

SAXOPHONE

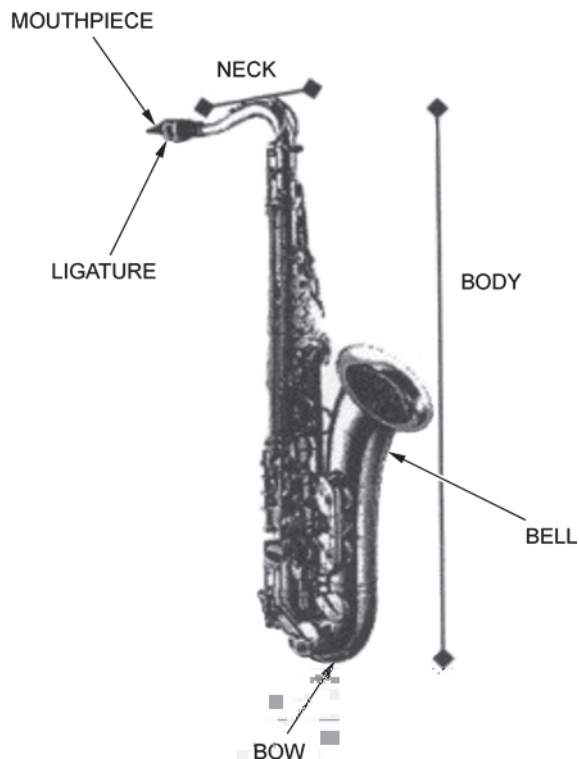


Figure 11 The Parts of the Saxophone

Note. Created by Director Cadets 3, 2004, Ottawa, ON: Department of National Defence.

The saxophone must be held carefully so undue pressure is not put on the key mechanisms.

Assembly

To assemble the saxophone, use the following steps:

1. Set the instrument case on a flat and stable surface. Make sure the case is facing up. The case latches are the best indication to verify this. Open the case.
2. Put the neck strap or shoulder strap around the neck or shoulders.
3. Apply cork grease to the cork tenons.
4. Hold the neck in the right hand and the mouthpiece in the left hand.
5. Gently push the neck and the mouthpiece together in a twisting motion.
6. Loosen the tension screw on the top of the body.
7. Hold the body by the bell in the right hand and the neck in the left hand.
8. Gently push the body and the neck together in a twisting motion while paying attention to the octave key.
9. Attach the saxophone body to the neck or shoulder strap.

10. Rotate the neck so the mouthpiece is at a comfortable height to be able to play with the upper body and the neck straight. Tighten the screw on the top of the body to the point at which the neck is held firmly in place. Do not tighten the screw beyond this point.
11. Adjust the length of the strap so the mouthpiece lines up to the mouth.
12. Loosen the screws on the ligature. Place the ligature on the mouthpiece.
13. Moisten the reed by putting the thin end in the mouth.
14. Holding the reed with the thumb and the forefinger, place the reed, stock first, between the mouthpiece and the ligature.
15. Slide the ligature down so the top edge of the ligature is in line with etched guidelines on the mouthpiece. If the mouthpiece does not have guidelines, line up the top edge of the ligature with the bottom of the reed's cut.
16. Align the reed so both the bottom and the top are in line with the mouthpiece.
17. Align the tip of the reed with the end of the mouthpiece so a black hairline is visible behind the reed.
18. Tighten the screws on the ligature to hold the reed firmly in place. Do not tighten the ligature.



Many types of ligatures exist for saxophones. Most are metal with two screws on the bottom of the mouthpiece but some ligatures have screws on the top of the mouthpiece while others have only one screw or are made of synthetic or real leather.

Disassembly

The disassembly process is the reverse of the assembly process.

Storage

Most saxophone cases are designed to fit only the instrument, a few reeds, a neck or shoulder strap and maintenance supplies. Storing anything else in the case may cause damage to the instrument.



Some saxophones have a plug at the top end of the body. This plug is used to prevent damage to the octave key mechanism. It is important not to lose the plug and to put it back in place when the instrument is stored.

Maintenance



Never try to pull a stuck swab out. Further attempts to pull out the swab will eventually wedge it further into the bore. A stuck swab should be removed by moving it in the direction it entered the instrument with a thin stick made of wood or plastic to avoid scratching the interior of the instrument.

Steps to swab the saxophone:

1. Blow air in through the wide end of the reed to remove moisture and place reed in storage case.
2. Remove the mouthpiece and wipe the inside dry with a piece of soft cloth.

3. Hold the neck and carefully shake the neck to remove moisture.
4. Gently swab the neck with a saxophone neck swab.



Only use a saxophone neck swab to swab the neck of the saxophone. Anything else may get stuck. If this happens, it should be removed by pushing it in the direction it entered the instrument with a thin stick made of wood or plastic to avoid scratching the interior or the neck.



Figure 12 Swabbing the Saxophone Neck Using a Neck Swab

Note. From *Guide to Teaching Woodwinds* (5th ed.), (p. 158), by F. Westphal, 1990, Sacramento, CA: McGraw-Hill.
Copyright 1962 by Frederick W. Westphal.

5. Use a soft cloth to wipe the inside and the outside of the connecting tenons.
6. Drop the weighted end of the saxophone swab into the bell of the saxophone and turn the saxophone over so that the weight drops out the other end and pull the swab through the body.
7. Repeat Step 6, two or three times.



Figure 13 Swabbing the Saxophone Body

Note. From *Guide to Teaching Woodwinds* (5th ed.), (p. 158), by F. Westphal, 1990, Sacramento, CA: McGraw-Hill.
Copyright 1962 by Frederick W. Westphal.



A wire handled swab designed specifically for the alto and tenor saxophone can also be used. It is easier to use, but must not be kept in the saxophone case compartment or in the saxophone itself until it has dried.

THE USE OF CORK GREASE

Cork grease ensures that the parts of the instrument fit together easily and helps avoid damage to the cork tenons. Greasing cork tenons is an important part of instrument maintenance for woodwinds. It should be done on a regular basis.



Cork grease should only be used on cork tenons. Flutes do not have any cork tenons. As such, cork grease should be never applied to flutes.

Some bassoons use non-stick tenons. These are kept lubricated with paraffin.

Applying Cork Grease

Before assembling the instrument, apply a thin coat of cork grease to the cork tenons. The cork grease should be spread evenly across the cork tenon using a finger.



Cork grease comes in two different packages: a small square box and a tube.



Figure 14 Applying Cork Grease to a Cork Tenon

Note. From Yamaha Canada Music (n.d.), *Maintenance Manuals for Wind Instruments*. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from <http://www.yamaha.ca/content/bandorchestra/coolstuff/manuals/index.jsp?from=coolstuff>