

Trombone Care



What you will need:

- Slide Oil (use sparingly)
- Tuning slide grease (use sparingly)
- Mouthpiece Brush
- Trombone "snake" brush for cleaning the bore of instrument
- Polishing Cloth / Handkerchief / Lint Free Cloth
- Lacquer polish (made for lacquered brass instruments - non-abrasive - NOT BRASS POLISH)
- Silver polish (use sparingly - made for silver plated instruments - non-abrasive)
- Mouthpiece pouch (protects mouthpiece from scratches, dings)

General

Frequency: Every Time the Instrument is Played

Carefully remove and replace the instrument from the case, check for weak or broken case latches.

Glance at the instrument to check for loose or missing parts. Check the slide lock, water key and cork.

MOVE THE TUNING SLIDE EVERY DAY - EVEN A HALF-INCH BACK AND FORTH. A major repair problem with tuning slides is that they are "frozen" from corrosion. Keeping them properly lubricated with slide grease and moving them every day will help eliminate costly repairs.

Avoid placing excessive amounts of "stuff" in the case that might damage the instrument. Loose mouthpieces, books, mutes, lyres, etc. can bend the thin metal.

Slide Maintenance / Applying Slide Oil

Frequency: Every Time the Instrument is Played

It is the slide that differentiates trombone care from that of other brass instruments. Both the outer and inner slides are very delicate, and subject to problems if not maintained properly. When it is permitted to accumulate, grime causes the slide to stick. To prevent this, special care should be taken every time the instrument is played.

1. Carefully extend the inner slide from the outer slide, without fully removing it.
2. Using a lint-free cloth, wipe down the inner slide. If there is any grime on the slide, your slide lubricant (oil, cream, etc.) will not stick, causing hang-ups while you are playing.
3. Apply your slide lubricant (oil, cream, etc.) to the inner slide. Control the amount you use - a little bit goes a long way. Work down the slide, in a relatively straight line.
4. Replace the inner slide within the outer.

Cleaning the Mouthpiece

Frequency: Once a Week

1. Remove mouthpiece from the instrument.
2. Run lukewarm water through the mouthpiece.
3. Using a mild soap and a mouthpiece brush, scrub out the inside of the mouthpiece.
4. Allow the mouthpiece to air dry.

Polishing

Frequency: Once a Month or as Needed

- Wipe down the entire instrument with a cloth. Commercial cloths specifically designed for lacquer instruments actually polish the instrument. However, a soft, lint free cloth will remove any fingerprints or buildup just as well.

Flushing Trombones

Frequency: Once a year or as Necessary

Like most instruments, general trombone maintenance is focused on the inside of the horn. Moisture collects within the instrument every time it is played. If allowed to build up, it will cause corrosion from within. To prevent this, the instrument should be flushed out monthly.

A note on flushing trombones: This is a very delicate procedure. Due to the unwieldy nature of the trombone, this can be difficult to do in the bathtub at home without damaging the slide. If you are unsure as to your ability to flush the trombone, bring it to a qualified repair technician.

1. Remove the main tuning slide from the instrument.
2. Run lukewarm water through the instrument and the slide. Be VERY careful with the slide. Even the slightest dent can affect the way the instrument plays.
3. Use the trombone snake and a mild soap to scrub out the inside of the instrument. A snake is a long piece of reinforced wire with a brush attached to the end. This permits you to clean deep within the sometimes complicated tubing of brass instruments.
4. Once the inside is clean, rinse the instrument and slide with lukewarm water.
5. Let all the parts air dry and reassemble.

DO NOTs -

Do not place the mouthpiece in the lead pipe and "pop" it with the palm of the hand to drive it in. Carefully "twist" or screw the mouthpiece in place. Remove the mouthpiece by "unscrewing" it with a twisting motion. Mouthpieces "driven" in the receiver get wedged in by dust particles and require a mouthpiece puller to get them out without damage.

Do not put the hand slide in the case with the mouthpiece attached. Major dents occur when the mouthpiece is allowed to hit the bell in most student cases.

Do not attempt to remove a stuck mouthpiece by twisting with pliers, door jamb, vise, or any other device other than a mouthpiece puller made for the job.

Do not attempt to twist a stuck hand slide-to-bell connection with anything other than normal hand pressure. Repair shops have tools to pull the hand slide out of the receiver with no damage to the instrument.

Do not place the instrument on a music stand, chair, bed, or other surface from where it can fall or where it can be sat upon. Most instruments are damaged from

falling or being dropped or being crushed. Always hold the instrument, have it held by another player, use a trombone stand , or put it in the case.

Do not use abrasive polish on lacquered brass, silver or nickel finishes. Abrasive polish removes the protective lacquer finish and promotes dulling of the finish. Overuse of polish causes unattractive accumulation between the valves and is difficult to properly remove.

Do not wash the mouthpiece or instrument in water that is so hot you cannot place your hand in it. Use liquid soap and avoid getting the felts and corks soaked.

DOs -

Protect the hand slide at all times. When possible, hold the instrument in a vertical position, protecting the hand slide from banging into stands, etc. Be very careful not to bang the hand slide into the bell. Most trombone slide repairs involve removing dents at the bell ring distance on the hand slide.

Do keep a small soft cotton cloth in the instrument case or available to wipe fingerprints off the instrument. A few drops of plain water on the cloth will help clean fingerprints off the instrument.

Do learn to properly lubricate the tuning slide and hand slide. Grease the tuning slides monthly and be sure to move them back and forth - even half an inch - every time the instrument is played. Slide grease not only lubricates the moving parts but also coats the inner slide - reducing oxidation - and helps avoid "rusting" or corrosion caused by bi-metal contact.

Wipe the hand slide clean before adding oil or silicone slide creams. Avoid buildup of lubricants in the Inside of the hand slide. Purchase a slide cleaning rod and clean the outer slide bore with a clean cloth to remove dirt and lubricants.

MOST COMMON REPAIR PROBLEMS:

- Dings and dents in hand slide
- Water key broken and cork missing
- Lack of proper cleaning of hand slide
- Bend and miss-aligned inner slides