



HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR INSTRUMENT

For instrument-specific care lists, head to redwoodmusic.us/instrumentcare

Musical instruments are expensive and fragile! When taken care of, they will play well for a long time. When not taken care of, they get damaged and become very hard to play. Some damage occurs very slowly over time as a result of small care items being ignored. Remember - treat your instrument well and it will play well for you in return!

General Musical Instrument Care

- Unless you have an official instrument stand, always keep your instrument in its case when not in use. Make sure that case handles, hinges, locks and zippers are working properly.
- Never set anything on top of your instrument, and never store anything on top of your instrument inside its case. Additionally, do not set anything on top of your instrument case, either (including yourself...it is not a seat)!
- Do not leave your instrument in extreme temperatures, as significant changes can warp and damage your instrument.
- Do not leave your instrument in a car; it is susceptible to hot/cold temperatures as well as humidity changes.
- Do not leave your instrument unattended, whether inside or outside of its case.
- If your instrument is being brought inside from colder temperatures, allow it to warm up to room temperature before playing it.
- Keep your instrument clean of fingerprints and everyday dust and residue. Do this by wiping your instrument down with a clean, soft, non-treated cloth before storing.
- Never attempt to repair an instrument at home! If a repair is needed, take your instrument to your music teacher first, then, if recommended, to a trained instrument repair technician.

Instrument Care for Woodwinds

- Avoid eating, drinking, or chewing gum immediately prior to playing your instrument. Sugary foods are particularly dangerous to music instruments. If you will be playing your instrument right after eating, thoroughly wash your mouth out with water (or better yet - brush your teeth)!
- Internal moisture can cause cracks and/or mildew. Always pull a clean, dry swab through your instrument to remove any moisture prior to storage.
- Gently wipe key pads of moisture prior to storage.
- Never store the reed on the mouthpiece! Store them in a reed holder. Replace chipped, cracked or softened reeds (their average lifespan, even when taken care of, is 2-3 weeks, no more than a month). Rotate use of a few reeds at the same time during your practice so that you are not relying on just one.

- When placing your instrument back into its case, make sure it fits all the correct indentations. Do not force your case closed, as it most likely means the instrument is not properly placed.
- Remove neck straps from your instrument before putting it in its case.
- Always use included plugs and covers when storing your instrument.
- Only pick up your instrument by the bore (the main, most sturdy interior chamber). Never lift by the keys. Also be careful not to bend the keys while assembling your instrument.
- Apply a very limited amount of cork grease to cork joints when needed.
- Clean mouthpieces (ligature and reed removed) in warm, soapy water and dry completely before storing. (Once a week.)
- Periodically check the key mechanisms for loose screws. If a key feels loose, tighten the pivot screw only until the key no longer wobbles. Better yet, if you are unsure, check with your teacher!
- Bring your instrument in for a “check up” at a music repair service (such as at a music store) yearly. This is like a yearly check-up at the doctor’s office!

Instrument Care for Brass

- Avoid eating, drinking, or chewing gum immediately prior to playing your instrument. Sugary foods are particularly dangerous to music instruments. If you will be playing your instrument right after eating, thoroughly wash your mouth out with water (or better yet - brush your teeth)!
- When placing your instrument back into its case, make sure it fits all the correct indentations. Do not force your case closed, as it most likely means the instrument is not properly placed.
- Make sure your instrument is completely dry prior to placing it in the case. Drain water after playing and wipe your instrument dry with a clean, soft cloth.
- Always remove your mouthpiece after playing. Regularly clean your mouthpiece with warm water and milk soap. (Once a week.)
- If your mouthpiece gets stuck, use a designated mouthpiece puller to remove it. Better yet or if you don’t have an official mouthpiece puller, ask your teacher for help!
- Brass instrument parts stick together when left unmoved for long periods of time. Take time to move all possible parts at least every couple of weeks.
- Regularly oil and grease valves. Work and move the valves and slides a few times to make sure that it is spread evenly.
- Unscrew valves, wipe clean, and place a drop of valve oil, coating the entire valve. Do this at least once a week to make sure they don’t build up anything that will get them stuck!
- Apply slide oil to your trombone at least once a week by placing hand slide into the third position and adding oil to each slide.
- Never try to hammer out dents at home. Take your instrument to a licensed professional for repairs!
- Bring your instrument in for a “check up” at a music repair service (such as at a music store) yearly. This is like a yearly check-up at the doctor’s office! This helps brass instruments to avoid costly repairs and possible corrosion.