

Caring for Your Flute

In order to continue to work properly, it is very important that your flute be properly maintained. Not only is a flute a musically artistic device, but it is also a mechanical tool requiring cleaning and service just as any machine would. Fortunately, maintaining a flute is not a difficult task when the student follows a few simple procedures on a regular basis. The following steps should be taken to keep your flute looking and sounding great.

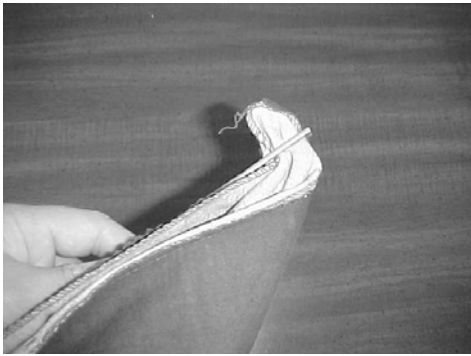
Every Time You Play	Once a Week	Once a Month/As Needed
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wipe fingerprints clean with a handkerchief.2. Use your cleaning rod and a soft cloth to remove moisture from the interior of the flute body and headjoint.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use the mark on the cleaning rod to insure proper intonation in the headjoint. Do not adjust the tuning cork!2. Check the flute for loose screws and springs. Don't tighten them yourself! Let your teacher know if something needs to be adjusted.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Use a polish cloth to remove any tarnish on your flute.2. Have any loose or leaking pads replaced by a professional repair technician.

Daily Maintenance

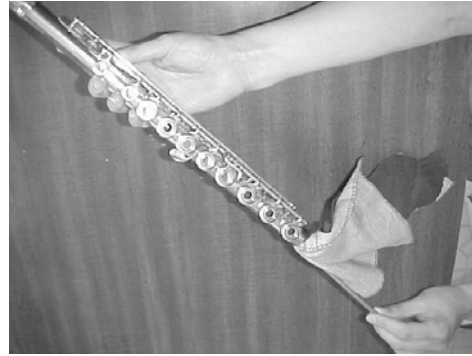
The oil that is naturally secreted from your skin will be deposited on your flute as you handle it in normal daily playing. Although the resulting fingerprints are not immediately harmful to your flute, they will attract dirt and will result in a dingy appearance. In addition, the silver surface of the instrument will begin to tarnish if not cleaned daily. Besides the obvious unsightliness of a flute in this condition is the fact that the oxidized silver will rub off onto the player's hands, leaving a filthy residue. To prevent this, simply wipe the exterior surface of the flute with a dry handkerchief before placing your instrument back in its case each time you practice.

Moisture is the flute's greatest enemy. Condensation will normally occur when you practice your flute for even a short amount of time. This accumulated water can seep into the flute's pads, causing them to rapidly deteriorate and become useless. Consequently, every effort should be made to remove moisture prior to storing your instrument each time you play.

To remove moisture from your flute, simply thread a dry handkerchief through the hole in the cleaning rod supplied with your flute. Then, gently swab out the headjoint, body, and footjoint of your flute. Be careful not to force the cleaning rod into any part of the instrument. You may wish to insert a "Shove-It" pad saver into your flute during storage to draw out any missed moisture. If you do use a pad saver, remember that it is to be used in addition to, not in place of, regular swabbing. See the illustrations on the following page for examples of how to correctly swab your flute.



Thread the handkerchief into the cleaning rod



Gently swab moisture from all parts of your flute

Weekly Maintenance

In addition to normal daily cleaning, you should also visually look over your instrument at least once a week to check for screws or springs that might be coming loose. Because adjusting one screw can possibly affect the entire mechanism of the instrument, it is important that only your director or a qualified repair technician tighten loose screws and springs on your instrument. Even screws that hold rods into place should be tightened to only a certain degree. Excessive tightening will prevent key movement and possibly damage your instrument.

Once each week you should also take a moment to check the tuning of your headjoint. The cleaning rod supplied with your instrument should have a line marked at the end opposite the hole. When this end of the rod is inserted all the way into the headjoint, the line should appear directly centered in the tone hole of the headjoint. If the line is off-center, let your director know so that appropriate adjustments can be made. Never try to adjust the tuning of your headjoint yourself. The illustrations below demonstrate this procedure.



Locate the tuning line on the cleaning rod



With the rod fully inserted into the headjoint, the line should be centered through the middle of the tone hole.

Monthly or As Needed Maintenance

Occasionally you will want to polish your instrument to keep its luster and shine. If you are playing on one of the approved instruments on the list given to you by the directors, your

instrument is constructed of either solid silver or a brass alloy covered in silver plating. Both finishes can be polished nicely with a silver polish cloth available at almost any music store. Do not use commercially available silver polish compounds, since they are too abrasive for instrument finishes and will ruin your instrument's pads. If you are using a family instrument other than the ones approved, check with your director to make sure your instrument has a silver finish before attempting to polish it.

Regardless of the quality of care you give your instrument, occasional repairs and adjustments will have to be made. It is far better in the long run to have leaking pads and screw adjustments made by a qualified repair technician as soon as possible than to postpone sending an instrument to the shop by making makeshift repairs. Your director can advise you when it is necessary to take an instrument in for repairs.

Even the most gifted musician cannot be successful on an instrument that is not properly maintained. Proper care of a flute is not a huge, time-consuming task when basic procedures are followed on a daily basis. The result of good flute care is an instrument that looks and sounds better with less money spent on repairs. Daily maintenance of your instrument is part of your responsibility as a musician.