

Walt's Inn - Karaoke Singing Tips

Preparation:

- Choose your songs ahead of time; pick songs you enjoy, that fit your vocal range and style. Develop your own 'A-list' of songs which you perform best and you can select from this list the songs best fit to your audience's mood and be insured of a great reception.
- Practice your songs, singing along with an original recording so you can become familiar with the lyrics and flow of the song. Gage how well you can reach all the notes; you should avoid songs where you need to strain to hit notes.
- Build a list of songs and write them on a small card with the artist noted and bring it with you, this way you'll always remember that song you wanted to sing, especially after a few drinks.
- Just as you would before a sporting event, the muscles involved with singing need to be warmed up to bring out your best performance and avoid injury. Take a few relaxed breaths and sing the lowest note in your range, sing 'Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti-Do' up the scale until you reach the top of your scale and then reverse this and sing from your highest note back down to the bottom of your range.
- As you practice scales, work towards being able to sing one or two notes beyond your bottom and top range without undue stress, this will increase your comfort level while singing within your normal range.
- Say some tongue twisters as fast as you can to warm up your tongue, and the rest of the muscles in your mouth.
- Drink plenty of water before you go out to sing, hydrating helps to lubricate your vocal cords and helps to offset the dehydrating effect of alcohol.
- Wait until no one is around and practice singing in a mirror, watching your face and posture you can tell how comfortable you are with the song and how well you are projecting emotion.
- Do some sit-up or leg-lifts, not only will it help your figure, it also helps strengthen the muscles used to give your voice power and overall tone.
- Come out to sing Karaoke earlier in the night; this will give you a chance to sing more and test out a few 'new' songs on a smaller crowd.

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Performance:

- Hold the mic about an inch away from your mouth when singing. Adjust the distance to allow for the strength (loudness) of your singing voice and also when singing a long high note start with the mic further away and move closer as you run out of breath; this will give you a stronger and more consistent note.
- Don't shout into the mic, they are sensitive and doing so will only make you sound like the voice at the local fast food drive through.
- Avoid 'popping' sounds when singing words with strong 'B', 'P' or 'S' sounds by moving the mic slightly to the side instead of directly to the front of your mouth.
- Don't cover or hold the mic by the head, this distorts and muffles your voice and can increase feedback.
- Stay away from the speakers and don't point the mic directly at the speakers, this will cause feedback.
- Let your soft palate, the fleshy part to the top-rear of your mouth rise to open up your throat. The sensation is similar to the beginning of a yawn. This will allow you to project a stronger and fuller sound.

Breathing (and you thought you knew how):

- Always remember that your breath is the driving force for producing sound, mastering good breathing is part of the equation to good singing.
- Breathe with your diaphragm, fill your lungs with air and use these muscles to control the release of air as you sing.
- Know your song, use natural pauses for taking a breath; you will usually find these at the end of each line in a song. Anticipate extended lyrics and long or powerful notes by always having a full breath to drive your voice.
- If it affects your breathing, it also affects your singing. (I.e. Smoking, colds, allergies, etc.)
- Posture affects your breathing, when singing keep a relaxed, but erect posture with your head up and neck comfortably extended to produce the best sound.

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Emotion:

- Anxiety affects your performance, if your anxiety level is high, try singing with a friend using the old 'safety in numbers' rule. This can be an interim step to building confidence and then going solo.
- Feel your song and learn to project the emotions to the audience. Most popular Karaoke tunes tend to be upbeat, so remember to smile; you'll be surprised at how something so simple can change how your performance is received.
- Focus your energy on the audience, try to avoid constantly staring at the monitor and make eye contact with the audience as much as you comfortably can.
- Have fun with the song, if you're having a good time singing it will project to the crowd.
- If you make a 'mistake', ignore it and keep singing, don't grimace or point it out; chances are likely that it wasn't even noticed by most.

Etiquette:

- Always applaud and cheer the performance of others, even those not destined for America's Idol. Remember, we're all here to have a good time, it doesn't cost anything to applaud and it's just the classy thing to do.
- Never heckle or boo a singer, it's rude, makes you look like a jerk and your mom taught you better.
- Don't try to out-sing someone performing and NEVER join the singer unless they have given you permission.
- Sometimes someone else will sing 'your song', the KJ will try to warn you if your song is already up, but be prepared with an alternative song if this happens.
- Don't curse like a drunken sailor (even if you are one), this can lead to things like a dead mic and does not raise your 'coolness' level.
- Be kind to the microphone, no screaming at it or beating it up! It didn't do anything to you and trust me, these things are not cheap!
- Treat your KJ with kindness, laugh at his/her jokes and avoid asking the 'When do I sing next?' question.

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- When you are called to sing, please come up to sing promptly. This waiting time just takes time from everyone else who wants to sing and can cause your song to be skipped.
- Karaoke is a service provided by the bar, support the bar by doing your part by buying a few drinks.
- Tip your bartenders well, it will bring you good karma, brighten your smile and help insure you always have a cold drink in your hands.