

Trombone Maintenance

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Blow all moisture out of the trombone before storing.

Wipe off old lubricant before re-applying.

Always lock the slide when not playing the trombone. The locked position should prevent you from moving the other slide.

Young players should use slide oil (Superslick) at least once a week. To apply slide oil, put hand slide into approximately third position and add oil to each slide.

Slide cream and water are recommended for mature players. A proper way to apply slide cream is to pull the inner hand slide almost all the way out, applying cream on only the very bottom edge of the inner slide.

Tuning your trombone is done by adjusting the tuning slide until you achieve the desired pitch. Move the tuning slide at least once every two weeks to prevent it from becoming stuck. Bare brass will stick together when in contact for long periods of time.

Hand slides of trombones can be cleaned by filling the outside slide with water/soap. Insert the inside slide and work in and out. This "pumping" action loosens most of the dirt. Dry exterior of instrument with a soft cotton cloth. A trombone cleaning rod can be used to further remove dirt from the outer slide. To do so, cut a 4" square piece from a cotton cloth and insert it into the cleaning rod. Work the cleaning rod back and forth in - both tubes of the outer slide. This may have to be done several times with new pieces of cloth until the cloth comes out clean. Make sure you thoroughly dry the inside and outside of the slides.

Trombones with rotary valves can be serviced by following the procedures in the [valve maintenance section](#).

General Brass Care Tips

- You can wash the mouthpiece with warm, soapy water, making sure you dry the inside thoroughly. The mouthpiece should not have any dents in the end of the shank. If the mouthpiece gets stuck, do not attempt to remove it. Your band director has a special tool for removing it.
- Wipe down the exterior of all brass instruments with a non-treated cloth to remove fingerprints and residue.
- Pitch is affected by temperature. Be sure to warm up your instrument before playing by blowing air through it.
- It is recommended that all brass instruments be taken to a professional repair technician at least once a year for general maintenance and professional cleaning. Doing so may prevent costly repairs in the future. Regular maintenance and professional chemical cleaning will also help prevent and retard "red rot", a form of corrosion that eats through brass.
- Broken solder joints should not be ignored. Have a qualified repair technician check out your instrument as soon as possible.
- Never set anything on top of your brass instrument, whether inside or outside of its case; this includes sheet music! Damage occurs easily when items are placed on the instrument and the case is closed. Make sure your case is secure and all hinges, latches, and handles are securely fastened to the case.
- Never leave a brass instrument in a hot car or in your trunk. Extreme temperatures can damage your horn.

General Brass Cleaning

Brass instruments should be flushed out once a month to clean out any accumulation of dirt and to prevent corrosion. A good place to do this is in a bathtub. Fill the tub with lukewarm water and a mild soap (not detergent). Remove all tuning slides. Unscrew top and bottom valve caps, removing the valves at the same time. Any felts on valves should be removed so they don't get wet.

Place instrument in water and flush interior with water and soap. Use a snake brush to clean tubes of tuning slides and bore of instrument. The snake brush can also be used on trombone slides, inside and outside.

Once all tubing has been cleaned, remove instrument and dry with a soft cotton cloth. Place any felts on valves and reassemble using a high quality valve oil. Reassemble tuning slides using a lanolin based slide grease (never Vaseline). A good practice to get into is to always push the tuning slides closed when you're finished playing (primarily because this prevents the air from drying out the grease, and also, you'll have to re-tune anyway).

