

7. Most woodwind instruments have keywork that has to be 'regulated' to work accurately together, flutes, saxophones and oboes in particular. Over time the regulation goes out of adjustment and needs to be reset. This is a job best left to a professional repairer, tinkering with adjusting screws/corks can make things much worse!
8. About every 12 to 18 months a routine service by a competent repairer will avoid small problems becoming big ones, and will keep the instrument playing as it should.



## Helpful Hint -

*Saxophones are less solid than they look! Keywork and body are easily bent by careless handling, and the extra size and weight means small knocks can cause major problems. Some cheaper makes are especially soft and bendy!*

9. After playing, remove excess moisture from inside the instrument with a suitable 'Pull-through', which should be cleaned regularly. Fingerprints and other marks may be removed from the body of the instrument with a clean soft cloth. Be careful to avoid catching springs and keywork. The 'microfibre' type cloths work well on lacquered instruments. Silver-plated instruments can be carefully polished with a silver cloth, which can be bought in most supermarkets. Do not use liquid silver cleaner such as 'Silvo' which is difficult to remove and can damage pads.
10. Small dents on metal instruments will not have a great effect, but larger dents, and any dents near the mouthpiece will alter the instrument's tuning. Your repairer can advise on this. Broken solder joints can weaken the instrument and should be repaired professionally.



# WOODWIND INSTRUMENT CARE & MAINTENANCE



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## LOOKING AFTER YOUR WOODWIND INSTRUMENT

Your instrument is precision-made and delicate. If carefully looked after it will give many years of troublefree playing. Follow these guidelines for looking after your instrument.

1. When not in use, keep the instrument in its case. Most accidents happen when the instrument is left unattended and out of its case. Be wary of cheaper soft 'gigbag' cases which offer less protection than a traditional hard case. Use stands carefully - many alto saxophones can be damaged at the low C# key by using the wrong stand.
2. The mouthpiece on a clarinet/saxophone should be kept clean - rinse through with tepid water, and a mouthpiece brush. In



neglected instances, a mild steriliser such as "Milton" can be used. All reeds should be cleaned and stored separately when not being played.

3. Your saxophone crook (neck) should be cleaned often under running water. Seal off the small octave pad with clingfilm. Dirt/saliva residues can work into the instrument,

eventually causing sticky pads and altering the tuning. Never eat or drink (except water) just before playing. It is not only unhygienic but can deteriorate the inside of your instrument.

4. On flutes and saxophones DO NOT use grease on the metal-to-metal joints, which attracts dirt, causing tight fitting and the likelihood of damage when assembling. If joints get difficult the answer is often to clean the mating surfaces with a solvent such as lighter fuel/clothes spot-cleaner and a CLEAN cloth.
5. Use cork grease *sparingly* on clarinet and oboe etc cork joints, and on the crook cork on saxophones. Oiling the keywork is a job best left to a professional repairer as part of a routine service. Applying oil to the outside of keywork can result in excess oil finding its way onto pads and bodywork, and can dissolve the glue holding corks/felts in place.

### 6. ASSEMBLY

Clarinets - hold the lower joint in your right hand, with the hand wrapped over the lowest pads, keeping them closed. Hold the upper joint in your left hand, again with the hand wrapped around the closed keys, keeping the D ring key closed. This lifts the 'bridge' out of harms way as you gently twist the two joints together. When fitting the barrel, bell and mouthpiece, hold the clarinet where there is the least amount of keywork.

Oboes - very similar to clarinets, but there is even more delicate keywork to



be wary of, including the bridge to the bell!

Flutes - Hold the head joint in the left hand, and the main body in your right hand at the receiver end (where there is no keywork). Line up carefully and gently twist together. For the foot joint, this time hold the main body receiver in your left hand, and the foot in your right, with the fingers wrapped over the closed C# and C keys. Keep the two parts *carefully* lined up and twist together. Do not 'waggle', do not force!

Saxophones - hold the main body by the bell when lifting it out of the case. Make it safe by hooking it on your sling (neck strap) as soon as possible, and keep one hand on the main body. The crook should be held in the left hand, being careful not to put pressure on the delicate mechanism as you insert it into the main tube (no grease). The mouthpiece/reed assembly can then be placed on the greased cork.

