



NIKKI SLADE

PILLAR 2: VOCAL TECHNIQUE

POSTURE

- 1) Spine- Keep your spine tall and your shoulders widened and imagine your head to be as a toffee apple on a stick. Imagine you have a string attaching your hair from the top of your head to the ceiling.
- 2) Jaw – Become aware of the position of your jaw. It should be neither jutting forward or clenched back towards your throat. (I call this 'the prime minister's chin').

AWARENESS

- 1) Cave-Wave Breath - Imagine the entrance of your mouth as being similar to a cave that yields to the ocean's waves drawing in and out.
- 2) Inhalation - Open the mouth and make enough space between the teeth as if holding a small plum. As you breathe in allow the roof of the mouth to form the shape of an egg. Then allow the breath to come effortlessly in and out just like the ocean waves that dance on the walls of a cave (as demonstrated in the video).
- 3) Voiced expiration - As the inhale begin to fill the egg shape in the roof of the mouth right where the hard and soft palate meet, begin to let the sound – Ahhhhhh- surf the exhale like sound waves rolling into the shore.
- 4) Surfing the Wave -As the inhale is fully engaged, raise your arm and make the gesture of a surfer coming into shore similar to an 8 x armed Goddess flowing with Shakti.

HIGHER PITCH (Dolphin Effect)

When you want to sing a higher note or surf a higher wave you need to ensure that you do NOT scoop the note from the ground like an ice-cream scoop but rather to pre-hear the note intended in your head. You can then prepare your breath as above and let the pitch of the note land directly from above like a dolphin diving over and through a hoop. You can initially make the gesture of the dolphin with your hand to help you visualise.

BUILD YOUR EGG

As your note gets progressively higher you will require more height in the roof of your mouth. In other words, build your egg shape. This can be achieved as you breathe by creating the start of a yawn and allowing the soft palate to lift up further.

JAW TO CORE

Be aware of the connection of your jaw to your core as you chant the open vowel sounds e.g.Om Namah Shivaya. At the end of each phrase ensure that you lower your jaw and let the sound fill the core of your body rather than only from the chest up.

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VOCAL WARM UP

- 1) Warm up your vocal chords by using the vowel OO but with the pronunciation as in the word "Cuckoo".
- 2) Start on the lowest note for your range of voice
- 3) Then sing the syllable OO ascending the scale and then descending.
- 4) Next move to the next pitch up and repeat.
- 5) Once you have completed 5 scales ascending and descending you will allow the vowel sound Ahhh to be sculpted out of the OO as you hit the top note.
- 6) Therefore, ascend up each of the 5 x scales on OO and descend on Ahhhh.

PRACTICE CHANTING OM NAMAH SHIVAYA

- 1) Chant Om Namah Shivaya ([Version One from my album Epiphany](#)). Be aware of all the above principles as you practice. Practice for 20 minutes daily and experiment.
- 2) Use a mirror for all or some of the practice sequences.

HAPPY PRACTICE!



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