Instrument Care Checklist for Band & Orchestra

For directors & parents · Every item comes from the manufacturer care guides listed at the bottom (mostly Yamaha's official guides). Your director's instructions, or the instructions that came with your instrument, always come first.

Everyone, every day

- ☐ Keep the instrument in its case whenever it is not being played, and don't pack anything that presses on it. [1,2]
- ☐ Avoid long, direct exposure to sunlight, rain, heaters and air conditioners, and sudden temperature or humidity changes. [1,3]
- ☐ Do the first assembly, cleaning and lubrication with the teacher present. [1,2,3]
- ☐ Book a cleaning and check-up with a qualified repair technician (Yamaha recommends once a year for flutes and piccolos). [2,1]

Brass with piston valves: trumpet, cornet, euphonium, tuba

- ☐ Before and after playing: lift each piston straight up (don't twist), oil the wide part of the piston, put it back with the guide in its slot, then work the valves. [1,4]
- ☐ Never drip oil down the valve stem or through the vent holes in the bottom caps. [4]
- ☐ Check the slides every time you play and keep them greased so they stay airtight and move smoothly. [1]
- ☐ Never force the mouthpiece in. If it gets stuck, take it to the director or a dealer, never pliers. [1]
- ☐ Wash the mouthpiece in warm soapy water with a mouthpiece brush, then rinse. [1]
- ☐ Wipe off fingerprints with a polishing cloth after playing. [1]
- ☐ If you change valve-oil brands, clean off the old oil first, because mixing oils can make valves sticky. [5]

Brass: trombone

- ☐ Use slide cream on the inner slide, not tuning-slide grease. Use only a thin layer, a fine mist of water, and work the slide. [6]
- ☐ Empty the water through the water key after playing. [6]

Woodwinds: flute and piccolo

- ☐ After playing, dry each section with a cloth wrapped around the cleaning rod so no metal is exposed. [2,7]
- ☐ Only push the rod a short way into the headjoint, so the head cork isn't moved. [7]
- ☐ Dry damp pads with cleaning paper. If they're sticky, use powder paper. [7]
- ☐ Wipe the body with a polishing cloth without pressing on the keys. [2]
- ☐ Don't put cork grease on flute tenons. Use it only on piccolo tenon corks. [2]

Woodwinds: clarinet and other reed instruments

- ☐ Take the reed off after playing, dry it, and store it in a reed holder. [3]
- ☐ Swab the mouthpiece from the cork end, then swab each joint and the barrel. [3,8]
- ☐ Dry the tenons carefully, because moisture there can crack wooden clarinets. [3,8]
- ☐ Grease the corks only when the joints feel tight, and wipe off extra grease before casing. [8]
- ☐ Line up the bridge key while assembling, because careless assembly damages it. [3]
- ☐ Loose or crumbling joint corks need replacing at a shop. Yamaha's rule of thumb is every year or two. [9]

Strings: violin, viola, cello, bass

- ☐ Wipe the instrument and strings with a dry, soft cloth after every playing. [10]
- ☐ Put it straight back in the case. Yamaha says the ideal humidity is about 50% and to keep conditions stable. [10]
- ☐ Keep it out of direct sunlight and the draft from air conditioners. [10]
- ☐ Ask a specialist about heavy rosin build-up. Cleaners that contain polish can remove varnish. [10]
- ☐ Bow: tighten the hair before playing and loosen it right after. [11]
- ☐ Bow: wipe the rosin off the stick, and don't touch the hair. [11]

Percussion (directors: end of season)

- ☐ Snare and concert toms: wipe with a soft cloth and no chemicals. [12]
- ☐ Snare and concert toms: cut head tension by half and loosen the snares 3–4 turns for storage. [12]
- ☐ Bells: wipe the bars without chemicals, store flat in the closed case, and never on top of another mallet instrument. [12]
- ☐ Timpani: leave the heads in tune and store with the pedal toe-down. [12]
- ☐ Take an inventory at the end of each semester, and make one person responsible over breaks. [12]
- ☐ Store everything cool, dry and secure, never in an equipment truck. [12]

French horn (rotary valves) and double reeds (oboe, bassoon) need instrument-specific care that this sheet doesn't cover. Ask the teacher.

Sources:

[1] Yamaha USA FAQ: Trumpet, Cornet, and Flugelhorn Maintenance – https://faq.yamaha.com/usa/s/article/U0002154

[2] Yamaha USA FAQ: Flute and Piccolo Maintenance – https://faq.yamaha.com/usa/s/article/U0002150
[3] Yamaha USA FAQ: Maintaining a Yamaha Clarinet – https://faq.yamaha.com/usa/s/article/U0002151
[4] Yamaha Music Educators Hub: Teach Your Students the Best Way to Oil Valves – https://hub.yamaha.com/music-educators/instruments/winds-instruments/oil-trumpet-valves/
[5] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Trumpet, monthly care – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/trumpet/maintenance/maintenance003.html
[6] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Trombone daily care – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/trombone/maintenance/
[7] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Flute care after playing – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/flute/maintenance/
[8] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Clarinet care after playing – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/clarinet/maintenance/maintenance002.html
[9] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Clarinet seasonal care (joint corks) – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/clarinet/maintenance/maintenance005.html
[10] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Violin daily care – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/violin/maintenance/
[11] Yamaha Musical Instrument Guide: Violin bow maintenance – https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/violin/maintenance/maintenance004.html
[12] Yamaha Music Educators Hub: Off-Season Care and Maintenance for Percussion Instruments – https://hub.yamaha.com/music-educators/instruments/perc/off-season-care-percussion/