

WOODWIND CLEANING AND CARE

EQUIPMENT YOU MUST HAVE

- Reed Guard that holds 4 reeds
- 4 working reeds (not chipped or moldy)
- Mouthpiece Cap
- Mouthpiece Brush
- Cleaning Swab
- Cork Grease
- Music Stand
- Polishing cloth (saxes only) and Neck Strap (saxes only)



If you can, **brush your teeth** before playing. If you can't brush, **rinse your mouth** before playing your instrument. Sugar residue from the tiny food particles in your mouth will damage your instrument.

BEFORE PLAYING

1. Put your reed in your mouth to moisten it while you put your instrument together.
2. Before you put your reed on your mouthpiece, **lick the back** of the reed. This will create a natural seal and your instrument will play better.
3. Carefully line the top of the reed up with the tip of your mouthpiece. Then slide your ligature down until it is only touching the bottom part of the reed (the darker part). Once you have aligned your ligature properly you can leave the screws on the ligature in the same position while stored in your case. The next time you put your instrument together you can slip the ligature over the reed and mouthpiece with very little adjustment to the ligature.

As soon as your reed has a crack or chip it is NO GOOD. Please throw it in the garbage.

Over time, all reeds collapse and are no longer good for playing. The average life of a reed depends on the player but a couple of weeks is the average time for a reed to last.

All reeds have a **size** that is numbered on the back. The higher the number the easier the reed plays in the high range and the better it plays in tune. However, high numbered reeds squeak easily and if they are too hard for you, you will have difficulty making a good sound. Use the following table as a general guideline.

Beginner players should start with a size 2.

Junior players should play 2 or 2.5.

Intermediate players should play a 2.5 or 3

Experienced players use size 3.

CLEAN YOUR INSTRUMENT AFTER YOU PLAY IT

1. Run your swab through your instrument to dry the pads.
2. A wet reed stored in your case will warp easily. Wipe the back of your reed with your thumb to remove extra moisture before you put the reed back in the reed guard.
3. Return your reed to your Reed guard (never leave it on the mouthpiece, it warps).
4. Place your mouthpiece cap on your mouthpiece.
5. Put your instrument in your case

REEDS

Your reed is your **most important piece of equipment**. With a good reed you can sound great, with a worn out, chipped or poor reed you can sound edgy and out of tune.

Rotate your reeds. Number your reeds from #1 – #4 (mark the back of each reed). Play #1 for a few practices, then play #2 for awhile and so on. After you have played on the 4th reed, start back at the #1 reed. **Rotating your reeds keeps them in good shape and they last longer.**

REED GUARD

You need a reed guard that holds **4 reeds**. Cardboard or see-through plastic guards that come free with reeds are **NOT** reed guards. A proper reed guard **presses** on the top of the reed to keep it flat so that it will play better. Store your reeds in your reed guard; **never leave them on your mouthpiece!** If you leave your reed on your mouthpiece it will warp, play poorly and break easily. It is also unhygienic as **mould grows** on the reed when it is left on the mouthpiece

MOUTHPIECE CAP

A mouthpiece is expensive and a small chip will make it unplayable and worthless. Protect your mouthpiece by putting the cap on it when you are not playing it. When stored in your case, put the cap on your mouthpiece to protect it.

MOUTHPIECE BRUSH

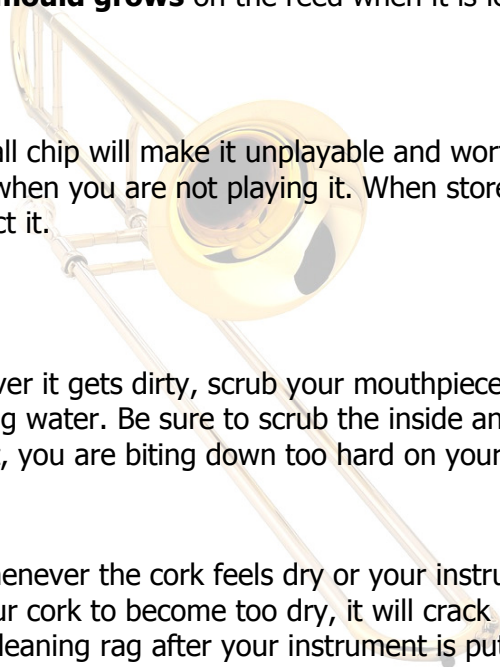
Keep your mouthpiece clean. Whenever it gets dirty, scrub your mouthpiece with your mouthpiece brush using warm running water. Be sure to scrub the inside and the outside. If your mouthpiece has bite marks on it, you are biting down too hard on your mouthpiece.

CORK GREASE

Apply cork grease once a week or whenever the cork feels dry or your instrument becomes hard to put together. If you allow your cork to become too dry, it will crack and fall off. **Wipe off excess cork grease** with your cleaning rag after your instrument is put together.

CLEANING SWAB

Your swab should have a weight at one end and a cloth at the other. Take your instrument apart and run the swab through each part every time you play your instrument. This keeps your



instrument dry so that it doesn't crack and the pads don't shrink. If the pads are wet when your instrument is stored they will shrink and leak. Saxophones need a special neck swab. Do not run a regular swab through the neck of your saxophone or it will get stuck.

SAX STRAP

A neck strap holds your sax in place. Many sax players leave their straps **too loose**. This puts strain on your neck and creates an incorrect embouchure. Tighten up the strap until **the sax meets your mouth** without moving your head downwards. If you play the bari sax, choose a strap that fits over your body so that you don't strain your neck.

LOOSE ROD SCREWS

Check your instrument on a weekly basis for loose screws. If the screws become too loose, they can fall off. Show your teacher loose screws or screws sticking out at the end of the rods. We have tools to tighten them. Please don't tighten them on your own unless you are a senior student. When you tighten loose screws you must line them up with the end of the rod or leave them sticking out slightly. Tightening them any harder will cause the keys to malfunction.

BENT RODS

If you are careless with your instrument (such as dropping it or putting something heavy on it, you can bend the rods. This is a major repair and you must take your instrument to the repair shop.

LEAKY PADS

Sometimes your pads will shrink and start to leak air. A pad may even fall off completely. Check to see if you have any pads that are loose or leaking and show them to your teacher. Leaky pads make it difficult to play some notes on your instrument and they must be replaced with new pads.