

Branham High School

Band Instrument Care Information

With proper care you can have many years of trouble free enjoyment from your instrument. You should perform maintenance on your instrument on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. Some of the instrument's maintenance can be done by the student, but aspects of it should be left only to trained professionals. If you have any questions not covered here you can contact one of our locations or repair shops. The following tips will help you keep your instrument in top condition.

Recommended Repair Shops in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Santa Clara Valley

Woodwinds:

Flute, Clarinet, and Saxophone:

West Valley Music, 262 Castro St, Mountain View, California –
Phone: (650) 961-1566

Music Village, 2971 Union Ave, San Jose, CA 95124-
Phone: (408) 377-2504

Rufus Acosta Repair, 1901 Old Middlefield Way, Mountain View, CA 94043-2556-
Phone: (650) 965-8485

Oboe:

Mark Chudnow Woodwinds, P.O. Box 3886 Napa, CA 94558-
Phone: (800) 780-4340 or (707) 254-7388

Forrest's Music, 1849 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703-
Phone: (510) 845-7178 Main number & Repair Shop

Bassoon:

Forrest's Music, 1849 University Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703-
Phone: (510) 845-7178 Main number & Repair Shop

Brass Instruments:

Hornucopia, 1549 Laurel St San Carlos, CA 94070-5114-
Phone: (650) 593-3050

Best Music, 1716 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612-
Phone: 800-821-3557

Peninsula Music & Repair, 4335 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306-
Phone: (408) 287-6779

General WOODWIND CARE

Flute / Piccolo Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your flute from its case never pick it up by its keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.
2. Put the flute together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the flute when assembling or disassembling this can cause the instrument to become bent at the joints.
3. Each time you put the flute together a small amount of debris will build-up on the tenons (this is normal), however, this can make it difficult to assemble. Always wipe the tenons (joints) with a soft cloth before assembling.
4. The use of lubricants on the tenons is not recommended - this can cause damage over time. The only exception to this rule is on some piccolos and wood flutes that have cork joints. You should apply a small amount of cork grease to these joints, as needed, to aid in assembly.
5. After you are finished playing, use a cleaning rod with an absorbent cloth to swab out the inside of all parts to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the flute to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your flute in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument from tarnishing. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the flute, this can bend keys.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your flute to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are affecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to flute and piccolo pads. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Clarinet Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your clarinet from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by the ends where there are no keys.
2. When putting your clarinet together, first apply a small amount of cork grease to the tenon corks.
3. Put the clarinet together with a slow back-and-forth twisting motion, never push or pull the clarinet when assembling or disassembling this can damage the tenon or tear the cork.
4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.
5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through all parts of the clarinet to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your clarinet in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place anything in the case that can press on the clarinet, this can bend keys.
7. Get into the habit of washing your mouthpiece on a weekly basis using warm water and a mild gentle antibacterial soap. A soft toothbrush is a safe way to get into the inner edges. Dispose of old reeds especially if you play on them during a time when you are sick or have a cold.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your clarinet to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are affecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to the clarinet's pads. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Saxophone Care

Daily Care

1. When removing your saxophone from its case never pick it up by the keys. Remove it by picking it up by the bell.
2. When assembling your saxophone, be sure to wipe the neck joint and inside of the receiver with a soft cloth this will make it easier to assemble.
3. Apply a small amount of cork grease to the mouthpiece cork to help the mouthpiece move into position.
4. When tightening the screws on the ligature, the device that holds the reed on the mouthpiece, take care not to over tighten them this can cause the screw to break.
5. After you are finished playing, pull a cleaning swab through the saxophone to remove moisture. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument and keys to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
6. Always store your saxophone in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend keys.
7. Get into the habit of washing your mouthpiece on a weekly basis using warm water and a mild gentle antibacterial soap. A soft toothbrush is a safe way to get into the inner edges. Dispose of old reeds especially if you play on them during a time when you are sick or have a cold.

Monthly Care

Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your saxophone to a repair shop to have them adjusted. It is not suggested that you try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or damaged.

Yearly Care

It is recommended that you have your instrument checked and adjusted, if needed, by a repair shop. The shop may find adjustments or worn pads that are effecting the optimal performance of your instrument.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to flute and piccolo pads. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Oboe Care

Assembly

Grease tenon corks with cork grease before assembly so that they work freely. Dry, tight corks may cause bent keys or broken tenons during assembly. Grasp the upper joint with the left hand near the bottom and the lower joint with the right hand near the bottom and carefully push the two joints together with a slight back and forth twisting motion. Line up the bridge keys carefully to avoid meshing them together and bending them. Grasp the lower joint near the bottom and attach the bell. If the bell has a key mechanism, be careful to line up the bell's key mechanism with that of the lower joint and avoid bending them. Insert the reed into the receiver at the top of the oboe holding it by the cork. NOTE: The oboe should NEVER be stood upright on its bell on the floor or any other surface! It will easily fall in that position resulting in very serious consequences.

Daily Cleaning

The inside of the oboe should be cleaned after playing with a silk or cotton oboe cleaning swab. The reed should be stored in a vented case in order to allow it to dry. Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to oboe pads. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Periodic Maintenance

Regular maintenance of the oboe will go a long way toward avoiding unnecessary repair bills. Note: **Never** turn the adjustment screws found on the keys--these are regulating screws and should not be tightened or loosened by the player. Also **Never** submerge the oboe in water.

ONCE A MONTH (or as needed): Thoroughly polish the keys of the oboe with a treated polishing cloth. Commercial liquid, powder or paste polishes should be avoided, as they can easily get into the mechanisms and pads of the instrument.

EVERY 10 MONTHS: Send instrument in for a professional adjustment, oiling, and cleaning with an oboe specialist.

WOODEN OBOES ONLY: Using a second swab (for this purpose only), place several drops of bore oil on the swab and run it through all sections of the oboe several times. Do not use bore oil on the outside of the instrument. This should be done twice a year (Spring and Fall) to prevent cracking of the oboe. Avoid sudden changes in temperature and humidity.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to the oboe's pads. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

BRASS CARE- Trumpet Care (And Other Valve Instruments)

Daily Care

1. Valves on brass instruments need to be lubricated on a regular basis. To do this: (a) Unscrew the valve cap and pull the valve out about half way. (b) Apply a drop of valve oil to the wide part of the valve. (c) Push the valve back into position making sure that it is lined up correctly.

(Note): The valve has a guide that keeps it in place. To check for correct alignment gently try to turn the valve. If it doesn't turn it is lined up. If it turns keep turning the valve till you hear a slight "click" and the valve stops turning.

2. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the horn. If this happens **don't** try force to remove it - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Take it to a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.

3. After you are finished playing make sure you remove any excess moisture from the inside of the horn by opening the water keys and blowing through the instrument. Carefully wipe off the outside of the instrument to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.

4. Always store your trumpet in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend slides and cause valve problems.

5. Get into the habit of washing your mouthpiece on a weekly basis using warm water and a mild gentle antibacterial soap. A cotton pipe cleaner or manufactured mouthpiece swab is excellent for cleaning the inner part of the mouthpiece. Be sure to clean your mouthpiece after a time when you are sick or have had a cold.

Monthly Care

1. Check all slides to see that they move freely and lubricate them with slide grease if needed.

2. The inside of your instrument needs to be cleaned regularly. This may not be needed every month but should be done at least every 3 months. See the section on [*Brass Cleaning*](#) for more information.

Yearly Care

If you clean your instrument on a regular basis you may not need any additional yearly care, however, repair shops have the ability to chemically clean your instrument which is a more thorough cleaning than can be done at home.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to the metal of ALL brass instruments. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Trombone Care

Daily Care

1. Great care is needed when handling your trombone. The smallest bump or dent in the slide can cause problems with its proper movement. Due to the precision needed in adjustment of the slide, repairs are time consuming and costly so...Be Careful!
2. The slide needs to be lubricated on a regular basis. Apply a small amount of slide oil or cream to the boot area of the slide as needed. The boot is at the very end of the slide, so be careful not to allow the slide to slip off the trombone.
3. Occasionally a mouthpiece will become stuck in the trombone. If this happens **don't** try force to remove it - this can cause major damage to the instrument. Take it to a repair shop or music store to have it removed. Most shops do not charge for this service.
4. After you are finished playing make sure you remove any excess moisture from the inside of the trombone by opening the water key and blowing through the instrument. Carefully wipe off the outside of the trombone to remove oils or perspiration caused by your hands.
5. Always store your trombone in its case when not in use, this helps prevent damage and aids in keeping the instrument clean. Do not place books or folders in the case, this can bend slides and cause problems.
6. Get into the habit of washing your mouthpiece on a weekly basis using warm water and a mild gentle antibacterial soap. A manufactured mouthpiece swab is excellent for cleaning the inner part of the mouthpiece. Be sure to clean your mouthpiece after a time when you are sick or have had a cold.

Monthly Care

1. Check the tuning slide to see that it moves freely and lubricate it with slide grease if needed.
2. The inside of your trombone needs to be cleaned regularly. This may not be needed every month but should be done at least every 3 months. See the section on *Brass Cleaning* for more information.

Yearly Care

If you clean your instrument on a regular basis you may not need any additional yearly care, however, repair shops have the ability to chemically clean your instrument which is a more thorough cleaning than can be done at home.

Note: Chewing gum, soft drinks, and other foods containing sugar are very harmful to the metal of ALL brass instruments. Avoid these things whenever possible before playing or rinse your mouth thoroughly before playing the instrument.

Brass Cleaning

Brass instruments need to be cleaned internally on a regular basis. The following is a description of that process. Please note that rotor instruments such as French Horns, Rotor Tubas, and Rotor Trombones should NOT be cleaned at home, they have special requirements and should only be cleaned by a qualified repair shop.

To clean your instrument you must take it apart completely. You will also need some cleaning brushes (available at music stores), valve oil, slide grease, and some liquid dish soap. You will also need a place to clean the instrument. Unless you have a large sink the bathtub is probably the best place.

1. Carefully remove all slides, valves and valve bottom caps. Extreme care should be taken with the trombone slides as they are very delicate, especially when they are apart! If any of the slides are stuck take your instrument to a repair shop to have them removed. They can be damaged if not removed properly.
2. Place all the parts, except for the valves, in warm, not hot, water containing some mild liquid dish soap. Let the instrument parts soak in the water for about 10 minutes.
3. While the instrument soaks, take the valves and run warm water over them and brush out all openings in the valves with the valve brush. Shake off any extra water and set valves aside to dry.
4. Next brush out all tubes with the "snake" (available at music stores) and the valve casings with the valve brush. Be sure to clean any debris from inside the valve bottom caps.
5. Use clean water and rinse out the instrument. Wipe off any excess moisture and set the instrument aside to dry thoroughly. It is important that the inside of your instrument is completely dry before you proceed.
6. Apply a small amount of slide grease to each slide and reassemble. Be sure not to put slide grease on the main trombone slide. Use slide cream or slide oil on this slide.
7. Install the valve bottom caps. Put a drop of valve oil on each valve and install them in their proper location. Valves are numbered and must be in the correct location to operate properly.
8. You are finished. Enjoy playing your newly cleaned instrument!

Brass instruments with Rotors: French Horn, Trigger Trombones, Tubas

Everyday

1. Glance at the instrument to check for loose or missing parts. Check the cork stop plate for missing screws or stop corks. Wipe off fingerprints with a soft cloth.

2. Check for looseness of strings, screws, and rotor end caps. **MOVE THE TUNING SLIDES EVERY DAY - EVEN A HALF-INCH BACK AND FORTH.** A major repair problem with tuning slides is that they are "frozen" from corrosion. Keeping them properly lubricated with slide grease and moving them every day will help eliminate costly repairs.

NOTE: The rotor valves of the French horn must be regularly oiled using a special oil solution. Apply the oil by opening the tuning slides that connect most directly to the valves and holding the horn so the oil will drip into the valves. Also, remove the valve caps and place a few drops of oil beneath them.

3. Carefully place the rotor-valved instrument in the case, checking for weak or broken case latches. avoid placing excessive amounts of "stuff" in the case that might damage the instrument. French horns and trigger trombones are lightly built and books, etc. can bend the thin metal.

DO NOTs -

Do not place the mouthpiece in the lead pipe and "pop" it with the palm of the hand to drive it in. Carefully "twist" or screw the mouthpiece in place. Remove the mouthpiece by "unscrewing" it with a twisting motion. Mouthpieces "driven" in the receiver get wedged in by dust particles and require a mouthpiece puller to get them out without damage.

Do not attempt to remove a stuck mouthpiece by twisting with pliers, door jam, vise, or any other device other than a mouthpiece puller made for the job.

Do not place the instrument on a music stand, chair, bed, or other surface from where it can fall or where it can be sat upon. Most instruments are damaged from falling or being dropped or being crushed. Always hold the instrument, have it held by another player, or put it in the case.

Do not use abrasive polish on lacquered brass, silver or nickel finishes. Abrasive polishes remove the protective lacquer finish and promotes dulling of the finish. Overuse of polish causes unattractive accumulation between the valves and is difficult to properly remove.

Do not allow bumper felts under the valves become water-soaked.

DOs -

Protect the rotors and slides from being dropped during oiling or cleaning. Rotors are generally very delicate and can easily be bent and ruined.

Do learn to properly lubricate the rotors and tuning slides. Grease the tuning slides monthly and be sure to move them back and forth every time the instrument is played. Slide grease not only lubricates the moving parts but also coats the inner slide - reducing oxidation - and helps avoid "rusting" or corrosion caused by bi-metal contact.

RECOMMENDED ACCESSORIES for these instruments:

Handkerchief-size soft cleaning cloth (periodically cleaned in the clothes washer)

Rotor oil (use sparingly)

Tuning slide grease (use sparingly)

Lacquer polish (made for lacquered brass instruments - non-abrasive - NOT BRASS POLISH)

Silver polish (use sparingly - made for silver plated instruments - non- abrasive)

Mouthpiece brush Brass instrument "snake" brush for cleaning bore of instrument

Mouthpiece pouch (protects mouthpiece from scratches, dings)

MOST COMMON REPAIR PROBLEMS: Missing parts from rotor cork stop plate or levers Broken solder joints Stuck slides Lack of rotor lubrication and corrosion