

Chapter 3

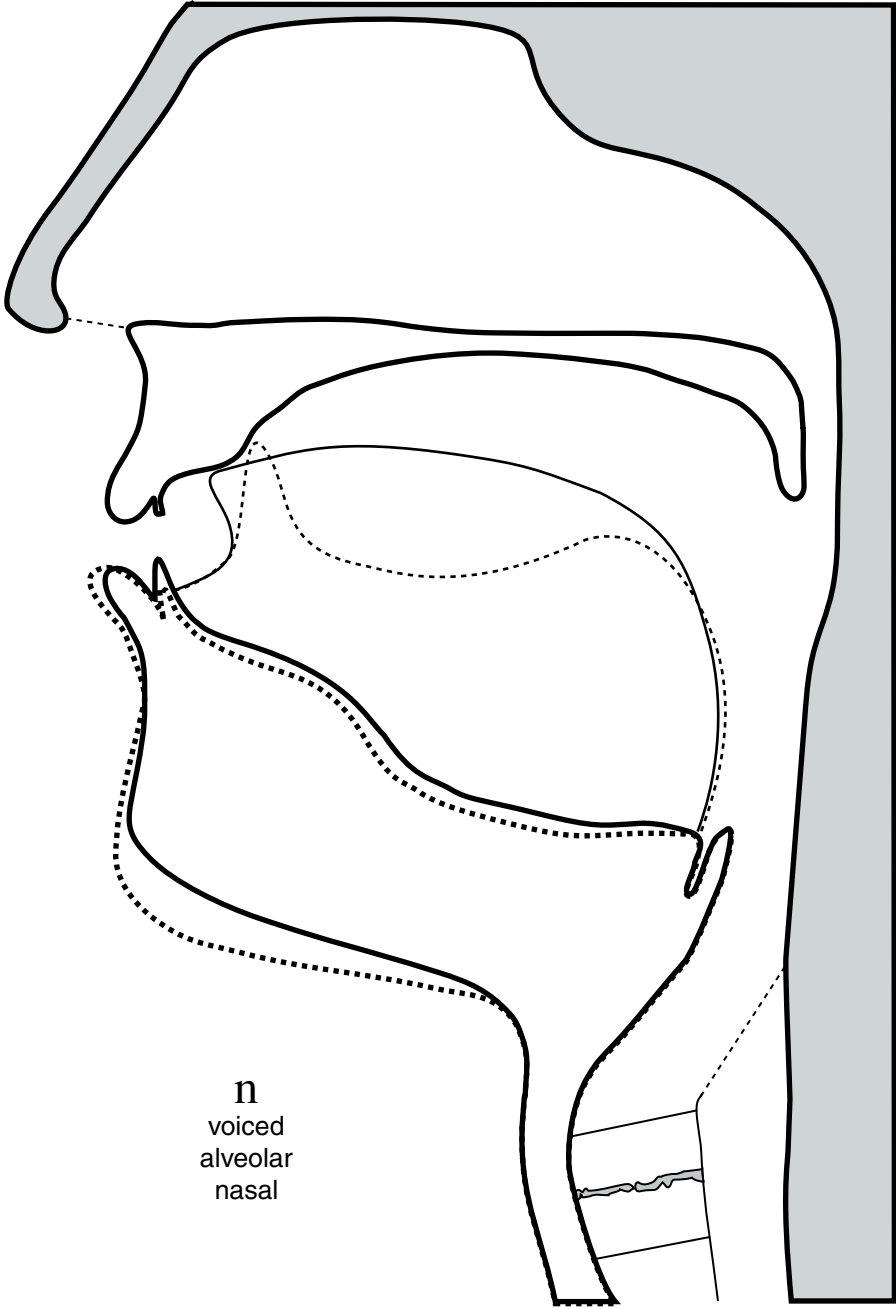
Voiced Alveolar Nasal Consonant

[n]

The exercises of Chapter 3 are also used for learning the feeling of an open throat and for correcting a retracted tongue or lack of adequate flow of breath to start a phrase. In English the tongue position for [n] is alveolar; that means that the tip of the tongue is touching the alveolar ridge at the back edge. In Italian and French the position of [n] is dental, meaning the tongue tip is close to or touching the upper teeth. The exercises in this book should be done with the position for English to establish basic vocal technique. The alveolar ridge is just behind the front upper teeth.

Even though the tip of the tongue is up, the back of the tongue is sloped down when producing [n]. This position is similar to the [i] vowel, for which the tip of the tongue is near the alveolar ridge and the back is sloped downward. For exercise 3-1 through 3-5, use a gust of breath through the nose before voicing the [n]. Place the tongue in the [n] position before starting the breath flow. This is represented by an *h* in the transcription [hn]. The effect will be similar to the sound you might make when you are disgusted with something.

The rhythms of the first [n] exercises can be varied, keeping in mind that the transition from consonant to vowel should be allowed extra time so you can observe the feelings and hear the sound change during the transition. It is also easier to hear what is happening when these transitions are done slowly.



The dashed lines represent the tongue and jaw positions for [n] on high notes.

3-1 Sustained *n* [n] plus *oh* [o]

hn _____ oh _____
hn _____ o _____

I I V₇ V₇ I

Start with the tongue touching the alveolar ridge so the *h* sound flows through the nose and go directly to the *n* consonant. The alveolar ridge is just behind the upper teeth. Sustain the *n* up the scale and open to the *oh* vowel only after you feel that the consonant is stable on the top note. Like the *ng*, the *n* feels small in physical space and also must get softer for higher notes. Sustain the *oh* vowel on the way down.

3-2 Sustained *n* [n] plus *oo* [u]

hn oo n oo n hn oo n oo n hn oo n oo n
hn u n u n hn u n u n hn u n u n

I IV I I VI I I V₇ I

Start the first *n* in each group with an *h* to get the breath flowing before the pitch and tone start on the *n*. Pay attention to the sensations of tone produced on the nasal *n* and how it changes going to the *oo* vowel. The vowel is not nasal, but oral, meaning that the soft palate is now stretching to touch the back of the throat, closing off the port to the nasal passages. Some of the resonance continues on the vowel but is no longer nasal.

3-3 Sustained *n* [n] plus *oh* [o] opening on the move

hn _____ oh _____ n _____ oh _____
hn _____ o _____ n _____ o _____

I I V₇ V₇ I

Start the *h* plus *n* the same way as you did in the previous exercise. When you open to the vowel let the breath fly. Even though the breath feels somewhat held back on the consonant, it should not feel obstructed on the vowel. The lips are rounded on the *oh* [o], just as they are on the *oh* and *oo* [u] in the previous exercises.

3-4 Sustained *n* [n] plus *ah* [a] in 6/8 time

hn _____ ah _____
hn _____ a _____

I V₇ I I

Let the breath flow through the *h* and the *n*. Let the breath fly when you open to *ah* at the beginning of the second measure. Feel the forward motion of 6/8 time, giving weight to the dotted quarter beat.