

Saxophone Maintenance Guide

AFTER PLAYING

- Remove the neck from the body and then the mouthpiece from the neck. This will prevent the neck from being bent while disassembling. When assembling, reverse this order (ie- mouthpiece on neck first, then put neck onto body).
- To prevent the reed from being damaged, carefully remove it from the mouthpiece and store it in a reed guard until you next play. Replace the ligature and cap on the mouthpiece and store it in the space provided in the case. Allow your reed to recover for a day or two before using it again by having at least two that you use alternately.
- Wash the mouthpiece in cool water after playing and then dry it with a small swab or cloth. Do not rub on the facing or the rails (the bits that are in contact with the reed) as this can cause uneven wear of the mouthpiece facing which will prevent it working properly.
- The neck (Crook) must also be swabbed out to remove any moisture. Do not use the body swab for this purpose – it is too big and will become stuck inside!!!
- Remove all moisture from the inside of the sax by using a pull-through swab. This prevents the formation of moulds and keeps the pads dry. The pads are made of leather, felt and cardboard, all of which can absorb moisture. If wet, the pads will distort, rot or become mouldy. If this happens, they will no longer make an air-tight seal on the tone-holes.
- Always pass the swab through the instrument from the top to bottom. Never bunch up the swab as you put it in – **it will get stuck inside if you do!!!**
- Never store a wet swab inside the case with the instrument. Allow it to air-dry for a couple of minutes before putting it away.
- Periodically wash the cleaning swab. Replace it if it becomes worn
- Use a separate lint-free, soft, dry cloth to remove finger marks etc from the keys and the outside of the body.

This is general information; please see the user guide for your specific instrument.

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- The mechanism must be in good working order for the sax to work properly. Regularly check that the pads are air tight and the springs that operate the mechanism have not become disengaged from their respective keys and that all pivot screws are tightened snugly (but not too tight). Ask your teacher to recommend a qualified instrument repairer and to show you how to oil the mechanism. **LIKE ANY MACHINE, YOUR SAX NEEDS REGULAR SERVICING (AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR).**
- Reeds wear out with playing. This unfortunate fact means that you must replace them regularly to maintain a good musical sound. Reeds are available from Old Bank Music Shop. Always keep a few spares in your case to use if your current ones get damaged. They are thin pieces of cane that can easily split or chip, so handle with care by always picking them up by the thick end (butt).
- Changes in temperature will affect the tone and fundamental pitch of your instrument. As the instrument gets warmer, the air inside gets less dense and the pitch goes up (sharper). Conversely, as it cools it goes flatter. Move the mouthpiece towards you (ie further off the neck) to lower the pitch and away from you (ie push further on) to raise it.
- Your instrument is designed to be played at room temperature (21 degrees Celsius). Before performing, warm up by playing for at least 5 minutes. Use the swab/ pull through regularly in breaks to keep the inside of your instrument dry.
- BEFORE playing the instrument, apply a small amount of cork grease to the neck cork to prevent it drying out. Put the mouthpiece onto the neck before putting the reed and ligature on and attaching the neck to the body. When not playing, put the cap on the mouthpiece.
- **NEVER** use oils, solvents or anti corrosive products to clean your instrument.

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