

Serious Crack Prevention

Oiling the bore of an instrument has been a controversial issue. Paul Covey recommends oiling the bore of his instruments once a day during the break-in period. On the flip side of the coin, Hans Moennig said never do it! People who have advised against oiling the bore of an instrument usually do so for one of two reasons: first, they are concerned that oil doesn't get on the pads and, second, no one should be oiling the bore of a plastic instrument, or one with a rubber bore liner. This includes all plastic oboes, all Kreul oboes, and the more recent Laubin oboes. If you know that you have a completely wooden instrument, and if you aim your oiled feather along the south side of the bore instead of where the pads are, you will be doing the right thing. Since players have started following these recommendations, my crack work has decreased by about 30%. So I know it works!

Oil the bore of a new instrument once a week for the first few months, gradually decreasing the frequency after that. Use a feather which has been dipped in a tiny bit of almond oil (Hain markets almond oil, so it can be ordered at your local health food store) or linseed oil (available at art supply stores). If you have a second instrument, alternate them, playing the new instrument every second day, and for very short periods of time, keeping the bore as dry as possible. Gradually increase the playing time, and try to keep to the every other day program as long as you can. This also applies to older instruments which haven't been played in years.

Here's the *raison d'être* of it all: the oil will help prevent moisture/water from expanding the inner bore. Cracks in the top joint are the result of the bore getting wet and expanding, while the outside of the remains as it was. The wood's reaction to this stress is a crack, and this is why so many new instruments crack where all that moisture condenses in the upper joint. The second point is playing every other day. The bore of a wooden instrument does not dry out completely in one day. It takes two days. Therefore, if you let it dry completely before playing it again, potential cracks have a chance to close up. If the instrument is played every day, the bore never really dries out, and cracks are more likely to occur.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CARE OF A NEW OBOE

Everyday Use

1. *Don't blow warm air into the instrument.* Let the instrument lie in its case in room temperature. You can also hold it under your arms to get it warmed up.
2. Swab out the instrument every *10 minutes*.
3. Use a paint brush to brush off the dust and feather debris off the instrument.
4. Check to make sure the humidifier in the case is full of water. If not fill it.

Alternate the use of the new and the used oboe every other day in order for the bore of the new instrument to dry out.

Once A Week

1. Oil the bore with a turkey feather. Use *almond oil*. Put a small dab on the end and direct the tip of the feather down at the bottom of the bore to only coat the bottom of the bore.
2. Use silver cloth on the instrument.