

Horn Maintenance and Repair

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Learning to perform routine maintenance and *minor* repairs on your horn is an essential part of your musical education. These tips should help you establish and follow a regular maintenance routine for your instrument.

Suggested Horn Maintenance Schedule

If followed, this plan will help you avoid any major (i.e. costly) repairs.

Frequency	Maintenance Type	Comments
1-3 Days	Oil valve rotors and bearings as needed. Blow 2-3 drops of oil through your horn at the end of each day of playing.	Recommended Valve Oils: Hetman Lubricants (rotor and bearing oil) Yamaha Valve Spindle Oil Al Cass Valve Oil
1-3 Weeks	Clean out leadpipe with a snake. ¹ Clean mouthpiece with soap and water, using a mouthpiece brush.	A rubber or plastic coated snake is recommended to avoid scratching the inside of the instrument.
1-3 Weeks	Remove valve slides and tuning slides. Wipe clean and dry with a paper towel, and reapply slide grease. Excess corrosion on slides and unlaquered horns should be removed using a <i>mild</i> metal polish, such as Simichrome.	Recommended Slide Grease: Schilke Roché-Thomas Apply the slide grease to the top of the slide, then replace in the horn. The grease will be distributed evenly when you replace the slide. Avoid using too much grease, and wipe away any excess.
1-3 Months	Bathe horn in warm, soapy water. Clean all slides and leadpipe with a snake and/or brush. Rinse and dry thoroughly, then grease slides and oil valves.	Use only a mild, liquid detergent such as Dawn. Allow the body of the horn to soak while you clean the slides and mouthpiece.
Yearly	Restring valves, even if the strings do not look worn.	Recommended Valve String: Braided Dacron Fishing Line 50-80lb test
Yearly	Have the horn professionally cleaned.	I recommend Ultrasonic cleaning over acid baths, as there is less chance of damaging your instrument. It is also a "greener" process, since it only uses a mild detergent.

¹ Of course, brushing and flossing your teeth after meals will help prevent any debris from getting into the horn.