

Cleaning Instruments 101:

Mouthpieces and Head Joints:

Cleaning the Flute Head Joint

1. *Using a cotton swab saturated with denatured, isopropyl alcohol, carefully clean around the embouchure hole.*
2. *Alcohol wipes can be used on the flute's lip plate to kill germs if the flute shared by several players.*
3. *Using a soft, lint-free silk cloth inserted into the cleaning rod, clean the inside of the headjoint.*
4. *Do not run the headjoint under water as it may saturate and eventually shrink the headjoint cork.*

Cleaning Hard Rubber (Ebony) Mouthpieces

1. *Mouthpieces should be swabbed after each playing and cleaned weekly.*
2. *Select a small (to use less liquid) container that will accommodate the mouthpiece and place the mouthpiece tip down in the container.*
3. *Fill the container to where the ligature would begin with a solution of half water and half white vinegar (50% water and 50% hydrogen peroxide works too).
Protect clarinet mouthpiece corked tenons from moisture.*
4. *After a short time, use an appropriately sized mouthpiece brush to remove any calcium deposits or other residue from inside and outside surfaces. This step may need to be repeated if the mouthpiece is excessively dirty.*
5. *Rinse the mouthpiece thoroughly and then saturate with Sterisol germicide solution. Place on paper towel and wait one minute.*
6. *Wipe dry with paper towel.*

7. *Note: Metal saxophone mouthpieces clean up well with hot water, mild dish soap (not dishwasher detergent), and a mouthpiece brush. Sterisol germicide solution is also safe for metal mouthpieces.*

Cleaning Saxophone Necks (Crooks)

1. *Swabs are available to clean the inside of the saxophone neck. However, most saxophonists use a flexible bottlebrush and toothbrush to accomplish the same results.*
2. *If the instrument is played daily, the saxophone neck should be cleaned weekly (and swabbed out each day after playing).*
3. *Use the bottlebrush and mild, soapy water to clean the inside of the neck.*
4. *Rinse under running water.*
5. *Sterisol germicide solution may be used on the inside of the neck at this time, if desired (not necessary). Place on paper towel for one minute.*
6. *Rinse again under running water, dry, and place in the case.*

Cleaning Brass Mouthpieces

1. *Mouthpieces should be cleaned monthly.*
2. *Using a cloth soaked in warm, soapy water, clean the outside of the mouthpiece.*
3. *Use a mouthpiece brush and warm, soapy water to clean the inside.*
4. *Rinse the mouthpiece and dry thoroughly.*
5. *Sterisol germicide solution may be used on the mouthpiece at this time. Place on paper towel for one minute.*
6. *Wipe dry with paper towel.*

Source: <https://www.unlv.edu/music/instrument-hygiene>

FULL INSTRUMENT CLEANING:

BRASS

Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, and Tuba

Brass instruments need to be cleaned internally on a regular basis. The following is a description of that process. Please note that rotor instruments such as French Horns, Rotor Tubas, and Rotor Trombones should not be cleaned at home, they have special requirements and should only be cleaned by a qualified repair shop.

To clean your instrument you must take it apart completely. You will also need some cleaning brushes (available at music stores), valve oil, slide grease, and some liquid dish soap. You will also need a place to clean the instrument. Unless you have a large sink the bath tub is probably the best place.

1. Carefully remove all slides, valves and valve bottom caps. Extreme care should be taken with trombone slides as they are very delicate, especially when they are apart! If any of the slides are stuck take your instrument to a repair shop to have them removed. They can be damaged if not removed properly.

2. Place all the parts, except for the valves, in warm, not hot, water containing some liquid dish soap. Let the instrument parts soak in the water for about 10 minutes.

3. While the instrument soaks, take the valves and run warm water over them and brush

out all openings in the valves with the valve brush. Shake off any extra water and set valves aside to dry.

4. Next brush out all tubes with the "snake" and the valve casings with the valve brush. Be sure to clean any debris from inside the valve bottom caps.

5. Use clean water and rinse out the instrument. Wipe off any excess moisture and set the instrument aside to dry thoroughly. It is important that the inside of your instrument is completely dry before you proceed.

6. Apply a small amount of slide grease to each slide and reassemble. Be sure not to put slide grease on the main trombone slide. Use slide cream or slide oil on this slide.

7. Install the valve bottom caps. Put a drop of valve oil on each valve and install them in

their proper location. Valves are numbered and must be in the correct location to

operate properly.

8. You are finished. Enjoy playing your newly cleaned instrument!

WOODWINDS

Flute / Piccolo Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your flute from its case never pick it up by its keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.
2. Put the flute together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the flute when assembling or disassembling this can cause the instrument to become bent at the joints.
3. Each time you put the flute together a small amount of debris will build-up on the tenons (this is normal), however, this can make it difficult to assemble. Always wipe the tenons (joints) with a soft cloth before assembling.
4. The use of lubricants on the tenons is not recommended - this can cause damage over time. The only exception to this rule is on some piccolos and wood flutes that have cork joints. You should apply a small amount of cork grease to these joints, as needed, to aid in assembly.
5. After you are finished playing, use a cleaning rod with an absorbent cloth to swab out the inside of all parts to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the flute to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your flute in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument from tarnishing. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the flute, this can bend keys.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your flute to your music teacher to have them adjusted.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are affecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

Clarinet Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your clarinet from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.
2. When putting your clarinet together, first apply a small amount of cork grease to the tenon corks.
3. Put the clarinet together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the clarinet when assembling or disassembling this can damage the tenor or tear the cork.
4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.
5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through all parts of the clarinet to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your clarinet in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the clarinet, this can bend keys.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your clarinet to Mr. Saltzburg to have them adjusted.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are effecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

Saxophone Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your saxophone from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by picking it up by the bell.
2. When assembling your saxophone be sure to wipe the neck joint and inside of the receiver with a soft cloth this will make it easier to assemble.
3. Apply a small amount of cork grease to the mouthpiece cork to help the mouthpiece move into position.
4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.
5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through the saxophone to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your saxophone in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend keys.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your saxophone to your music teacher to have them adjusted.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are effecting the optimal performance of your instrument.