

How to Care for Your Clarinet/Saxophone

Supplies Needed to Care for Your Instrument

1. Swab
2. Cloth
3. Cork Grease
4. Mouthpiece Brush

Assembly: How to Put Your Instrument Together

- Clarinets: Before you open your case, make sure that it is right side up. When possible, avoid touching the keys or other moving parts when you put your instrument together. When joining the lower and upper joints, you must press the rings of the top joint. Do this carefully so you do not bend any keys. The joints of the clarinet should twist together easily. If you have any difficulty, grease each of the tenon corks. Wipe off any excess grease so it does not get on pads or in the key mechanism. If corks are dirty, clean them before applying new grease.
- Saxophone: Before you open your case, make sure it is right side up. Grease the cork on the neckpiece so that the mouthpiece goes on easily. Put the mouthpiece and reed on the neckpiece. Place the neckpiece in the body of the saxophone and tighten the neck screw. To avoid bending the neckpiece, do not apply any downward pressure. Use gentle rotating, twisting motions as you put the neckpiece on to the body. The octave key lever should go under the ring on the neckpiece. Always loosen the neck screw before removing the neck.

When You are Finished Playing

- Moisture left in the instrument after you have finished playing will cause the pads to deteriorate. Swab your instrument each time you finish playing. The most common type of swab is a cloth attached by a string to a weight. The weight is dropped through the instrument for clarinets from top to bottom, and for saxophones, dropped into the bell of the instrument and pulled through the top.
- Wipe the keys with a cloth to remove finger marks and acid left by perspiration. This acid will tarnish the metal if it is not removed.
- Remove your reed from the mouthpiece and place it in a reed guard. This will extend the life of the reed. Swab out the mouthpiece.
- Leave the ligature on the mouthpiece to keep it from getting bent, and be sure to replace the mouthpiece cover on the mouthpiece.
- Always keep your instrument in its case when you are not playing it. Never put anything into your case that it was not designed to hold.

Regular Maintenance

- Do not polish the keys. Use a cloth to wipe off moisture and finger marks after playing.
- Under each key is a pad that seals the tone hole when the key closes. If pads stick, they are dirty. To keep pads clean, do not eat candy or chew gum before playing! Pads can and should be replaced after several years of use, but this is expensive, so make them last as long as possible.

Handling the Instrument

Instruments are delicate and expensive; therefore it must be handled carefully. Do not let anyone else but your teacher play your instrument. If you must set it down during a rehearsal or practice, put it on a flat surface with the keys up. Never leave your instrument on a music stand.