

CARE GUIDE FOR DOUBLE REED INSTRUMENTS

Congratulations on your purchase of a new or reconditioned Oboe or English horn.

The more you treat your Instrument with care and respect, the more you will be rewarded not only financially, but musically and aesthetically as well. If your instrument is wooden, please especially remember that it has a potential for developing cracks (which is unfortunate but not unusual with the finer wooden instruments). Cracking is primarily caused by warm air traveling through a cold instrument (the warm air causes the interior of the wood to expand, while the outside wood is still contracted from being colder). Before you begin to practice, while your instrument is cold, start gradually warming your instrument up by holding it under your arms or inside your jacket.

The break-in procedure for new and/or instruments that may not have been played for a while:

Week One: Play for only 10-15 minutes at a time, and then let the instrument rest for at least 30 minutes. Repeat

Week Two: Play 20-25 minutes at a time, and then let the instrument rest for 30 minutes. Repeat

Week Three: Play 40-45 minutes at a time, and then let the instrument rest for 30 minutes. Repeat

Week Four: Play as desired.

General Care Instructions

Feather out between playing, and regularly as needed during playing. Swabs are not recommended. However, if you use a swab, never, never pull it all the way through the instrument; instead, always leave the tail of the swab hanging out the bottom of the bell to use in pulling it back out. For best results, insert the feather, turn it 1/2 revolution and then extract it from the bore. Don't try to actually dry out the bore with it. The idea is not to remove all the water from the bore, but to cause the bore to be coated with a film of moisture. The weight of the water will then keep running to the back of the bore where there are no tone holes, and then run down and drip out the bell. You will always have water, so you want to "train" it to go in that direction.

Other reasons some moisture in the bore is good:

1. It helps the Instrument resonate better with more overtones. This has been shown to be the case at several blind demonstrations in front of large groups of oboists.
2. Leaving some moisture in the oboe when packing it up helps keep the pads from drying out. The pads seal better when they are puffed up, leaving a nice "impression" to seal the tone hole tightly. And when the weather or environment is dry, the moisture is good for the wood.
3. Oil the key mechanism (one drop only at each point) with high quality key oil as needed or every three to four months. Be sure to keep oil away from the pads.
4. Do not oil the bore of the instrument.
5. To prevent accidents, store your instrument in its case when not in use.

Enjoy!!! David Weber