

## **Clarinet Cleaning & Care Guide**

### **MOUTHPIECE**

*You will need* – a small bowl, warm water, washing-up liquid, a small toothbrush or a mouthpiece brush.

1. Use a paper towel to wipe the cork grease from the mouthpiece cork. You should also remove any built up cork grease.
2. Put some warm water and a few drops of liquid soap in the bowl. Mix thoroughly.
3. Dip the brush in the water. Clean the inside of the mouthpiece with the brush, dipping the brush back in the soapy water as needed.
4. Clean the outside of the mouthpiece in the same way. You can also use a clean cloth dipped in the soapy water to clean the outside.
5. Rinse the inside, then the outside of the mouthpiece with cold running water from the tap. Be careful not to get too much water on the mouthpiece cork.
6. Dry the mouthpiece with a clean, soft cloth. Be sure to put more cork grease on the cork before you assemble your instrument.

### **TOP JOINT, BOTTOM JOINT, BARREL & BELL**

*You will need* – a clean, soft cloth; a small toothbrush or woodwind key brush, cotton buds, paper towels, and a pull-through cloth.

1. Use the pull-through cloth on each joint, the barrel and the bell several times. Repeat this at least 3 times.
2. Using the paper towels, clean the cork grease from the end of each joint.
3. Use cotton buds to clean each tone hole (there are three on the bottom joint and four on the top joint). If there is stubborn dirt, lightly dampen the cotton bud with water.
4. Use a brush or the cotton buds to clean dust from the areas around and under the keys and rods. Take care not to move any springs.
5. Using the soft, clean cloth, wipe the outside areas to remove all fingerprints and smudges. Wipe the keys with this cloth also. Do not put anything (oil, Vaseline, rubbing alcohol, etc.) on the outside of the clarinet!
6. Put fresh cork grease on the corks when the cleaning process is complete.

### **CLARINET CASE**

- You should clean the case each time you clean your instrument.
- Remove any unnecessary items and find them another home.
- Thoroughly vacuum the inside of the case before you return the instrument to it.
- Be sure to store all items (reeds, cork grease, pull-through cloth, pencil, etc.) in the spaces provided so that they do not get under the keys. Put nothing between the top of the case and the clarinet.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES**

- When assembling your clarinet, if needed, apply a small amount of cork grease to the corks.
- A sticky pad is usually due to moisture or dirt. To clean the pads, place a piece of absorbent paper, such as lens paper for cleaning camera lenses, under the pad, close the key, and pull the paper through. To avoid sticky pads, don't eat or chew gum before playing.
- After each practice, use a swab to clear the moisture from the inside of your clarinet. Swab each section individually as you put your instrument away. Carefully wipe off the outside of the clarinet and the keys to remove oils and perspiration caused by your hands.
- Your reed should be removed after playing your clarinet. Dry the reed on a cloth and return it to its case.

- Check all screws and pivots to see if they are coming loose. If they are, take your clarinet to a repair shop or your teacher to have them adjusted. You should not try and adjust them yourself because they can be over tightened or can cause the instrument to become out of adjustment.
- A small brush or pipe cleaner can be used to clean the dust and dirt from between the keys where a cloth won't reach.
- About twice a year the clarinet keys should be oiled. A small amount of high-grade key oil should be applied to the friction points in the mechanism. To avoid damage to the pads, immediately remove excess oil with a cloth. Apply the oil with the tip of a toothpick.
- Always keep your clarinet in its case when you are not playing it. Never put anything in your case that it was not designed to hold. The pressure from papers or music in your case can bend the rods and keys. Be sure to latch your case carefully.
- Be careful to never leave your instrument in extreme heat or cold.