

INSTRUMENT CARE

Players benefit from a well-maintained instrument.

General Best Practices

- When not playing, the best place to keep your instrument is in its case or on a stand.
- Your posture is important when playing. Sit with your back straight and on the edge of your chair. Using a music stand adjusted to the right height and angle is really important to your playing success.
- Make the case your own! Make it easy to spot when it's in the band room with a bunch of other instruments by adding stickers or a ribbon to the handle.
- Keep your instrument in top shape and smelling good by rinsing your mouth with water after eating or drinking a sugary drink—BEFORE playing. Sugar and food can cause sticky pads, valve corrosion, and make the instrument smell bad. Yuk.
- Be aware of your space, especially in the band room, so that you don't knock your instrument over. Instruments (especially brass) dent and damage easily when they hit the floor, your chair, or a music stand.
- Never force a mouthpiece into the receiver. Insert gently and wipe down if necessary. Never try to remove a stuck mouthpiece yourself—we have a special tool and are happy to do it for you anytime!
- Instruments made of wood do not like to be exposed to extreme temperature or humidity (i.e. hot cars or cold garages), a hot car can damage the binding glue. Rule of thumb: keep the instrument with you.
- Handling an instrument can be awkward at first so assembling and disassembling an instrument near the ground will help reduce damage if a piece is accidentally dropped. Especially true for trombones!
- For adjustments or repairs, bring your instrument to The Magic Flute. Don't attempt to repair a musical instrument yourself, your rental contract includes service.

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Care Tips for Specific Instrument Groups

Brass

- Don't over tighten the slide receiver lock on your TROMBONE
- TROMBONE tuning slides are very fragile. Take special care to protect them from damage.
- Never set or stand your TRUMPET on its bell! It will warp.
- Oiling the valves AFTER playing your TRUMPET will keep corrosion down, especially if the instrument will sit for several days without being played.
- Each value on a TRUMPET is individually numbered to match the numbered valve casing. When putting a valve back into the casing, make sure to properly align the valve guide into the valve guide slot.

Strings

- Do not touch the bow hair with your fingers! Use rosin on your bow to make it sticky, as sticky is what it needs to make a sound. You don't want to touch it because your fingers can be oily and ruin the stickiness.
- Loosen the bow BEFORE putting it back in the case. This will preserve the shape and playability of the bow and bow hair.
- If a bow hair breaks (which they do all the time), DON'T PULL IT OUT. Carefully use scissors to carefully snip off the broken hair without cutting other hairs.

Woodwinds

- Avoid contact with the keys during assembly and disassembly of your FLUTE. Pressure on the keys can cause them to get out of alignment, causing air leaks because the pads will no longer cover the holes.
- CLARINET and SAX players—throw away chipped or cracked reeds. Keep your case clean!
- Best practice for all woodwind instruments (FLUTE, CLARINET and SAX) is to use a swab after playing to remove all moisture; use a pad saver when storing the instrument in its case.
- Keep wet swabs away from the instrument as much as possible. Pads should not be moist as the longer they stay wet, the shorter their lifespan and the more likely they are to cause air leaks or grow mold. Silk swabs absorb A LOT of moisture and last a long time, and they can be washed without wearing out.