

Taking Care of your Instrument

Your instrument will need to be washed out a few times a year and the moving parts oiled or greased. You can buy special mouthpiece brushes and instrument-specific cleaning brushes from local music shops or online. No detergent is necessary (it can attack the laquer), just warm (not hot) water. A trumpet or Cornet will be able to fit in a kitchen washing up bowl but other instruments would be better off in the bath, with an old towel in the bottom. A jay cloth or face flannel can be useful but don't use anything abrasive.

Trombones

The slide section will need cleaning more than the bell section. Wash the inside of the outer slide and the inside and outside of the inner slide. When you put the instrument back together the water-key hole should be pointing to the floor as you play.

I recommend Slide-o-mix black top. The red top Slide-o-mix is fine but you need to mix two products so is harder to use for younger students. Using slide cream is also good and much cheaper. Any make will do but you will also need a water spray bottle. A travel bottle from a chemists is a good option- smaller and cheaper than the trombone manufacturers own makes.

Valved instruments

Sometimes valves are numbered. Check the barrel of the casing to see if you have numbers (often they number just 1- nearest the mouthpiece, and 3- nearest the bell) and look at the top of the inside of the valve to see if there is a corresponding number.

It is possible not only to put the valve in the wrong casing, but also to get it the wrong way round in the casing! It is time consuming to work out what's wrong if this happens so I recommend doing one at a time. Wash the inside of the casing and the outside of the valve, replace the valve and then blow the instrument to check it will still play. Any make of valve oil is fine.

To replace a valve

- 1) Push the valve gently into the casing until you feel it stop at the ledge inside.
- 2) Turn the valve slowly until you hear the click as the guide on the side of the valve slots into the slot on the inside of the casing.
- 3) When oiling, the valve will only need 3 or 4 drops of valve oil. Once replaced push the valve up and down rapidly several times to distribute the oil.

Tuning slides

These do need to move! They will need cleaning occasionally and applying a small amount of tuning-slide grease is often helpful. (sometimes they are fine without any grease.) Trombone players- if you use slide cream you can also use this on your tuning slides.