

Trombone Maintenance and Cleaning

Needed items

Slide grease, slide cream, mouthpiece brush, snake brush, cleaning cloth

Storing your instrument

When not using your instrument, keep it closed in its case to help protect it and to prevent the possibility of damage.

Do not store the instrument in areas of extreme temperature changes. Keep the instrument away from heating supplies or from windows where direct sunlight or other weather can cause damage.

Daily Maintenance

As you play, your trombone collects moisture inside from the warm air coming out of your mouth. If you do not clean this moisture out after each playing session, it can accumulate in your instrument and cause various problems. After playing, open any water keys and blow a steady stream of air through the instrument to blow any water out. When opening the third valve key, make sure to also press down the third valve. The outside of the trombone should be wiped off with a polishing cloth to remove fingerprints. This will stop your instrument from tarnishing and keep it in good working order.

Weekly Maintenance

The mouthpiece should be cleaned weekly using warm water and soft liquid soap and your mouthpiece brush. This sanitizes the mouthpiece and removes foreign matter from the inside.

Make sure all slides move easily. Use slide grease to lubricate slides if they are difficult to move. Make sure valves move easily as well. Oil valves once each week or more often as needed.

Monthly Maintenance

Every few months the instrument should be taken apart and given a bath. Begin by laying a towel in the bathtub. Take the tuning slide out of the bell and wipe the grease off it. Then take the inner slide out from the outer slide. Everything can then be laid on the towel in the bathtub. Making sure that the water is a comfortable temperature (comfortable for you is comfortable for your horn), fill the tub with enough water to cover the instrument. **HOT WATER WILL DAMAGE YOUR INSTRUMENT!** Let the instrument soak for about an hour to loosen dirt and debris. Once the horn has been soaked, clean out all of the tubing using a snake brush. Run the snake's bristle heads in and out of all of the tubing several times underwater to remove any build-up. Hand slides of trombones can also be cleaned by filling the outside slide with water and then inserting the inside slide, working it in and out. Be sure to handle the slide section carefully to avoid denting the tubing. After you're satisfied that everything is clean, rinse everything with lukewarm water. To prevent spotting, wipe off the outside of the horn with the softest cloth you can find. Blow out any water hanging up in the tubing, and lay the horn

out to dry. As you reassemble your horn it is necessary to remember that your slides are bare metal and need grease to keep them moving properly, otherwise, they can get stuck. With your finger, place a small amount of grease on the tuning slide. Spread the grease evenly all the way around the slide, and then reinsert only one of the tubes back into place, rotate around, and repeat with the other side. Once both sides have been rotated in the tubing, the slide can be replaced normally back onto the trombone. Do the same on the hand slide, but this time with slide cream. Apply the cream down at the stocking of the inner slide. Test it and see how it feels. If it's a little hard to move, put on more cream. Once the instrument is reassembled, try playing to make sure everything is back to the right place.

Yearly Maintenance

Have your instrument checked out at a music store. They will do minor repairs and replace worn pads. You may ask for an estimate for cleaning and repairs before having the work done. If you are renting an instrument, this work will be covered in the rental program. Early summer is a great time to do this.