

# Trombone Maintenance

## Basic levels

**Level One:** Functionality and health safety.

**Tools:** Slide cleaning snake and liquid detergent (Tide, germicidal dish soap- don't use hand soaps as this may have emollients such as lanolin that will not help slide action).

**Cleaning:** This is best done in a clean bathtub or large utility tub. Adjust water until very warm. Remove outer slide, pour a ½ teaspoon (approx.) of your chosen soap into both outer tubes, fill slide with warm water. Use the slide snake to thoroughly scrub interior of slide, including bow at the bottom of the slide. Rinse out soapy water, then put snake back in slide tube and while running water through the slide, use the snake to help scrub loose any soap/corrosion residue that may be left. Wipe off inner slide and lubricate before re-assembling the slide. **DO THIS AT LEAST EVERY 2 WEEKS, MORE OFTEN IF YOU'VE HAD A COLD OR VIRUS INFECTION!!**

*This is the minimum maintenance needed to keep a slide working properly*

**Level Two:** This level will promote a more professional level slide action

**Tools:** In addition to the above tools/supplies you will need a cleaning rod and an old bed sheet (I use white muslin which I bought at a close out store) that can be cut/torn into sheets also a cleaning solvent such as Alisyn synthetic solvent (available through the Brasswind or International Music catalogues) or failing that, rubbing alcohol will work.

The 1<sup>st</sup> step is to cut a piece of cloth about twice the length of the cleaning rod and about 6" wide. This will then be threaded through the eye at the thin end of the rod to the middle of the cloth. Pull both ends of the cloth to parallel with the rod and then twist the rod while holding the two ends of the cloth. The end result when you are done twisting will be that the rod is completely covered with the twisted cloth preventing the rod from scratching the inner surface of the slide and providing a large surface area to clean the inside of the slide. Apply your chosen solvent to the last couple inches of your cleaning rod and insert it into the slide tube, making sure that you always have a hold on the cloth ends as well as the rod handle. If the cleaning rod binds, pulling on the cloth ends alone will free it whereas pulling on the rod handle alone will wedge it more tightly into the tube and you may have to make a trip to the repair shop to free it. At this point you need to begin moving the rod in and out to polish more corrosion off the inside of the outer slide. If you have the cloth wrapped properly so the cloth/rod fits snugly, the outer slide will warm up as you polish the inside of the slide. If you make the cloth long enough you can also untwist it and then shift it to a clean area to continue to clean the slide.

**Level Three**: requires that you do all the above steps plus you will need a car polish, which is safe for clear coat finishes.

You will be continuing to polish the interior of the slide as in level two but now you will be using the car polish to create a smoother interior surface (if you can, get a car wax that contains Teflon or a similar product like the “Fomblin” in “Autofom”-this is what I use).

Once again wrap your cleaning rod with a clean cloth and this time apply the car polish to the last couple inches and insert the rod and work it for about 15-20 strokes or until the portion of the cloth with the polish on it is well blackened. Do this until the rag will only become gray instead of black. At this point, give the polish 15-20 minutes to dry and polish the residue out with another clean section of cloth. Lastly, make sure you rinse the slide out when you are done so you don't breathe in the wax powder!!