

French Horn Maintenance

Before You Play:

Do not consume sugary candy, gum or sodas before playing your instrument.

Always lay your case flat on the floor before opening and closing your French horn case.

Apply oil to the valves every time you play your instrument or at least every couple of days. There are specific types of oil made for the French horn. Use what is recommended by your band director or private lesson teacher. Keeping your valves oiled frequently will ensure fast, quiet action on your French horn. Fast action leads to better technique and playing!

How to Oil Valves:

1. Apply oil to the top of the valve:
 - Remove valve caps
 - Place a drop of oil in the center of the valves
 - Replace the caps and gently tighten down
2. Apply oil to the back of each valve
 - Place a drop of oil in the small gap/ seam between the stationary valve plate and the turning rotor post.

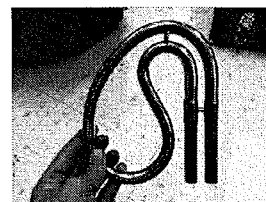
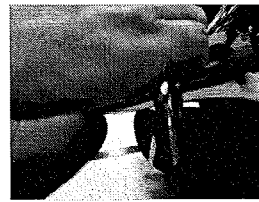
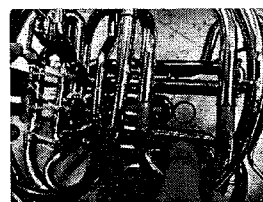
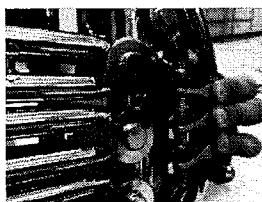


Applying oil to top of the valve

Never force your mouthpiece onto your instrument. If you do, it will most likely get stuck. If this happens, never try to remove it yourself by using force. Instead, bring your instrument to your directors because they will most likely have a mouthpiece removal tool. If not, it can be removed quickly and easily by a representative at a local music store.

After You Play:

Remove excess moisture from the inside of your instrument. Listen to your teacher carefully for instructions. Here are some pictures to help you remember:



Then, wipe down the outside of your French horn with a clean, soft cloth to remove oils and perspiration. This will keep it from tarnishing.



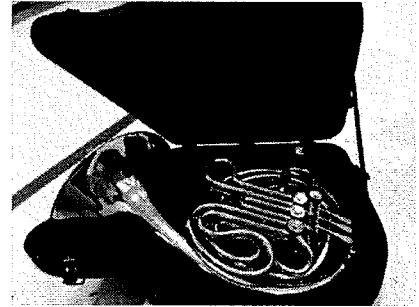
Storage:

Always leave your instrument placed properly in its case when it is not being used. Never leave it on the ground, a chair or a music stand. Always keep it in your hands or in its case.

Do not put music and other items in your case unless there is a space or compartment designed for it. Loose items can damage your instrument. Make sure to keep the mouthpiece in its special compartment.

Never store your French horn in extreme hot or cold temperatures. Extreme temperatures can damage your instrument.

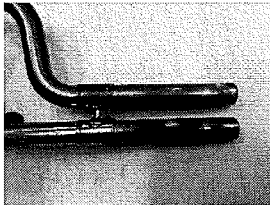
When carrying your instrument, double check that the latches are closed securely. It is a good idea to carry the LID of the case against your leg.



Weekly Maintenance:

Clean out your mouthpiece weekly with soft liquid soap, warm water and a mouthpiece brush.

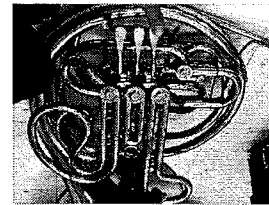
Check to make sure that slides move freely. Lubricate them if they are difficult to move. Pull them out, one at a time, and wipe them with a soft cloth. Afterward, rub a small amount of slide grease on them and carefully insert them back into your instrument.



Clean slide first



Apply slide grease



Carefully re-insert slide

Monthly Maintenance/As Needed:

Bathe your slides in lukewarm water (NOT hot) to remove any buildup. Then re-grease the slides before replacing them.

The inside of your French horn should be thoroughly cleaned every few months in lukewarm water- NEVER hot water. Your teacher will give you specific instructions on how to give your instrument a deep cleaning at home.

Oil the inside of the valves. To do this, remove the valve slide and pour the oil into the inner valve slide. Replace the slide, push it all the way in and then turn the horn so the oil will run down into the rotor valve. Gravity will help accomplish this. Afterward, press the valve lever up and down to distribute the oil evenly. If you need help or have questions, ask your director or private lesson teacher.

Annual Maintenance:

If you own your instrument, summer is a great time to take your French horn to a local music store for an annual check-up. Yes, musical instruments need "check-ups" too! The store will do minor repairs if needed and do a thorough chemical cleaning of your instrument. If you are renting, this maintenance is usually covered in the rental program.

For more articles about caring for your French horn, visit www.BandDirectorsTalkShop.com.

