in a progression. Feel free to explore a few at a time (each takes up to 5 minutes) or to work through all of them in sequence (about 30 minutes).

If you have any questions, please contact
Brian Allman
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BrianA@geffenplayhouse.org

INTRODUCTION TO THEATER WARM-UPS:



**INTRODUCTION TO
THEATER WARM-UPS**

<https://tinyurl.com/theaterwarmup>

THEATER WARM-UPS



LEMON/LION

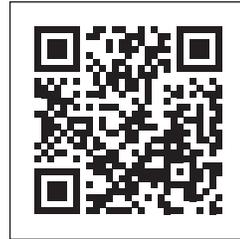
To stretch out your face for clearer expressions

Stretching your face helps warm up your facial muscles and relieve the tension that you may not realize is in your face.

Actors use various face stretches to prepare for the wide range of facial expressions they take on during performances.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

Join Brian Allman for a face stretch here:



LEMON/LION

<https://tinyurl.com/lemonlion>

DIRECTIONS

Scrunch your face up tight, as if you have just bitten down on a super-sour lemon, for 3 seconds. Engage all parts of your face — eyes, nose, cheeks, and mouth.

Open your face wide, as if you were a roaring lion, for 3 seconds. Keep your eyes wide open and try sticking out your tongue.

Switch between “lemon” face and “lion” face 5 times. Make your lemon face tighter and your lion face wider each time.

QUESTION:

What other words could prompt you to stretch your face?

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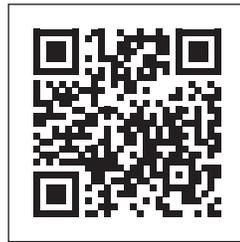
DEEP BREATH

To warm up your breathing for relaxation and control

Deep breathing is essential when preparing for a rehearsal or performance. It helps actors decrease stress and increase calm, especially when a big performance is about to take place!

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

Join Brian Allman in this breathing exercise here:



DEEP BREATHING

<https://tinyurl.com/warmupbreathing>

DIRECTIONS

Stand in *Actor's Neutral* — with your feet flat on the ground, standing tall, with a slight bend in your knees, and your hands resting at your sides.

Visualize your favorite color, and take a 3-second deep breath in through your nose, inhaling that color. Hold your breath for 2 seconds.

Exhale gently and quietly through your mouth for 3 seconds, imagining the air that is leaving is a grayish color, filled with any negative thoughts you may have.

Take 3-5 deep cleansing breaths of your favorite color and exhale any negative thoughts.

QUESTIONS:

Which color did you choose?

How did you feel after this exercise?

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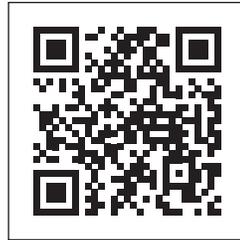
ARTICULATORS

To warm up your mouth and tongue for speaking

Articulators also include your tongue, lips, teeth, and hard palate. Warming them up helps prepare actors to say their lines during rehearsals and performances.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

Join Brian Allman to warm up your articulators here:



ARTICULATORS

<https://tinyurl.com/warmuparticulators>

DIRECTIONS

Stand in *Actor's Neutral* — with your feet flat on the ground, standing tall, with a slight bend in your knees, and your hands resting at your sides.

Take a deep breath in through your nose, and when you exhale through your mouth, try to make your lips flap quickly like a horse's.

With every new deep breath, try to extend your exhale so your lips flap for a longer amount of time before taking your next breath.

Stick your tongue out of your mouth and try to touch the tip of your nose for 3 seconds.

Stick your tongue out of your mouth and try to touch the bottom of your chin for 3 seconds.

Stick your tongue out of your mouth and try to touch your left and right ear, each for 3 seconds.

QUESTION

Which was the easiest stretch? Which was most difficult?

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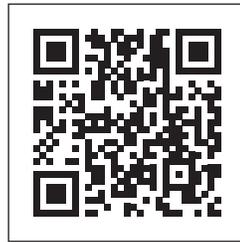
TONGUE TWISTERS

To warm up your lips and tongue for speaking

Tongue twisters help strengthen and stretch the muscles used for speaking, which helps performers pronounce, enunciate, and project.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

Join Brian Allman in working with tongue twisters here:



TONGUE TWISTERS

<https://tinyurl.com/warmuptwister>

DIRECTIONS

Read each phrase quietly to yourself.

Speak each phrase out loud slowly and clearly, stressing the consonants in each word. Example: **Red wrist watch.**

PHRASES - Speak each phrase quickly and clearly three times without stopping.

“Red wrist watch”

“Unique New York”

“Red leather, yellow leather”

“Toy boat, toy boat”

“English horseradish sauce”

“Brush each pretzel”

“A wet red work rag”

“Free flea spray”

“Where are all our oars?”

QUESTION

Which were the hardest phrases to say clearly and need more practice?

EXTENSIONS

1) Practice each phrase so many times you can say them clearly and quickly without thinking. 2) Come up with your own tongue twisters and add them to the list.

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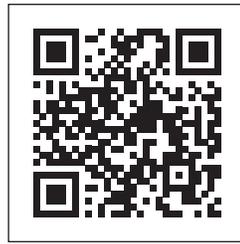
BODY SHAKE

To warm up your body and voice

Shaking out before a rehearsal or performance can help to loosen up and enliven your body and voice. It allows you to move in the space around you, and project your voice more freely and with ease.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION

Join Brian Allman in a body shake:



BODY SHAKE

<https://tinyurl.com/warmupbodysshake>

DIRECTIONS

Stand in *Actor's Neutral* — with your feet flat on the ground, standing tall, with a slight bend in your knees, and your hands resting at your sides.

Counting out loud backwards from 10 to 1, shake your left arm 10 times. Repeat counting backwards while shaking your right arm, then your right leg, and finally your left leg, each 10 times.

Starting again with your left arm, you will now count out loud backwards from 9 to 1, shaking your arms and then legs each 9 times.

Continue shaking each arm and each leg while counting backwards, always dropping a number after completing a cycle. (Example: 8 times each, 7 times each, 6 times each, all the way to 1 time each.)

QUESTION

What creative adjustments could make each movement more than just a shake?

EXTENSION

Turn this exercise into a dance and add music.

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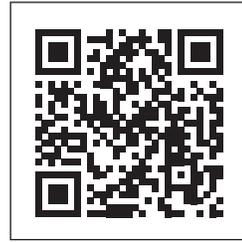
ZOO NAME

To warm up your voice and your body

In addition to warming up your voice and body, this exercise works out your creativity. Speaking and moving inventively can inspire your choices as a writer or actor when creating characters.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION & DIRECTIONS:

For every letter it takes to spell your first name, think of an animal or mythological beast or movie creature that also begins with each letter of your name.



ZOO NAME

<https://tinyurl.com/warmupzooname>

ANIMAL SELECTION:

If an animal does not come to mind, look up creatures that begin with the letter in your name and select one.

Say your name out loud, and then create a movement or gesture that represents each animal. Now come up with a sound for each animal and say the sound as you make the gesture.

EXAMPLE:

"Brian" (say name)
B=Bear (make gesture & sound representing this animal)
R=Rabbit (gesture & sound)
I= Iguana (gesture & sound)
A=Alligator (gesture & sound)
N=Narwhal (gesture & sound)

SOUND OPTIONS: Research and copy the sounds your selected animals make, or make up sounds you imagine those animals might make.

QUESTIONS: For which animal was it most difficult to create a gesture and/or sound? Why?

EXTENSION: Do this exercise with your first **and** last name.

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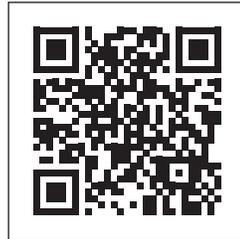
MIRRORING

To strengthen your focus and warm up your imagination

Mirroring helps build focus and collaboration with your fellow ensemble members. It can also help you discover facial expressions and body movements when developing a character.

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION & DIRECTIONS

As if you are a mirror, copy or match the movements you see Brian performing.



MIRRORING

<https://tinyurl.com/warmupmirroring>

EXTENSIONS

- 1) From wherever you are sitting or standing, or while looking out the window, spot a person or object that is in motion and mirror its movements.
- 2) Connect with a classmate on FaceTime, Zoom, or other platform, and take turns mirroring each other's facial expressions and gestures.

QUESTIONS

Did you prefer being the leader or the follower? Why?
How might mirroring help you create a character?