

## MOUTHPIECE CARE AND MAINTENANCE

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Introduction: As I travel around the country I am constantly amazed to find that many clarinetists don't know how to properly care for their prized mouthpieces. They have spent much time and money finding the right equipment for their needs, but then watch it deteriorate over time due to a lack of proper care. If the guidelines below are followed in a consistent manner, that prized mouthpiece can provide many years of trouble free service.

### Mouthpiece Care And Maintenance

Your mp has several enemies that are attacking it on a daily basis.

- a. Saliva deposits – These are left behind each time you play your mp. Preventing these deposits from building up is much easier than trying to remove them once they have taken hold.

**SOLUTION:** Wash you mp ONCE A WEEK in COOL water and a mild antibacterial hand soap solution. Place a few drops of soap and water inside the mp and use a Q Tip to clean the inside. Use your fingers with the soap to clean the outside of the mp, using your fingernails to clean around the mp teeth cushion if one is used. Then rinse the the mp well with COOL running water and wipe dry with a soft cloth. If you have one of our mp swabs and can use this each time you play this will provide added protection against saliva deposit buildup.

- b. Nicks and scratches: Guard your mp in the same way you would protect your eyes or any delicate object. NEVER lay your mp down on any hard surface on it's reed table. This can scratch and damage both the table and even the side rails of the facing. NEVER pull your instrument swab through the mp. It has too much material in it and pulling it across the tip rail can change these very critical measurements. Be very careful when placing a metal ligature on your mp. The tip of the mp can be damaged by contact with the ligature.
- c. Heat and Sunlight: Both heat and sunlight can damage your mp. Heat can cause it to warp, which will destroy the critical measurements that make it what it is. Sunshine attacks the chemical make up of the rubber, causing premature aging and deterioration. If possible don't play your prized mp in a direct sunlight venue such as an outdoor concert. If at all possible use a spare mp you have selected for this situation.