

Instrument Cleaning Lesson 2

Woodwind/Brass Daily Maintenance

Flute

Supplies needed:

- Flute cleaning rod
- Clean handkerchief or flour sack cloth

After playing the flute, take it apart and put each part in a safe place (even in the case). Thread a small corner of the handkerchief or flour sack cloth through the eye of the cleaning rod. Wrap the end of the handkerchief over the top of the cleaning rod and wrap the rest of the handkerchief around the rod so that the rod won't scratch the inside of the flute. Insert the covered rod into each section of the flute and twist it gently to dry out all moisture. You should also use your handkerchief to wipe all fingerprints off the keys and body of the instrument before putting it away.

Clarinets, Oboes, Bassoons, and Saxophones

Supplies needed:

- Pull-through swab (silk or handkerchief style—NEVER the fuzzy ones!)
- Handkerchief or flour sack cloth
- Turkey feather or super-duper-skinny oboe pull through swab for oboes)

After playing the instrument, remove the reed and put it away in a reed keeper (don't reuse the individual container provided with a new reed). Put your reeds in the case. Take apart the instrument and put each part in a safe place (even in the case). Unroll your pull through swab and pull it through each section of the instrument two or three times to completely dry out the inside. It is important that the swab is completely unrolled or it will get stuck in your instrument. You can also pull the swab partway through your mouthpiece to dry it, but don't force it. Be very, very gentle. Use your handkerchief to wipe all fingerprints off the keys and body of the instrument before putting it away.

Oboes should be careful to use the correct size of swab or your turkey feather to dry out your instrument. Bassoons should blow moisture out of the bocal (blow from the cork side) and wash this section with soap and water at least once a week.

Trombone

Supplies needed:

- Valve or slide oil; Handkerchief or flour sack cloth

Stand your trombone up on the end of its slide. Unlock the slide lock and lift the body of the trombone until about 6 inches of the inner slide is exposed. Squirt oil around each inner slide. Pick up your trombone and move the slide back and forth to coat the slide completely. Use your handkerchief and wipe off fingerprints before putting it away. The slide should be oiled daily.

Trumpet, baritone, and tuba

Supplies needed:

Valve oil; Handkerchief or flour sack cloth

(THIS SHOULD BE DONE ONE VALVE AT A TIME)

Unscrew the upper valve cap and pull the valve all the way out. Place the valve carefully on your handkerchief. If you drop it even slightly, it can damage the valve. Squirt a little bit of valve oil all the way around the inside of the valve casing (where you insert the valve on the instrument). Pick up your valve and put several drops of oil all over the solid portions of the valve. Insert the valve carefully into the valve casing. Trumpets should make sure the number on the valve is turned the correct way (usually toward the mouthpiece end of the instrument). Baritones and tubas have a slotted valve casing. Line up the valve guide with the slot. Insert the valve all the way into the instrument and push it down slightly. Screw the upper valve cap back onto the instrument and push the valve up and down a few times to spread the oil all over the valve.

Repeat this step for each valve. Valves should be oiled at least every other day. Wipe off fingerprints before putting it away.

Horn

Supplies needed:

Valve or rotary oil; Handkerchief or flour sack cloth

(THIS SHOULD BE DONE ONE VALVE AT A TIME)

Locate all removable slides leading to a valve. Push down the valve lever that moves that valve and remove the slides; place them carefully on your handkerchief. Turn the horn so that the open tube on the instrument is pointed STRAIGHT UP. Drop a few drops of valve oil down the tube, but try not to get any in the tube. The point is for the drops to land on the valve without washing dirt and grease from the inside of the tubes. Move the lever of the valve up and down rapidly and repeatedly as you drop the oil onto the valve. Replace the slides you removed. Lay the horn flat in your lap. Remove the upper valve cap and put one drop on the very center of the valve (the part that sticks up). Replace the valve cap and pull out the slide again, but rapidly this time (you should hear an air “pop”). Now, push down the correct lever and insert the slide again.

Repeat this step for each valve. Valves should be oiled at least every other day. Wipe off fingerprints before putting it away.