

How to care for your TJ wooden flute and piccolo



The beautiful time-honoured sound of organic wood comes with some important care duties.

Woods are specially selected, dried, and seasoned for many years before being used. In order that the wood is then not to crack it is very important to avoid too much moisture too quickly (*See 'Playing In'*). Also, extremes of temperature as well as temperature changes should be avoided (*see Care and Maintenance*).

1. Playing In:

As moisture needs to be given to the wood gradually it is very important to slowly increase the playing time over the first 5 to 6 weeks. It is suggested that 15 mins per day in the first week, 30 mins per day in the second, building up slowly to your normal practice time. A pull through should then be used after each practice to remove any excess moisture. This procedure is important to help the wood remoisturise. The procedure should not be rushed.

Use of oil is covered in 'Care and Maintenance' (below)

It is also important that the head or flute is played and kept at room temperature where possible. Warming the bore gently with breath and the outside with hand warmth if necessary.

2. Care and Maintenance:

In addition to the playing in routine there may be a need to apply a very light oil to the bore from time to time. Please note that this is mainly to add a thin barrier to avoid excess moisture and may be required if the head or flute has not been played for some time. Often the bore can look dry inside. As mentioned, previously, the wood should be as played in as possible first.

Apply a few drops of Almond oil or a proprietary Musical instrument Bore oil to a pull through and once applied look down the bore to see a thin film. Build up gradually and allow 8 to 10 hours between applications.

The same oil can be used sparingly on the outside of the wood should the colour start to lighten. This applies especially to wood lip plates and embouchure holes. Don't be tempted to add oils to the mechanism tone holes as this can cause problems to pads and the keywork - it is preferred that these gain their moisture from playing or from the oiling of the bore.

Always make sure that all excess oil is removed and generally use the 'less is more' principle. Additionally, temperature is extremely important so make sure the head or flute does not become too cold or hot. Any sudden temperature change can also cause the wood to crack.

Servicing of your wooden flute or piccolo should be every year to 18 months as usual.