



## *Professional Wind Instrument Consultants of NJ*

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### RECOMMENDED BREAK-IN PROCESS

#### **First phase: 4 - 6 weeks**

- Play 15 minutes a day, twice a day, with at least an hour break in between
- Swab thoroughly- focus on the tenons and sockets. The end grain is where moisture will wick into the grain so you want to make sure these stay dry.
- Keep tone holes dry- you can use cigarette paper for this.
- Don't play in a cold room.
- Avoid climate shocks (hot to cold, cold to hot, etc) including humidity changes.
- Avoid travel if possible (different climates).
- Keep orange peels in the case to help regulate the humidity.

#### **Second Phase: 4 - 6 weeks**

- Increase to 30-minute intervals.
- All of the above still apply.

#### **Third Phase: 3 months**

- Increase to hour-long intervals (keep the hour break in between).
- All of the above still apply - traveling is ok but be sensitive to the environment.

#### **Things of which to be mindful**

- Your clarinet is made of wood, an organic material that is as sensitive to the environment as you are. If you are comfortable, your clarinet is more likely to be comfortable.
- Cracks are caused by rapid changes in temperature or humidity, so try to minimize these shocks. This includes coming in from the cold and blowing warm air into a cold instrument, or playing an instrument in a cold room. It introduces stresses on the grain when the wood in the bore is expanding while being warmed with 98 degree humid air as the exterior of the instrument is trying to shrink from the cold, dry environment.
- The worst cases we have heard about are situations on a hot stage or pit when a stage door is opened at intermission to cool things off. Suddenly cold air rolls across the stage or into the pit, and you literally can hear the crackling or snapping sound as oboes and clarinets crack. Keep your instrument covered, or better yet, break it down, swab it out and put it in the case during the break.
- While you may wish to oil the bore of your clarinet, it will void the warranty. Some oil is used in the manufacturing process, but the bore is reamed and polished after it is oiled. If the bore is subsequently oiled again, it will raise the grain which may actually change the bore dimensions and thus the treasured playing attributes of your hand-selected instrument.

*These guidelines are not a guarantee of a crack-free experience, but we have had good experience lowering the probability of a crack by following them appropriately. As always, if you have any questions, please contact us.*