

# Instrument Cleaning Lesson 4

## Woodwind/Brass Deep Cleaning

### Flute

Supplies needed:

- Flute cleaning rod
- Clean cloth
- Alcohol pads

About once a month or anytime after you have been sick, clean the lip plate and the aperture of the flute with alcohol pads (such as used to clean a small cut on your finger). Using your clean cloth, swab out the flute and headjoint several times until it is as dry as possible. Wipe all fingerprints off the flute and its keys. Leave your case open overnight to air it out (you can spray with Lysol first, but only return the instrument to the case if the Lysol has completely dried). Stand the flute up on a flute peg stand and allow it to completely dry. Germs usually can't live very long on metal that is free of moisture.

### Clarinets, Oboes, Bassoons, and Saxophones

Supplies needed:

- Pull-through swab
- Dish detergent
- Mouthpiece brush
- Clean cloths
- Rubbing alcohol

Clean your mouthpiece thoroughly with soap and water (refer to Cleaning Lesson 1). Dry with a soft cloth and put the mouthpiece in a safe place so that it continues to dry completely. Dry out the inside of your mouthpiece and clean the tenons (joints) with the clean cloth. Work carefully around the tenons, as a lot of dirt and germs can collect here. Wipe all fingerprints off the clarinet and stand the instrument up on a clarinet stand to completely dry overnight. Leave your case open overnight to air it out (you can spray with Lysol first, but only return the instrument to the case if the Lysol has completely dried).

Put your used reeds in rubbing alcohol for a few seconds to kill germs; wipe gently from the thick end to the thin end to remove the excess alcohol. Place the reeds in a reed keeper to allow them to dry correctly.

## All brass instruments

Supplies needed:

Dish detergent  
Valve casing brush  
Old, but clean, towels  
Brasso

Cleaning snake  
Old toothbrush  
Cleaning cloths  
Slide grease

Completely disassemble your instrument. Once you have take it apart, the individual parts become much more delicate--BE CAREFUL!! As you disassemble the instrument, place all the parts on a clean towel (this will leave stains, so use an old but clean towel).

Fill the bathtub or a large utility sink with lukewarm (NOT HOT) water and dish detergent. Separately fill either a large bowl or a regular kitchen or bathroom sink with dish detergent and water. Place the body of your instrument in the soapy water in the tub. Allow it to soak while you are cleaning the other parts.

Put only the individual slides in the smaller sink or bowl of soapy water. Also put in the top and/or bottom valve caps. Let these soak.

Trumpets, baritones, and tubas should make a THIRD bowl of lukewarm soapy water. Disassemble your valves (take a picture first, if you need to, in order to put everything back together). Using an old soft toothbrush and some clean cloths, carefully clean each tiny part in the soapy water. Rinse and put everything on ANOTHER clean towel. Dry off the parts with a soft cleaning cloth. Once everything is clean, put your valves back together. Leave them on the towel for now.

Go back to your smaller slides and use your cleaning snake to scrub out the insides of all the slide. You may not be able to go around the sharp turns, so be careful not to force anything. Use a cleaning cloth, also wash off the outside of the slides to remove dirt and grease. If the inner slides are still dirty looking (this is the part that goes INSIDE the tubing when you put it back together), use a little Brasso and a clean cloth. Scrub very small areas with the Brasso, but DO NOT GET THE BRASSO ON THE SHINY PARTS OF THE INSTRUMENT. Wash off the Brasso and clean the slides again in soap and water. Rinse each slide in cold water. Run lots of water through the slides so no detergent is left. Dry each slide as well as you can and place them on a dry, clean towel.

Clean the body of your instrument the same way. Carefully clean out the inside of the tubing with the snake and a valve casing brush. Rinse the instrument in cold water. Run lots of water through each part of the instrument so no detergent is left. Dry the instrument as well as you can, then let it sit out long enough to dry to completely.

Once dry, grease all slides properly and replace all slides correctly. Oil valves (or the trombone hand slide) and the inside of the valve casings and replace valves (remember they are numbered!) Wipe off the outside of the instrument and you are ready to play!

**FRENCH HORNS SHOULD NEVER ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THEIR VALVES!!!**