

CLARINET CARE & MAINTENANCE

A few simple steps to avoid costly repairs

Assembling the Clarinet

Place upper joint into the palm of the left hand and wrap the fingers over the ring keys. This will lift the bridge key away from the lower joint.

The lower joint must be held in the palm of the right hand, holding closed the E/B – F/C key cups. A careful ‘twist and push’ action is used to join the joints aligning at the bridge keys. Do not use pressure on the E/B, F/C and F#/C# levers as this is a critical and delicate point in the alignment of the lower joint. Now apply the barrel and bell.

Keep the tenon corks clean and well greased with a good quality grease. Some low grade greases do not permeate the cork and therefore smear off then the joints are assembled. Other greases permeate the cork, but over time destroy the glue holding the tenon cork. From our thorough research, we have found La Tromba to be the best cork grease.

Buy a Clarinet Stand

Never lay the clarinet on a chair or bed. We receive clarinets for repair that have been cracked or broken due to someone leaning on them. A stand is a cheap accessory that can save a lot in repairs.

Oiling Wooden Clarinets

- Choose a good quality oil. We recommend either Ailsyn synthetic oil which, after much scientific research, is regarded as the best in the world, or sweet almond oil – second best.
- Protect all closed keys with a strip of card of thick paper under the pad. This stops the oil getting on to the pad.
- Put approximately ten drops of oil on a goose feather or an old cotton or chamois swab and then smear the oil in the bore only. You should be able to see a fine wet film. (Too much oil is better than not enough).
- Leave the instrument lying (not in the case) overnight
- Pull the instrument through with your regular chamois or cotton cleaning swab (not silk)

New instruments should be oiled on a monthly basis until they are 1 year old, then the oiling can be reduced to every 2 or 3 months. Then after another year bi-annually. Older instruments should be oiled bi-annually.

Regular Servicing

Regular maintenance is highly recommended. It keeps the clarinet in good playing order and stops minor problems becoming major ones. How often a service is needed depends on how much use the clarinet gets, but as a rule of thumb it should be checked over once a year. If a clarinet has had a good service record it holds its value better.

Keep Your Clarinet Clean

1. Silver plated keys need extra care as the plating can deteriorate due to acidic perspiration. We consider the best cloths to use are made by the Selvyt or Altus companies. These are simply a very slightly abrasive cloth that removes any dirty marks on the clarinet keys although they sometimes require a little moisture (breath) to remove some marks. These cloths will not remove Black tarnish. This should be removed when the clarinet is completely disassembled by a competent repairer.

2. Pull the instrument through with a good quality pull-through, preferably chamois as this dries all moisture and gently polishes the bore.

Keep Your Clarinet Clean *continued.*

3. Never use cigarette papers to clean sticky pads. They are surprisingly abrasive and will tear the pad skins, resulting in a very expensive repair job. Quite often the cleaning process, apart from being of therapeutic value after a hectic rehearsal, can alert the player to any problems waiting to happen i.e. Corks missing or falling off, cracks or torn pads.

Insurance

We recommend that all musical instruments are insured. Many instruments will be covered by a standard household contents policy but always make sure there is adequate cover for the clarinet at school or on trips. Always insure your clarinet for the replacement as new value, not its current second hand value. We are happy to advise upon or arrange comprehensive insurance if required.