

Care and Maintenance of the Flute

You Will Need:

- 1) Cleaning rod.
- 2) Swab. Silk or microfiber work best, because they absorb moisture well and will not get stuck. Cotton swabs are okay too. Do not use felt swabs. They smear the water around instead of absorbing it.
 - Avoid a “Pad Saver” swab (long fuzzy stick). The fuzz can fall off and can affect how your instrument plays.
- 3) Soft cloth.
- 4) Pad cleaning paper.

Daily Care

- 1) Never leave your instrument by itself. It takes very little time for someone to take it.
- 2) Never leave your instrument on the ground, on a chair, on a music stand, etc. Always keep your instrument in your hands or in the case.
- 3) Do not let other people use your instrument unless you teach them the right way to hold and use it.
- 4) Do not use your case as a chair or step stool. It is not designed for that kind of weight.
- 5) Lay your case flat on your lap before opening it. Do not let it “fall” open.
- 6) Twist the parts of your instrument together. Do not rock them in to place.
- 7) Secure all loose items in your case. Anything loose will damage your instrument.
- 8) Do not put music in your case, unless space is provided for it. If you have to fold it or if it touches the instrument, it shouldn't be there.
- 9) Avoid eating or drinking anything but water just before playing. If you must, rinse your mouth with water or brush your teeth before playing.
- 10) Do not touch the keys or lip plate when assembling or disassembling the flute.

Daily Cleaning

- 1) Keeping your instrument dry when you are not playing it is the most effective way to keep it in good condition.
- 2) Put some of the swab through the hole in the cleaning rod, flip it over the top and wrap it around the rod.
- 3) Remove the head joint and shake out any excess moisture, then swab it until it is dry on the inside. Wipe each connector (called a “tenon”) dry and place the joint back in the case.
- 4) Remove the middle joint, swab it from both sides and place it back in the case.
- 5) Swab the foot joint and place it back in the case.

Weekly Cleaning

- 1) Wash the swab by soaking it for 3 minutes in a sink filled with lukewarm water and soap or a mild detergent. Rinse thoroughly. Let dry completely.
- 2) Wipe the fingerprints and dirt off of your instrument with your soft cloth. This will keep it looking nice. Also, the acid from your hands will eventually tarnish the silver if you leave it on the instrument.
 - Do not use any kind of polish. Wiping it clean is enough.
 - Be careful not to snag any springs while cleaning the instrument. Clean the keys ONE AT A TIME.
 - Be careful not to get the cleaning cloth under the pads. This will tear the pad.
- 3) Make sure the screws at the ends of your rods are not sticking out.
- 4) While you are practicing, leave the case open in the sun. The warmth will dry out any moisture and discourage moths from living in the case (they like to eat pads).
- 5) Vacuum your case.

Every Four Months

- 1) Check to make sure your end plug (cork in the crown) is in the right place. Use the line on the cleaning rod.
- 2) Dust in between the rods and keys if they are dirty. Don't poke the soft material of the pads! Use a water color paint brush or pipe cleaners.
- 3) Clean the pads. Put a piece of pad cleaning paper or a NEW dollar bill under the pad, press the key and pull the bill out slowly. Don't push too hard or you will rip the paper!
- 4) If any corks or felt bumpers are missing, have them replaced. If they are missing, you may hear metal hitting metal when you push your keys. You should never hear this on an instrument that is working properly.
- 5) Check your pads for tears in the skin and discoloration. Worn-out pads will not seal and will make playing the instrument more difficult.

Regular Check-ups

To keep your instrument in top working condition, have it checked by a qualified repair person once per year (Winter break is better than summer, repair shops are not as busy). Woodwind instruments will stay in top form if they are overhauled every three to five years. Regular maintenance keeps an instrument in good playing condition for a period of years, rather than allowing it gradually to deteriorate, becoming more difficult to play and more expensive to repair.

