

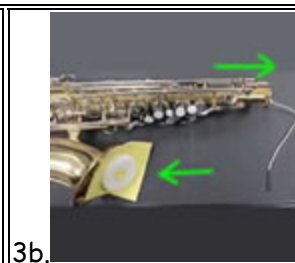
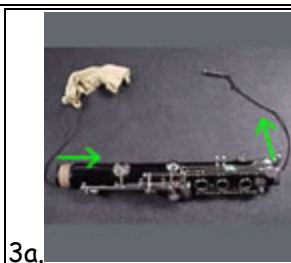
# Cleaning Woodwind Instruments

Playing a musical instrument means you have to use air from your lungs. This air contains moisture that collects on the interior surfaces of your instrument. If this moisture contacts the pads on the keys for long periods of time it can cause damage resulting in expensive pad repair. Whenever you are finished playing it is important to use a cleaning swab to remove this moisture and anything else that may have found its way into your instrument. Get into the habit of using this procedure every time you put your instrument away and you will get much more use out of the pads.

## Reeds

1. Locate your swab. They will vary in length depending on the instrument it is being used for. Inspect the knot where the string meets the cloth. If this is torn, there will be a good chance of it coming loose and leaving the cloth in your instrument. You should discard the swab if this is the case.
2. Remove your mouthpiece and disassemble your instrument. It may be tempting to use the swab before you take your instrument apart, but there will be a much greater chance of getting it stuck.

3. Drop the weight on the end of the swab into the joint/section you want to clean (a). In the case of saxophones, you will need to turn the instrument to get the weight to fall out of the other end (b).



4. Pull the weight firmly, but slowly through the joint/section. The cloth at the end of the weight will pull through, cleaning the interior surfaces.
5. Wrap the string and weight around the cloth and store it back in your case.

## Flutes

1. Locate your Cleaning Rod (a) and a Strip of Cotton Cloth (b).



2. Feed the cloth through the eyelet on the end of the cleaning rod.



3. Pull the rod and cloth through each section of your flute before you put it away.



4. Tie the cloth on the handle of your case in order that it does not cause pressure on your flute inside.

## Regular Maintenance

### Every Use

1. When finished, swab out each section of your instrument. Make sure to let your swab dry outside of your case if it begins to feel damp. It is also helpful to wash the cloth, or replace the swab after it gets really dirty or torn. If your swab gets stuck, give it to a band director. Do not yank at it or you will severely damage your instrument. Flutes should try to wipe the tenons (connections between joints) with a soft cloth to remove any build up as well.
2. Take the reed off from your mouthpiece and store it in a reed guard. Reeds will warp, crack, and develop mold when left of a mouthpiece.
3. Flutes and Saxophones should try to wipe the places where fingers contact the metal on their instruments to avoid corrosion.

### Monthly

1. Look over all of the screws on your instrument and ensure that they are properly tightened. Keeping a small screwdriver in your instrument case is always a good idea.
2. Clean tone holes where pads get sticky. This can be done with a clean piece of paper, or dollar bill. Place the material between the pad and tone hole and press down. Pull the material out and check the pad again. If it is still sticky, repeat.
3. Clean your mouthpiece (not flutes) using a mouthpiece brush, warm water, and soap. This kills bacteria and germs that might surface and keeps the chamber mouthpiece free from buildup.
4. Apply cork grease to tenons that might be getting tight (clarinets).

### Twice Yearly

1. Use a pipe cleaner to clean the tone holes out. Oils from your skin and fingertips will collect on the inside of the hole and build up causing bad pad seals. Moving a pipe cleaner around the inside of the rim of each tone hole will help keep it clean.

### Yearly

1. Do a thorough inspection of your instrument taking note of dents, cracks, bent keys, loose fittings, missing screws, and other physical damage. Bring your instrument to a music repair facility and have these items repaired. Regular repair of physical damage prolongs the life of your instrument, keeps it in better condition, and retains the value if you ever decide to move to a higher level instrument or sell it later on. Also, as a woodwind instrument is used there are keys and rods that can become bent. Students normally adapt, or get used to, their instruments problems and create bad habits. Getting a woodwind instrument realigned greatly improves its sound and playability, often surprising the player as to how bad it had really become.