

LOWERING YOUR LARYNX

Extracted from **Singing For Dummies, 2nd Edition**
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Most of your neck muscles are designed to keep the larynx high — which prevents singers from making a full, open sound. You have to figure out how to keep the larynx in a lower or more neutral position in your throat for singing.

To drop your larynx, you can use the beginning of the yawn. Avoid intentionally pushing down the back of your tongue, as most people do when first trying to drop the larynx: If you push your tongue down, you also feel the larynx push down and you feel a tightening of the muscles under your chin. This tight sensation isn't what you want for singing.

It may take you a while to feel the difference between pushing down and dropping. The correct sensation is to feel your tongue moving forward and stretching the space between the parts of the larynx so that the bottom part of the larynx drops. You can also try the following suggestions to drop the larynx without pushing the tongue:

- **Smell something yummy.** Inhale slowly as you smell something positively wonderful. When you smell something yummy — or even pretend to — your throat opens and your larynx drops. Try smelling something yummy a few times and just notice what you feel. After a few tries, smell something yummy again and put your hand on your throat to notice whether your larynx dropped.
- **Open the space behind your tongue.** If you release your tongue forward, inhale, and pretend that the space behind the tongue opens — or the space between your tongue and the back wall of your throat — you may feel your larynx drop. Releasing or opening the back wall of the throat while releasing the tongue forward helps you drop your larynx.

Now, how do you keep the larynx dropped when you make sound? Good question — and it takes some practice for you to maintain the lower position of your larynx.

Remember, the larynx is designed to ride high in your throat, but you want it to lower or at least stay in a neutral position for singing. Try the following suggestions to drop your larynx and leave it there while you make sound:

- **Drop and breathe.** When you feel the dropping sensation of the larynx, just breathe in and out (inhale and exhale) and leave the larynx in the low position. It may take a few days of experimenting before you can keep it steady while you breathe. When you can keep it steady while breathing, try the next suggestion.

- **Drop and make sound.** Say “ah” on a low note. Notice whether the larynx stays in the same place when you say “ah.” Make the same sound several more times so you can really feel what’s happening. If the larynx bounced up when you said “ah,” try again.

Release the larynx down and say the “ah” again. It seems simple, but it may take a couple of days of experimenting before you can make sound without the larynx jumping up.

- **Drop and slide around on pitch.** Drop the larynx, say “ah,” and slide around a little bit in pitch, almost like you’re saying “ah-hah.” This sound is the one you make when you finally understand what someone told you. Keep exploring the “ah-hah” or sliding around on pitch before moving on to the next suggestion.
- **Drop and sing.** When you can keep the larynx steady while breathing or making simple sounds, try singing. Sing a simple two-note pattern or three-note pattern. Use this pattern, but sing it low in your range. When you’re confident that the larynx stays steady, you can gradually sing higher.

