

# Instrument Cleaning Lesson 3

## Woodwind/Brass Daily Maintenance

### Flute

Supplies needed:

Flute cleaning rod

About once a month, check the position of your head cork. Insert your cleaning rod (“wrong end” first) into the end of the headjoint. Looking through your aperture, you should see the cleaning rod; it has a notch cut into it. This notch should be exactly in the center of the aperture. If the rod doesn’t go far enough into the flute, tighten the headjoint plug at the end of the headjoint by turning it slightly. Check the position of the cleaning rod frequently while adjusting. If the rod is too far into the flute, loosen the headjoint plug slightly and push the plug from the outside. This will push the cork further into the flute. Check the position of the cleaning rod frequently while adjusting.

Once a month, you should clean the keys. Using a key brush or a paintbrush (a short, stubby, thick one), dust under and around your keys to keep dirt from building up.

### Clarinets, Oboes, Bassoons, and Saxophones

Supplies needed:

Cork grease

Key brush

Some of the joints on your instruments have cork on them. About once a week, you will need to grease the corks with cork grease (Vaseline or pure lanolin will also work). Apply a very thin coat of grease to the cork and put together the instrument. Turn the joints a bit to spread the cork grease over the entire cork. Make sure you don’t use too much. If grease oozes out, wipe it off with a cloth immediately.

Once a month, you should clean the keys. Using a key brush or a paintbrush (a short, stubby, thick one), dust under and around your keys to keep dirt from building up. Clarinets and bassoons should also use the round brush to clean dust and dirt out of the finger tone holes. If you don’t have an appropriate key brush, you can also use replacement mascara brushes, which are available from a beauty supply store.

## **All brass instruments**

Supplies needed:

Slide grease

About once every week or two, grease all slides on the instrument (trombones, this is NOT the hand slide). Apply a small amount of slide grease to the end of the inner slide. Make sure the grease goes around the entire slide tube. Insert the tube all the way into the instrument, then pull it back out to where you need it to be for tuning. If excess grease oozes out, wipe it off with a cloth immediately.

Additionally, empty the water from your instruments frequently (several times per playing session). Many instruments have a water key. To use the water key, tilt the instrument in the direction of the water key. Depress the water key and blow air only through your instrument. This should get most of the water out. If you play French horn, remove your mouthpiece. Hold the instrument up in front of you and turn the instrument counterclockwise several times. Water will probably come out of the mouthpiece receiver.

You may also need to empty individual slides. If the slide leads directly to a valve, push down the valve and remove the slide (make sure the instrument is turned so the water will move into the slide before you remove it). Just dump the water and replace the slide. This is a good time to grease your slides, also.