



Singing For Your Health

Singing has the power to uplift the soul, and as your spirit soars your health benefits too, whether you warble in the shower or sing along to mass chanting at football matches.

Singing expert Helen Astrid, from **The Helen Astrid Singing Academy** says, “When you sing you use far more of your lung capacity than normal, which oxygenates the blood and helps circulation. Singing exercises the respiratory muscles and helps asthmatics breathe more easily. It’s a good way to get some gentle aerobic exercise; it also improves your posture and straightens your back and shoulders. If you sing regularly, it’ll keep your voice youthful because it exercises the vocal cords. As your voice is closely bound up with your identity, the way you use it reflects your inner mental health; if we’re fed up, our voice sounds flat and harsh, when we’re happy it mirrors our joy.”



How Singing Helps

- Singing helps those suffering from depression to gain control. Endorphins, our feel-good hormones, are released when we sing and this reduces stress
- Singing helps stammerers regain use of muscle groups
- Singing helps stroke victims as it improves the immune system
- Singing helps Parkinson’s sufferers
- Singing helps Alzheimer’s sufferers
- Singing helps asthmatics breathe deeper
- Singing helps children with co-ordination
- Singing improves well-being of Senior Citizens

As part of a three-year study examining how singing affects health, a Senior Choir was formed by the Levine School of Music, in Washington D.C. The average age was 80 years old. The seniors involved in the choir showed significant health progress including:

- **Less** medical visits
- **Fewer** eyesight problems
- **Less** incidence of depression
- **Less** need for medication
- **Less** falls and other injuries

Lead researcher Dr. Gene D. Cohen, director of the Center on Aging, Health and Humanity at George Washington University says *“My surprise was not the fact that the intervention worked, but at the magnitude of the effect it had”*.

The seniors themselves noticed the significant health improvements:

- **Feeling better in daily life**
- **Everyday voice quality better**
- **Easier breathing**
- **Better posture**

Not only is singing excellent for people of all ages, **The Helen Astrid Singing Academy** has facilitated singing workshops for medical professionals within the National Health Service including a Nursing Conference at Hammersmith Hospital and at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London. According to Helen, “Everyone benefits.”

“Learning to sing with Helen has been one of the best things I’ve ever done. She has a real talent for making the learning process great fun and I always end the session feeling energised and uplifted. I’ve gained understanding of the physiology underlying effective muscle use in order to achieve improved breathing control, and noticed a significant improvement in my lung function, even after the initial few lessons. I highly recommend singing as a means to improve both physical and mental wellbeing.”

Dr Gillian Tomlinson, MBChB, BSc, MRCP(UK)

“The health benefits of my singing lessons are twofold; both body and mind. For the body there’s a tremendous aerobic workout; the lungs open in ways they haven’t for years. The practice of expanding one’s vocal range is true exercise and after an hour’s lesson I come away completely energised by adrenaline. Singing lessons are also good for the mind; there’s a tremendous sense of achievement when you realise you can do it. A complete challenge.”

Geoffrey Pullen BDS (University of London), DDS (University of Southern California), Dentist and Clinical Director Connaught Village Dentistry

“Singing makes me feel happy and healthy. I feel very positive after each session.”

Dasha, Intensive Care Nurse, Brompton Hospital

“Lessons have been a voyage of discovery and delight. Helen has increased my confidence, improved my range no end and showed me that I can sing despite previous protestations from my family. It’s been exhilarating and always a great pleasure. Helen is patient, supportive, encouraging and utterly professional. I can never thank her enough for the joy and lasting

treasure she has given me. I initially gave myself 10 lessons and am still having lessons after 10 years. There cannot be a better accolade for a teacher than that.”

Jill, Dr of Philosophy, B.Sc, PhD, AKC, MS Biol, C Biol.

“After the passing of my musical mother, I felt a profound desire to sing. I arrived at my first lesson with Helen, terrified to open my mouth. Helen immediately put me at my ease and helped launch me on a rich journey of musical discovery. With Helen's support and guidance the emotional journey has been immense. Singing could be an enriching and supportive experience for others suffering grief and loss; Helen's sensitive teaching has helped launch me on a new and rewarding path”

Liz Middleton MSc, DBO, SRO. Orthoptist & Smoking Cessation Adviser

Book available on Amazon

Helen Astrid is author of [‘Singing Tips at your Fingertips’](#). “This book will unleash and transform your voice to its greatest potential, giving you a tip for every day of the year” Gary Lachman (*The Guardian*).

Contact

M: +44(0)7710 245 904 E: helen@thehenastridsingingacademy.com

The Helen Astrid Singing Academy is located in Strawberry Hill, Middlesex and central London.

Related articles

Singing for Health, Rosie Stacy, Katie Brittain, Sandra Kerr
Health Education Volume 102 no4, 156-162

Therapeutic effects of music and singing for older people, Skingley A, Vella-Burrows T, 2010
Nursing Standard 24, 19, 35-41

The Link between Singing and Respiratory Health, Jeanette Tamplin, M.Mus, B.Mus (hons), RMT Austin Health, Melbourne.

The Australian Journal of Music Therapy, 2009 p.45

Choral Singing and psychological well-being

International Symposium on Performance Science, ISBN 978-90-9022484-8