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THE USE OF RELAXER – ENERGIZERS

Dory Kafoure - VOICE 2014

Our bodies have natural built-in relaxer-energizers available to us at any time. These are helpful to voice-acting by providing easy, quick ways to relax and energize our bodies and our voices. Arthur Lessac, internationally known for his work in theatre and voice, defines relaxer-energizers as “a body activity that frees muscles, relieves tension, maintains body awareness, supports personal pleasure, and sustains body curiosity and vitality.” Do you have a few minutes before your next recording? Feeling a bit tired? Explore some of these ideas?

Some of the easier ones to grasp are: smiling, singing, laughing, dancing, swallowing and humming. What is so unique is the body involvement to feel the energy that connects to the particular relaxer-energizer. For example, if we say ‘muscle stretch’ it communicates effort, working and usually not something pleasurable. However, if we say ‘muscle yawn’ our body and mind reacts in a different way. The words ‘muscle yawn’ seem to communicate a feeling of opening, pleasure and easy effort. This draws on left brain-right brain language. The left brain is more analytical and quantitative. The right brain is more creative, flexible and qualitative. Discover how your arms and legs move with the idea of a muscle-yawn. Another example is the mental thought of muscle strength you need to lift a heavy object. Now, think of this strength as a muscle-yawn similar to a cat stretching or picture how your body might respond waking in the morning while saying, “It feels SO-O-O GOOD to get up in the morning”. With this feeling or energy you will be surprised how your body will exert the strength you need without thinking of force in turn making the task seem easier. Muscle-floating and muscle-spreading release tension in the body. Muscle-shaking vibrates the muscles, wakes up the body and loosens joints. By adding different rhythms muscle-shaking can slowly morph into dancing.

When using swallowing as a relaxer-energizer check that there is sufficient saliva to lubricate the inside of your mouth and tongue so that as you swallow you will feel the saliva coating your throat. We can also use a facial-vocal yawn (arms extending backward/opening the soft palate) and a facial-vocal yawn (arms stretching forward/waking up the hard palate with forward facial posture).

Let’s look at humming. Humming wakes up the body and the voice. Humming feels good and can bring back pleasant memories of favorite songs or favorite times. Humming can be soothing or allow us to retreat to a private place. It can also help us to think. The fun part about humming is that it doesn’t always have to be with an m-m-m sound. We can vary humming with different pitches, rhythms, vowels or consonants letting the voice play. Relaxer-Energizers can also be incorporated easily into body-voice warm-ups.



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