

Proper Tuba Maintenance

Tubas are very expensive to purchase, so whether it is yours or your school's, don't let it fall out of good shape.

1. Read all warnings and prepare containers of water, etc. before starting.
2. Remove and disassemble all slides and valves, remembering how they go back together.
3. Take the body of the tuba and set it on top of a towel in a bath-tub full of warm, not hot, water and a little mild, non-abrasive soap. Rub gently with a wash cloth to remove all gunk. If you have to pick the tuba up during cleaning be very careful because it's heavy when full of water.
4. Get a strong person to help you carefully rotate the tuba head over heels, so to speak, to get all the water out and then let it air-dry on a soft bath towel.
5. While it's drying place all slides in the soapy water and rub gently with wet paper towels to clean. Clean the insides of them with the snake. Rinse them in the clean water then dry off with a paper towel and set them somewhere safe.
6. Put all parts of the valves except the felt or rubber bumpers(which are very easily replaced if need be) and any other parts that aren't metal in the soapy water and clean with wet paper towel. Rinse in normal water and dry with more paper towels. Don't use the snake through those little holes in the valves.
7. When all parts of your tuba (or other brass piston instrument), including the body are completely dry, reassemble the valves , putting a few drops of valve oil around the top of them and twist them back in to place on the tuba.
8. Before putting the slides back in, put a small amount of slide grease on the part that goes inside the tuba and rub on with a paper towel, not your finger remember, and wipe off any excess. Then slide back into place on tuba and re-tune before you next play.

Tips

- The valves and slides should be cleaned every month or two, and the body of the tuba no more than twice a year.
- This works pretty well for all piston brass instruments.

Warnings

- These instructions are for piston valve tubas only, *not* rotary valves.
- Do all steps very gently. Tubas can dent and scratch very easily.
- Don't touch the part of the slide that goes inside the tuba because the oils on your hands will deteriorate them.

- If your slides are stuck, you have to go get them professionally pulled. It's not that expensive to have done.
- NEVER boil your mouth piece! Also DON'T stand the tuba on end without a stand as this will cause the bell to flatten over time.

Things You'll Need

- Tuba
- Bathtub
- Two bath towels and a washcloth
- Mild, non-abrasive soap
- Wire snake
- Two-ply paper towels or absorbent soft rag you don't mind throwing away
- Small plastic container full of warm water and before said soap
- Another container with plain water
- Valve oil and slide grease