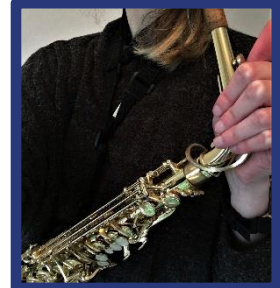
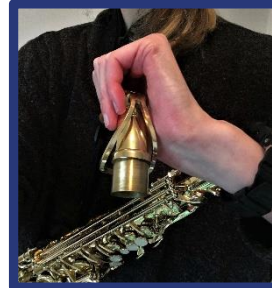


# Looking After Your Saxophone

Saxophones are wonderfully versatile instruments: they can be heard in so many genres from classical, to jazz to pop. Here are a few simple ways you can help to keep your saxophone in top playing condition.


## Putting your sax together

When assembling your saxophone, I would recommend attaching it to your neck strap or harness straight away. This leaves your hands free for your crook and mouthpiece whilst the rest of your instrument is safely secured. Insert the crook or neck of your saxophone gently and without holding on to the key and take care not to do the neck screw up too tightly.



## Swab out after playing

When you are finished playing you should swab out the inside of your saxophone with a brush or a pull through. This removes any moisture, prevents your pads from getting sticky and so helps them last longer. If you use a brush or a 'pad saver' I would recommend storing it outside of the saxophone after use – otherwise all the moisture that you have collected with it stays inside your instrument along with the brush.

 *Try to avoid eating and drinking whilst playing as sugary foods & drink can make your pads very sticky! Although water is fine.*



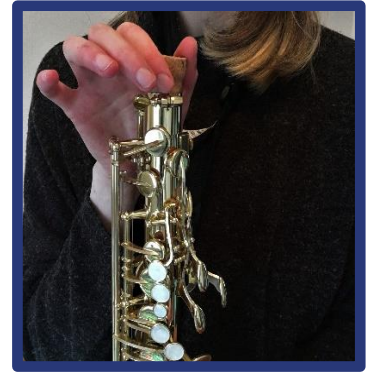
## Keeping the outside clean


Gently wiping your saxophone over with a clean, soft cloth should be enough to keep your instrument gleaming and remove any fingerprints. How often you do this is entirely up to you. I have known sax players to do it weekly, monthly, or hardly ever! However often you clean your sax, remember to wipe gently in the direction the keys open and close, and do not try to clean under the keywork as you risk unhooking springs or adjusting your set up.



## Put a stop in it


Your saxophone should have come with an end stopper. They are usually plastic or sometimes metal and should be placed in the neck socket before it goes back in the case. This protects the socket and the octave key from harm. Should you ever lose it a champagne cork is an effective replacement.



 Remember to leave the neck screw loose to avoid warping the socket.


## Cork grease

Cork grease should only be used on the neck cork of your saxophone. Use a small amount to ensure your mouthpiece slides smoothly onto the neck and creates an airtight fit. Keeping it greased will make the cork last longer before it needs changing but be careful not to over-do it. Only use grease when the cork feels dry to the touch.

 If you are unsure how much cork grease to use, apply it like you were putting on lip-balm. A light layer is enough!

## Mouthpieces & Reeds

To clean the mouthpiece, you should remove the reed and swab it out after each practice. Saxophone players often wash their mouthpiece in warm & soapy water for a deeper clean both inside and out. Protect your mouthpiece by replacing the ligature and cap after use and storing it in the correct slot in your case. If your case does not have a mouthpiece slot, you can buy protective pouches to store your mouthpiece.

 If you have an ebonite mouthpiece it can get discoloured in hot water. Make sure the water you use for cleaning is warm at most.

Reeds have a certain lifespan, and they will at some point wear out. It helps them to last longer if you remove them from your mouthpiece & store them in a reed case when you put your instrument away. If something feels wrong while you are playing check your reed for chips & splits or warping. If in doubt, try a new reed first to see if it solves the problem.



# Looking After Your Flute

Flutes are fairly low maintenance instruments and by following a few simple steps you can help keep your flute in top playing condition!

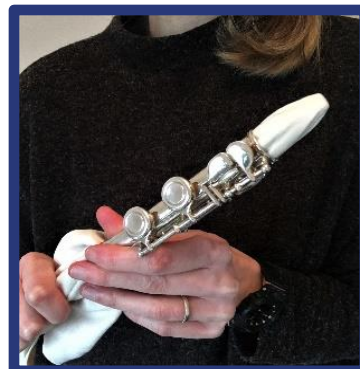
## Putting your flute together


The important thing is to not hold onto the keywork as you assemble your instrument; it is easy to accidentally bend keys or disturb the way your flute is set-up. Try to only hold the body of your flute where there are no keys. You should also not need to use excessive force; the sockets should gently come together and feel snug. If it is difficult or very loose then it may be a sign of an issue with the socket.



## Swab out the inside after playing

After you are finished playing you should swab out the inside of your flute with your cleaning rod and cloth. This removes the condensation & moisture from the instrument and will ensure your pads last longer & don't get sticky.




 *Try to avoid eating and drinking whilst playing as sugary foods & drink can make your pads very sticky! Although water is fine.*

## Keeping the outside clean

Gently wiping your flute over with a clean, soft cloth should be enough to keep your instrument gleaming and remove any fingerprints. How often you do this is entirely up to you, I have known flautists do it weekly, monthly, hardly ever! However often you do it remember to wipe gently in the direction the keys open and close, and do not try to clean under the keywork as you risk unhooking springs or adjusting your set up.



 *Some players like to use a silver polish cloth for an extra shiny finish – if you do make sure you go over your instrument again afterwards with a clean, soft cloth - as silver cloths can leave a black residue that can get over your hands/clothes/face!*



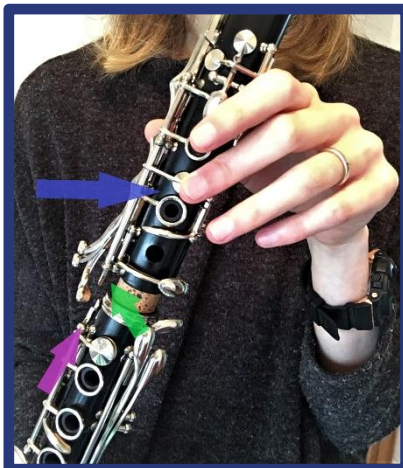


# Looking After Your Clarinet

As a clarinet owner there are a few simple things you can do to make sure your clarinet stays in top playing condition!

## Putting your clarinet together

It is important to try to hold your clarinet in such a way that you avoid accidentally bending any of the keywork or disturbing the way your clarinet is set up. Aim to hold onto the body of the instrument, rather than the keys, wherever possible. As you hold onto the top joint remember to hold down the 'D' key (blue arrow) which will lift the top foot (green arrow) out of the way of the bottom foot (purple arrow). This will ensure the top foot does not get bent when you put your clarinet together.



You should also not need to use excessive force; the sockets should gently come together and feel snug. If it is difficult try using a little cork grease. If it is very loose it may be the case a thicker cork needs fitting.

## Swab out the inside

When you are finished playing you should swab out the inside of your clarinet with a brush or a pull through. This removes any moisture and helps your pads last longer and helps prevent them from getting sticky.



*Try to avoid eating and drinking whilst playing as sugary foods & drink can make your pads very sticky! Although water is fine.*



## Cleaning the outside

Gently wiping your clarinet over with a clean, soft cloth should be enough to keep your instrument gleaming and remove any fingerprints. How often you do this is entirely up to you, I have known clarinet players to do it weekly, monthly, or hardly ever! However often you do it remember to wipe gently in the direction the keys open and close, and do not try to clean under the keywork as you risk unhooking springs or adjusting your set up.



## **Cork grease**

It is a good idea to apply cork grease to the cork on all the joints of your clarinet. It is important these corks are a snug & airtight fit for your clarinet to blow properly - keeping them greased will make them last longer before they need changing. Be careful not to over-do it though! Only use cork grease when the corks feel dry to the touch and rubbing in light layer is enough (like you were putting on lip-balm).

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## **Mouthpiece & Reeds**

To clean the mouthpiece, you should remove the reed and swab it out after each practice. Clarinet players often rinse\* their mouthpiece in warm & soapy water for a deeper clean both inside and out. Protect your mouthpiece by replacing the ligature and cap after use and storing it in the correct slot in your case.

*\* I say rinse rather than soak or scrub - as you risk damaging the cork on the mouthpiece if it gets too wet for too long.*

Reeds have a certain lifespan, and they will at some point wear out. It helps them to last longer if you remove them from your mouthpiece & store them in a reed case when you put your instrument away. If something feels wrong while you are playing check your reed for chips & splits or warping. If in doubt, try a new reed first to see if it solves the problem.

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## **A note on wooden clarinets**

The main difference between looking after a wooden and a plastic clarinet is that with wood you need to be mindful of dramatic changes in temperature, as this can sometimes cause the wood to crack. Avoid extremes such as leaving your clarinet next to a hot radiator or in the sun, or outside in a cold car. Lots of cracks can be successfully repaired, however depending on their nature and the manner they are repaired in, they may or may not become a recurring problem and if possible, it is best they are avoided altogether! Wooden clarinets do also need oiling from time to time - a good repairer will be able to determine when this needs to be done & can carry out the process for you.

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