

How to Care for Your French Horn (I)

Before You Play

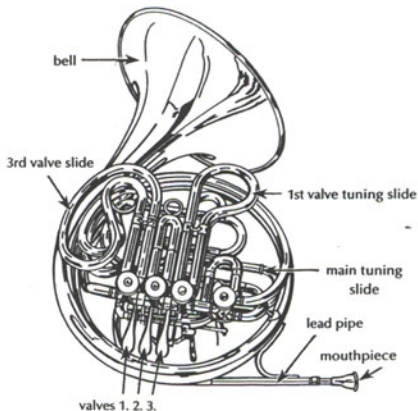
There is very little to assemble on a French horn. All you have to do is place the mouthpiece into the lead pipe. Do this with a gentle twisting motion. Do not hit or pop the mouthpiece into place. This can lead to a stuck mouthpiece. Oil the valves every day you play your French horn or every second day. Remove the rotary valve cover and oil all moving parts. Alternately, remove each valve slide, place two or three drops of oil inside the valve tubing, replace the slide, and wiggle the valve.

Tuning and Playing

To lower the pitch of the French horn, lengthen the instrument by pulling the main tuning slide out. To raise the pitch, push the main tuning slide in.

The moisture that accumulates inside the French horn is not "spit." It is condensation from the player's breath—just like the moisture from a steaming kettle that condenses on windows. When this moisture accumulates inside the French horn, it makes it gurgle and has to be removed. Remove the mouthpiece and the main tuning slide, rotate the horn, and dump the liquid. Depress each valve in turn, remove the valve slide, and dump the liquid. Keep the valve depressed while you replace the slide.

If your mouthpiece gets stuck while you are playing, do not attempt to remove it yourself or have anyone yank it out for you. Forcibly removing a stuck mouthpiece can break



Double French Horn

the braces on a French horn. Carry the French horn to your teacher (it won't fit into your case) and he or she will remove it with a tool made specially for pulling mouthpieces. To prevent stuck mouthpieces, always insert the mouthpiece gently, don't pop it during rehearsal, and don't use too much pressure while you play.

After playing, wipe away finger marks with a soft cloth. This will remove perspiration which can damage the lacquer and metal. Do not use polish on lacquered instruments because it can scratch the finish.

How to Care for Your French Horn (II)

Regular Maintenance

A clean French horn works and sounds better than a dirty one. Once a week clean the mouthpiece with warm water and a mouthpiece brush. Help keep the mouthpiece and instrument clean by avoiding gum, candy, and pop before you play. Rinse your mouth if you have been eating anything sweet.

Once a month give your French horn a bath. Take all the slides out. Take the valves out one at a time and lay them in order on a towel. This will help you to put them back in the correct order when you have finished. Put the slides and the body of the French horn into warm soapy water. Run snake brushes through all the tubes. Rinse them off in clean lukewarm water. Wipe the water off the outside of the horn. Don't leave the instrument in the water too long or the lacquer finish can peel off.

Put the French horn back together. Oil the valves and grease the slides. For slide lubrication you can use petroleum jelly, anhydrous lanolin, or commercial slide grease. Wipe off excess grease.

Supplies Needed to Care for the French Horn

1. Rotary valve oil
2. Slide grease
3. Mouthpiece brush
4. Soft cloth
5. Snake brushes

Handling the French Horn

The French horn will dent easily. Dents look ugly, affect the tone of the instrument, and are expensive to remove. Always put the French horn in its case correctly. Never set the French horn in its case with the bell hanging over the edge. Anyone accidentally closing the case on a French horn left like this will crinkle the bell. Don't cram books and music into your case because the pressure on the tubing can cause damage. Be sure the mouthpiece and other accessories are put away properly so they don't jar loose and cause damage. If your case is equipped with a restraining strap, fasten it. Remember that the French horn is an expensive instrument—not a toy—and should be handled with care.

How to Care for Your French Horn (III)

Directions: Match each clue in the left column with the correct answer in the right column. Write the letter of the answer in the blank.

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| 1. _____ A French horn works best when it is _____ . | A. metal polish |
| 2. _____ You should never do this to your mouthpiece. | B. valve tubing |
| 3. _____ Your valves need this each time you play. | C. clean |
| 4. _____ Never eat this before you play. | D. snake |
| 5. _____ Clean your mouthpiece this often. | E. candy |
| 6. _____ These should be removed with a soft cloth after you play. | F. once a month |
| 7. _____ This can scratch the finish of your French horn. | G. oil |
| 8. _____ You should bathe your French horn this often. | H. finger marks |
| 9. _____ A flexible brush used to clean the tubes of a French horn. | I. anhydrous lanolin |
| 10. _____ Bathe the French horn in this. | J. main tuning slide |
| 11. _____ To lower the pitch of the French horn, pull the _____ out. | K. soapy water |
| 12. _____ If your mouthpiece gets stuck, do not attempt to _____ it! | L. remove |
| 13. _____ You can grease slides with this. | M. once a week |
| 14. _____ An alternate method of oiling the valves is to remove the valve slides and place two or three drops of oil inside the _____ and replace the slide. | N. pop |
| 15. _____ Always remember that your French horn is an _____ musical instrument and handle it with care. | O. expensive |