

How To Care for Your Trumpet, Baritone, or Tuba

Supplies needed to care for your instrument:

1. Valve Oil
2. Slide Grease
3. Mouthpiece Brush
4. Soft Cloth
5. Snake Brushes
6. Valve Casing Brush or Cleaning Rod and Cloth

Before you play

- Assembly: All you have to do is place the mouthpiece into the lead pipe. Do this with a gentle twisting motion. Do not hit or pop the mouthpiece into place. This can lead to a stuck mouthpiece.
- Oil the valves every day you play your trumpet or every second day. Loosen the valves one at a time and then pull the valves partially out of the valve casings. Apply three or four drops of high quality thin oil. Replace the valve, slotting it into place or turning it until it clicks. If the valve is not in the proper position, you can blow hard, but no air will go through the horn. If this happens, check the position of each of the valves to correct the problem.

The Mouthpiece

If your mouthpiece gets stuck while you are playing, do not attempt to remove it yourself or have anyone yank it out for you. Forcibly removing a stuck mouthpiece can break the braces on a trumpet. Carry the trumpet to your teacher (it will not fit into your case) and he or she will remove it with a tool made specially for pulling mouthpieces. To prevent stuck mouthpieces, always insert the mouthpiece gently, do not pop it during rehearsal, and do not use too much pressure while you play. Keep the shank of the mouthpiece and the receiver clean.

Regular Maintenance

A clean instrument works and sounds better than a dirty one. Once a week clean the mouthpiece with lukewarm water and a mouthpiece brush. Help keep the mouthpiece and instrument clean by avoiding gum, candy, and soda before you play. Rinse your mouth if you have been eating anything sweet. After playing, wipe the instrument clean with a soft cloth. This will remove perspiration, which can damage the lacquer and metal. Do not use polish on lacquered instruments because it can scratch the finish.

Once a month, give your instrument a bath. Take all the valves out one at a time and lay them in order on a towel. This will help you to put them back in the correct order when you have finished. Put the slides and the body of the trumpet into warm soapy water (dish soap is recommended). Run snake brushes through all the tubes. Use a valve casing brush or a cleaning rod and cloth to clean the valve casings. Rinse them off in clean lukewarm water. Wash the valves thoroughly, checking so that no lint, dirt, or other substance remains in the ports (holes). When cleaning the valves, be careful not to get the felts/washers wet. Wipe the water off the outside of the horn. Do not leave the instrument in the water too long or the lacquer finish can peel off.

Handling Your Instrument

- Your instrument will dent easily. Dents look ugly, affect the tone of the instrument, and are expensive to remove. Always put the instrument in its case correctly. Never set your instrument in its case with the bell hanging over the edge. Anyone accidentally closing the case on a trumpet left like this will crinkle the bell.
- Do not cram books and music into your case.
- Be sure the mouthpiece and other accessories are put away properly so they do not jar loose and cause damage.
- Trumpets: hold the instrument by the valve casings, not by the slides or the bell. Do not lay the trumpet down on a music stand or chair or stand it on the floor on its bell.