

Tips and Hints: Taking Care of Your Instrument

All instruments and players benefit from a few key best practices. Here are some instrument specific care tips.

- When not playing your instrument, the best place to keep it is in its case or on an instrument stand.
- Your posture is important when playing an instrument. 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 success.
- Make the case your own! Make it easy to spot when it's in the band room with a bunch of other instruments. Add stickers, or a ribbon to the handle, so you can quickly spot it.
- Keep your instrument in top shape and smelling good by rinsing your mouth out with water after eating, or drinking a sugary drink, **BEFORE** playing your instrument. 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 the brass ones!) dent and damage easily when they hit the floor, your chair or a music stand.
- Never force a mouthpiece into the receiver. Insert gently. 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.
- 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 actually damage the binding glue. Rule of thumb, keep the instrument with you.

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- Handling an instrument can be awkward at first. Assembling and disassembling an instrument near the ground means less damage if a piece is accidentally dropped. Especially trombones!
- For adjustments or repairs, bring your instrument to The Magic Flute! Never attempt to repair a musical instrument yourself.

Brass

- Do not over-tighten the slide receiver lock nut on your **TROMBONE**.
- **TROMBONE** tuning slides are very fragile. Take special care to protect them from damage. For example, give yourself plenty of room between the slide and the music stand.
- Never set or stand your **TRUMPET** on its bell, this can cause warping, and it will likely fall and cause further damage.
- Oiling the valves **AFTER** playing your **TRUMPET** will keep corrosion down, especially if the instrument will sit for several days at a time without being played.
- Each valve 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.
- Stringed
- Do not touch the bow hair with your fingers! You rosin your bow to make it sticky. Sticky is what it needs to be to make a sound. Your fingers are oily, the opposite of sticky.
- Make sure to 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. Use scissors to carefully snip it off without cutting other hairs.

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Woodwind

- 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 can no longer properly cover the holes.
- **CLARINET** and **SAX** players, throw away reeds when they are chipped or cracked. Keep your case clean.
- For all Woodwind instruments (i.e. **FLUTE**, **CLARINET** and **SAX**) the best practice is to use a swab after playing to get all the moisture out of the instrument, THEN use a pad saver when storing the instrument in its case.
- For all Woodwind instruments (i.e. **FLUTE**, **CLARINET** and **SAX**), keep wet swabs away from the instrument as much as possible. Pads don't like to be moist. The longer they stay wet, the shorter their lifespan and the more likely they are to cause air leaks or grow mold.
- For all Woodwind instruments (i.e. **FLUTE**, **CLARINET** and **SAX**), silk swabs absorb A LOT of moisture and last a long time. They can be washed without wearing out.

Have questions? Do not hesitate to reach out to us, we're here to help.