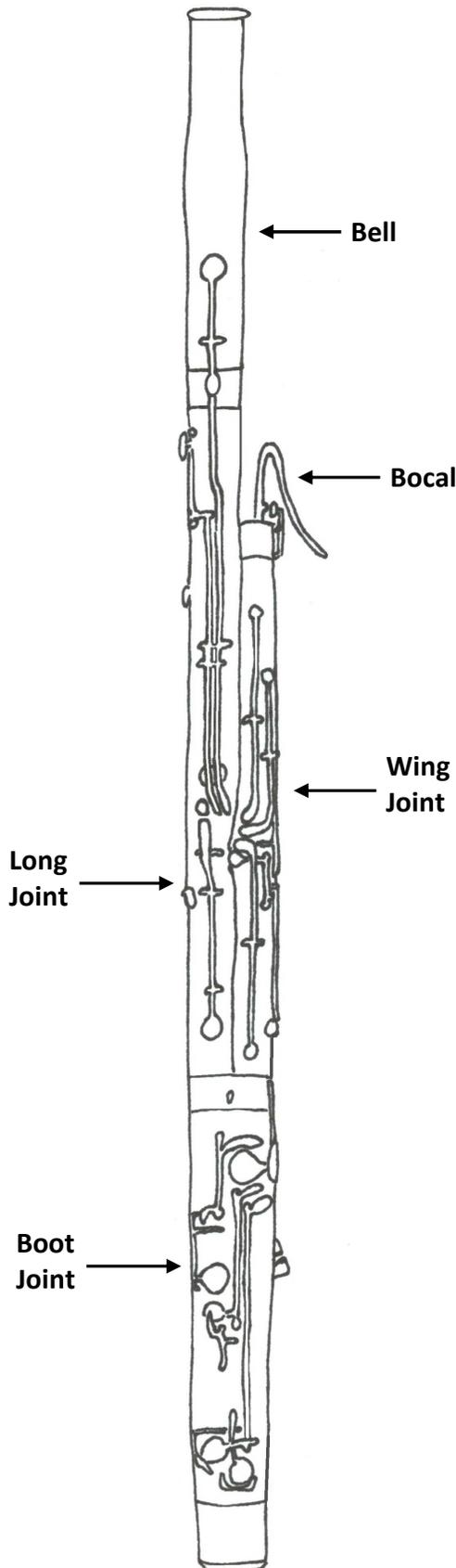


# Bassoon Care



## Assembly

1. Insert the wing joint into the smaller hole in the boot joint. Notice the area of the wing joint that has no keys and is half-moon shaped. This side goes towards the center.
2. Insert the long joint right beside the wing joint into the other boot joint hole. Again, the side of the long joint without keys goes towards the middle.
3. If your instrument has a body lock, lock the long joint and wing joint together.
4. Place the bell on top of the instrument and align the metal mechanism that connects the long joint to the bell.
5. Insert the bocal. Line up the tiny hole in the bocal with the pad that juts off the wing joint.
6. Place the seat strap on your chair and then connect it to the bassoon. There should be a hook on the seat strap and a small hole on the bottom of the boot joint for this purpose. If you do not have this small hole, you will need to use a seat strap with a boot cup that cradles the bottom of the instrument.
7. Soak the reed, and screw it tightly onto the bocal.

## Cleaning

You will need to swab out the **wing joint** and the **boot joint** after **every** time you play. No exceptions! Purchase a silk swab with a long bead chain on the end. The swab made by Hodge Products works the best and can be used to clean the entire instrument.

To clean the wing joint, insert the swab into the larger end of the joint and gently pull it through.

The boot joint is trickier to clean. Insert the swab into the larger hole until it hits the bottom, and move the boot joint back and forth tipping it towards the other side. Then flip it over until the swab chain goes around the bottom and out the other hole. Now pull the swab through.

Blow out the bocal using the instructions on page 2.

The long joint and bell do not need to be swabbed since no moisture should accumulate in these pieces.

## Reeds

Do not soak your reed for more than one minute before you play to prevent it from becoming waterlogged.

The reed should be the first thing you put away after playing, as it is the most fragile piece of the instrument. Do not carry the bassoon around with the reed still attached.

Store your reeds in a well ventilated box. Reeds that are closed up too tightly can easily mold. There are many nice reed boxes on the market, or you can re-purpose a box from home. When making your own reed box, it must follow these simple criteria:

- ✓ It should be made out of a porous material like wood or cardboard. You can also use a plastic box if holes are drilled for ventilation.
- ✓ It will fit easily into your bassoon case.
- ✓ It has adequate padding to prevent reeds from rattling around. A paper towel works well for this purpose.
- ✓ It cannot accidentally come open in your case. Use a rubber band!

## Tenons

Tenons are the ends of each joint that connect the bassoon together. They are covered with either string or cork. Be aware that your bassoon will most likely shrink and swell with the seasons due to changes in temperature and humidity.

If **string wrapped tenons** are too tight, ask your teacher to remove some of the string. Or, carefully apply a little bit of paraffin wax. If string tenons are too loose, simply wrap them with a small amount of waxed dental floss.

If **corked tenons** are too tight, apply cork grease. If there is any old cork grease caked onto the joint, carefully rub it off before applying new grease. If corked tenons are too loose, you can wrap them with some waxed dental floss. If corks are always too loose or falling apart, a repairman can replace them.

## Bocals

The bocal is very fragile and can easily crack and bend. Always insert and remove the bocal from the end closest to the cork. Whenever the bocal feels tight or makes a squeaking sound when you insert it, apply cork grease.

After every time you play, clean the moisture out of the bocal. Cover the tiny hole that connects to the whisper key pad with your finger, and blow through the large end of the bocal closest to the cork.

## Other Important Advice

**Do not lie the instrument down flat.** This includes laying it on your lap while counting rests in band! The long joint and half of the boot joint are not lined. Therefore, moisture can run into these pieces when the bassoon is laying down which destroys the pads. When finished playing, immediately clean the instrument and put it away in its case.

**Never pick the bassoon up by the bell.** Always grasp the long and wing joints together when you pick it up.

**Do not leave your bassoon in the car.** Many instruments are stolen each year from vehicles. Also, extreme heat and cold can damage a bassoon.

**Check your swab for knots.** This will ensure that it never gets stuck inside the instrument. If the swab ever does get stuck, **do not** pull too hard or force it out. Stuck swabs usually need to be taken to a repairman. Do not be tempted to stick coat hangers or other objects into your instrument as this will damage the inside.

**Take your bassoon to a trusted instrument repairman** once every year or two for routine maintenance. He or she will assess which pads are leaking and replace them, as well as oil mechanisms, and fix anything else that is out of alignment. Many times its even worth parents' money to take school instruments to the shop for a little TLC. You'll be amazed at how much easier a bassoon will play after a good checkup.