

Trombone Maintenance

Trombone maintenance is a practice which should be a part of every trombonist's daily playing routine. Keeping a clean instrument not only serves to maintain the value of your investment, but it also helps keep your slide and valve movements easy and smooth, allowing for more maneuverability with the instrument and better sound quality. Here are

Steps

1. Disassemble the trombone by unscrewing the bell portion from the slide and removing the mouthpiece.
2. Remove the outer slide and wipe off any excess grease, oil or moisture from the inner slides with a soft rag.
3. Use a cleaning rod or a "snake" (a flexible rubber coated metal wire with a small brush on both ends), clean out any excess grease, oil or moisture from the insides of the outer and inner slides.
4. Remove the main tuning slide from the bell portion and clean the inside with a cleaning rod or a "snake".
5. Do the same for F attachment tuning slide if your trombone has the F attachment.
6. Disassemble the rotary valve for the F attachment, rinse off each piece and wipe off excess oil or grease.
7. Rinse all trombone components with warm water in a shower or bath. Special attention should be given to the rotary valve, water key (or spit valve), and the outer and inner slides.
8. Dry off all components with a soft rag, making sure that no large pockets of water remain in any of the tubing or in the rotary valve.
9. Apply necessary grease to the tuning slides and attach them to the bell portion of the instrument.
10. Reassemble the rotary valve and apply necessary oils. Most of the oil should be applied by dripping it in through the pipe where the bell section and playing slide meet, though a few drops may be applied to the rotary valve directly.
11. Reassemble inner slide and outer slide and attach it to the bell section of the trombone.
12. Apply necessary slide grease or oils to the inner slide.
13. Wipe down the entire outside of the trombone using a soft rag and a spray bottle filled with alcohol to remove any fingerprints or grease that may have been left behind.

Tips

- These steps are primarily guidelines for a thorough cleaning of the instrument which should be done every one to two months, depending on how often you use your trombone. For a more regular upkeep, follow steps 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, and 13 at the end of a full day of use.

- The playing slide may require more frequent lubrication with grease or oil. Simply apply as necessary.
- Make sure the instrument is wiped down after all parts have been reattached and lubricated, as this will help you remove all finger prints or oils from your hands, valves or slides for a nice, polished look.