

Trombone Care and Cleaning

- I. **Slide Cleaning** - Some players swab after every practice. You may like that often or less depending how much you play and whether or not you brush your teeth before playing.

Materials: funnel, trombone Brass Saver, cleaning rod and cheese cloth (or the Slide-O-Mix sheath or a shotgun cleaning rod with sheath), denatured or rubbing alcohol, clean cotton rag like an old tee-shirt

1. Thread the cheese cloth through the cleaning rod and wrap so that the rod, especially the tip, is completely covered to protect the slide from damage. Wrap the end thickly enough so that it will need firm pressure to run through the slide but is not impossible. Set this aside until step 5.
2. At a large sink or tub, funnel water into the slide (rinse with parts together). Use enough water to fill the crook (the u-shaped bottom) and pour it out.
3. Run a Brass-Saver through the slide. If you have a removable leadpipe, remove that first, run the brass saver, and set the pipe safely aside.
4. Separate slide parts and store the inner slide safely (doorknobs make convenient hangars for draining).
5. Dip the cleaning rod in a small amount of denatured or rubbing alcohol (generally water is fine; alcohol for a deeper cleaning), to help remove old creams, oils, and dirt. You can also occasionally apply brass polish to the cleaning rod cloth to smooth the unlacquered inside of the outer slide. If you do this things may feel worse before they feel better. You would need to rinse a lot but on an older slide it can improve action.
6. Grip the cleaning rod and cloth firmly with one hand and an outer slide tube with the other and run the cleaning rod through several times. Switch tubes and repeat. Partially unwrap the cloth so it is thinner to carefully repeat this on the inner slide, while holding each inner slide tube. For the mouthpiece side, you either must have a removable leadpipe or carefully send the cleaning rod in from the bottom and only part-way. Avoid contact with the leadpipe. You can skip the inner slide since the Brass Saver has already gone through, or do it to be extra thorough.
7. Using the funnel again, rinse the inside of the outer slide and rinse any alcohol that may have dripped onto the outside of the slide.
8. Back to the inner slide, dab a soft cotton rag (not a towel or paper towel, which scratches) with alcohol (occasionally) or water. Hold the inner slide by the cross brace and gently pull the rag over the tubes, removing old creams, oils, and dirt. Repeat with water to wipe the alcohol off and proceed to section II.

II. **Slide Lubricating** - as needed

Materials: slide cream and spray bottle or synthetic lubricant like Yamaha Trombone Lubricant or Slide-O-Mix

CREAM:

1. Apply a small fingertip (very little is needed) of slide cream evenly around the slide stockings (the thicker bottom few inches of the inner slide). Wipe extra cream from your hands onto the rest of the slide.
2. Assemble one tube of the inner slide onto one tube of the outer slide. Exercise the slide, spreading cream around the inside of the outer slide tube. Repeat with the other tube then assemble the slide.
3. Spray the slide with water now and as needed between lubrications.
4. If the slide is slow, thin out the coating of cream by lightly running a damp rag over the inner slide tubes.

SLIDE LUBE

1. Follow instructions on the bottle. Instructions vary with brand. Usually apply a small squirt or two to the inner slide past 7th position.

III. **Bell Care** - every two to three months or less

Materials: soft clean cotton rag, tuning slide grease, rag for old grease, denatured alcohol, Brass-Saver, short cleaning rod and cloth or the euphonium Brass Saver cleaning stick

1. Shine the bell by wiping it with a clean wet rag (not a towel or paper towel). Gently wipe it dry.
2. Remove and rinse tuning slides, inside and out. Some tuning slides are very difficult to move, remove, or replace. Don't force them, walk them on or off, or lean on the bell section when trying to move them. Visit a repair shop if needed.
3. Dab a soft cotton rag with alcohol (occasionally) or water and gently remove the old grease from tuning slide tubes. Rinse the alcohol off tubes and anywhere else. You can use a Brass-Saver, cleaning rod and cloth, or the firm euphonium Brass Saver stick for the insides of tubing.
4. Apply a small fingertip of tuning slide grease to each tube.
5. Exercise tuning slide tubes individually then fully assemble.

IV. **Valve Care** - monthly or more

Materials: light and heavy oils (preferably synthetic) like Hetman #11 and #13

1. Apply heavy oil (13) to the external linkage parts, anywhere there is metal moving against metal (springs, ball joints, and on the moving circle under the rotor valve cap which you will have to remove if you have a rotor).
2. Remove the main tuning slide to drip light oil (11) down that tube while moving the valve. That is the only place for the lighter oil, where there is the most metal against metal.
3. After oiling the valve, set the bell on a trombone stand to drain for a few minutes without the slide, to prevent valve oil from mixing with slide cream.

V. **Mouthpiece Cleaning** - weekly or more

Materials: mouthpiece brush, mild soap, silver cream

1. Run water through the mouthpiece while sending the brush up the shank from the bottom. You can also use a drop of dish/hand soap.
2. Use your finger to rub dish/hand soap over the rim, and rinse. Don't use the brush on the rim since it can scratch (especially gold plating).
3. Use silver cream to remove tarnish if desired. Black mouthpieces can shine again if you add and remove this product.