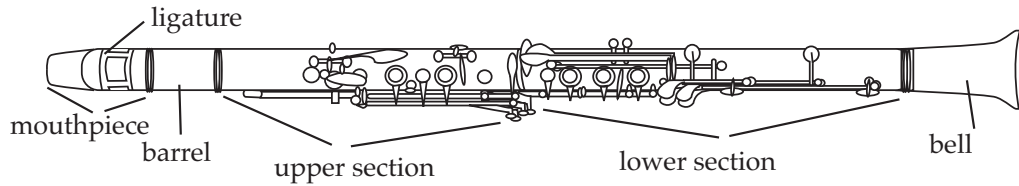


How to Care for Your Clarinet



Handling the Clarinet

The clarinet is a delicate and expensive instrument which must be handled carefully. Do not let anyone else but your teacher play your clarinet. If you must set it down during practice, put it on a flat surface with the keys up (never on a chair). Always keep it in its case when you are not playing it.

How to Put Your Clarinet Together

Corks: Grease the four corks lightly every day at first, twice a week later. (Wash hands).

Bell and Lower Section: Holding the lower section, use a gentle twisting motion to attach the bell.

Upper Section: Hold the upper section in the palm of your left hand while pushing down the keys with your fingers. Take the bottom section in your right hand down by the cork. Gently twist the two pieces together, lining up the keys carefully.

Mouthpiece and Barrel: Remove ligature from mouthpiece. Gently twist the mouthpiece on to the barrel. Replace ligature on mouthpiece.

Reed: Carefully slide a reed out of its case. Moisten it in your mouth about three minutes. Place moistened reed on mouthpiece by lifting the ligature slightly and sliding the reed between the ligature and mouthpiece from the top down. Line up the tip of reed with the top of the mouthpiece, touching only the sides of the reed with your fingers. NEVER TOUCH THE TIP OF A REED. Move the ligature down just below where the reed has been shaved. Tighten screws of ligature, but not too tight.

Attach Mouthpiece/Barrel to Body: Hold the upper section in your left hand and grasp right hand around the barrel. Twist barrel into the upper section and adjust.

When You Have Finished Playing

Remove your reed from the mouthpiece and place it in a reed case. This will extend the life of the reed. Leave the ligature on the mouthpiece to keep it from getting bent, and be sure to replace the mouthpiece cap to protect the mouthpiece. Wipe the keys and body with a cloth, preferably muslin, to remove finger marks and acid left by perspiration. Never put anything in your case that it was not designed to hold. The pressure from papers, pencils or music in your case can bend the rods and keys. Several times a year vacuum your case out to keep your instrument free of dust.

Regular Maintenance

Once or twice a week wash just the mouthpiece with lukewarm, soapy water (dish soap). Keep three good reeds at all times (replace as needed) and rotate them. It is important to always practice with a good reed! Under each key is a pad that seals the tone hole when the key closes. If pads stick, they are dirty. (Tell your teacher). To keep pads clean, rinse your mouth before practicing and avoid gum, candy or pop before playing! Pads can and should be replaced after several years of use, but this is expensive, so make them last as long as possible.

Keep a name tag on your case at all times for identification.