

Basic Supplies Needed

(or, more stuff to buy)

This handout contains a list of basic supplies that you need to get, along with your instrument. Please note that what I have listed here is the bare essentials! There are lots of other things that you can buy but may not be necessary. If it is not listed here, you really don't need to get it, at least not the first year.

Students do NOT need to purchase their books at the music store. I really need to see students before assigning a certain book. I will provide the necessary books for class and you will purchase them from me. Most of the beginning books I have written myself, and the other method books I purchase at a discount. Getting the books directly from me will save you time and money. You are more than welcome to buy any "supplementary" books anywhere you want.

EVERY student should strongly consider getting a metronome. Rhythm is the most important element of music to master, but also one of the more difficult ones when there is not a consistent, concrete example to follow. String and trombone students should get one that also plays reference pitches (an electronic "pitch pipe").

String and trombone students are also very, very, very strongly encouraged (I'm trying not to say "required!") to get a chromatic tuner right away. You can buy them directly from me for about \$17.00 (again, at a discount). You do not need a "violin" or "guitar" tuner. Students of the other instruments probably would not get much use out of a tuner until the second year.

**Ask me to get anything from your supply list for you. I'm happy to save you time and money by purchasing items in bulk!

PLEASE READ AND CONSIDER THIS NEXT POINT: When looking for an instrument to play, your best choice is to buy or rent one from any of the local music stores. Stafford Music, Chancellor Music, Roberson's Music, Music Quest, and Music and Arts Centers are some of the local stores, depending on where you live. There are some very cheap (\$ and cheap construction) instruments to be found out there that should be avoided. I have seen no-name brand instruments for sale, brand new at Costco, J.C.Penny's, etc., that are not very high quality. I've also found some brand new foreign (overseas) instruments for sale on Ebay that are so cheap - the entire cost of the instrument, including shipping, is about the cost of one month's rent from the local music stores. Please remember that **YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR!**

The biggest problem with these cheap instruments (other than not sounding very good) is that they are very poorly made. Parts break easily, and when you take the instrument to the shop to be repaired, replacement parts cannot be found. Parts from standard, brand-name instruments like Yamaha, Selmer, Bach, etc. do not even fit these other instruments. Many of the repair technicians I know are starting to REFUSE to work on these instruments because it's a waste of their time.

Getting a quality instrument is just the smart thing to do! An instrument that is in good working order will sound better, will be easier to play, and making music will be much more FUN!

Clarinets

Beginners (1st year)

1. You need a minimum of 5 reeds at all times
 - *****PLEASE***** NO Flavor-Reeds - you will ruin your instrument
 - beginners should start out with *Rico* brand, strength 2 1/2
2. Something to soak the reeds in
 - you can use a small cup, film canister, etc.
3. Cork Grease
 - get the kind that comes in a stick (looks like ChapStick)- easier to deal with than the box
4. Cleaning Swab
 - pull through starting at the bell
 - a small mouthpiece swab is a good idea, too
5. Soft Cloth and some handkerchiefs
 - you should wipe the fingerprints off with a soft cloth
 - handkerchiefs are very handy (and cheap!) for catching water drips, cleaning the inside of the mouthpiece and barrel
6. Optional items (recommended for intermediate level)
 - teeth cushions on the mouthpiece are softer on your teeth and will protect the mouthpiece
 - a better mouthpiece will make it easier to play and will sound better
 - a better ligature (Rovner) is easier to use, reeds stay put better, and may sound better
 - thumb cushion for the right hand thumb which supports the weight of the clarinet
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start
7. Things you DON'T need
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments tend to collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

You can get most of the care items you need (and some you don't need) in an Instrument Care Kit.

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

1. You need a minimum of 5 reeds at all times
 - *****PLEASE***** NO Flavor-Reeds - you will ruin your instrument
 - intermediate players should consider getting the blue box Vandoren reeds instead of Rico.
 - experiment with different strengths the higher the number, the stronger (stiffness) the reed
 - you can buy a Reed Guard case that will hold either 2 or 4 reeds
2. A decent mouthpiece
 - Vandoren B45 is recommended
3. A decent ligature
 - Rovner (medium) is THE recommended ligature
4. A better instrument
 - a good mouthpiece and ligature should come first
 - Yamaha and Buffet are recommended
 - wood sounds better than plastic, but must be taken care of properly
 - ask me about some good choices
5. Metronome and Tuner
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
 - A digital tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
6. Comfort items
 - teeth cushions on the mouthpiece are softer on your teeth and will protect the mouthpiece
 - thumb cushion for the right hand thumb which supports the weight of the clarinet
7. Things you still DON'T need
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments tend to collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

Saxophones

Beginners (1st year)

1. You need a minimum of 5 reeds at all times
 - *****PLEASE***** NO Flavor-Reeds - they will ruin your instrument
 - beginners should start out with *Rico* brand, strength 2 1/2
2. Something to soak the reeds in
 - you can use a small cup, film canister, etc.
3. Cork Grease
 - get the kind that comes in a stick (looks like ChapStick)- easier to deal with than the box
4. Cleaning Swab
 - you should use the pull-through kind
 - avoid the leave-in kind - they defeat the purpose by leaving moisture inside the instrument
 - a small mouthpiece swab is a good idea, too
5. Soft Cloth and some handkerchiefs
 - you should wipe the fingerprints off with a soft cloth
 - handkerchiefs are very handy (and cheap!) for catching water drips, cleaning the inside of the mouthpiece and neck
6. Padded Neckstrap
 - You should **strongly** consider getting a padded neckstrap - your neck will thank you
7. Optional items (recommended for intermediate level)
 - teeth cushions on the mouthpiece can lessen vibrations to the skull and protect the mouthpiece
 - a better mouthpiece will make it easier to play and will sound better
 - a better ligature (Rovner) is easier to use, reeds stay put better, and may sound better
 - palm key risers make the palm keys easier to reach if you have large hands
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start
8. Things you DON'T need
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

You can get most of the care items you need (and some you don't need) in an Instrument Care Kit.

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

1. You need a minimum of 5 reeds at all times
 - *****PLEASE***** NO Flavor-Reeds - they will ruin your instrument
 - intermediate players should consider getting the blue box Vandoren reeds instead of Rico.
 - experiment with different strengths the higher the number, the stronger (stiffness) the reed
 - you can buy a Reed Guard case that will hold either 2 or 4 reeds
2. A decent mouthpiece
 - Selmer C* is THE recommended mouthpiece
3. A decent ligature
 - Rovner (medium) is THE recommended ligature
4. A better instrument
 - a good mouthpiece and ligature should come first
 - Yamaha 23, 475 or 52 is recommended
 - ask me about other choices
5. Metronome and Tuner
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
 - A digital tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
6. Comfort items
 - teeth cushions on the mouthpiece can lessen vibrations to the skull and protect your mouthpiece
 - palm key risers make the palm keys easier to reach if you have large hands
 - Saxophones should **strongly** consider getting a padded neckstrap - your neck will thank you
7. Things you still DON'T need
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

Flutes

Beginners (1st year)

- 1. Soft Cloth and some handkerchiefs**
 - you should wipe the fingerprints off with a soft cloth
 - handkerchiefs are used for cleaning the inside of the flute with the cleaning rod. (You can also use a silk scarf or other material that absorbs better.)
 - avoid the leave-in type of cleaning swabs - they defeat the purpose by leaving moisture inside the instrument
- 2. Optional items**
 - the *Bo Pep* finger or thumb rest may make playing more comfortable
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start
- 3. Things you DON'T need**
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

You can get most of the care items you need (and some you don't need) in an Instrument Care Kit.

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

- 1. A better instrument**
 - Armstrong or Emerson is recommended
 - some features to consider are offset G, B foot, open holes, and split E
 - ask me about decent brands of flutes
- 2. Metronome and Tuner**
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
 - A digital tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
- 3. Things you still DON'T need**
 - key oil (unless the keys are truly stuck, in which case the instrument should be taken for repairs) over-oiled instruments collect dust
 - powder for pads (will gunk up when they get wet)

Trumpets, French Horns and Baritone Horns

Beginners (1st year)

- 1. Valve Oil**
 - you need to oil the valves often
- 2. Soft Cloth and some handkerchiefs**
 - you should wipe the fingerprints off with a soft cloth
 - handkerchiefs are handy for cleaning the mouthpiece, catching water drips, etc.
- 3. Mouthpiece brush**
 - You'd be surprised at what starts growing on the inside of a mouthpiece that is not cleaned out with a brush every so often
- 4. Optional items (recommended for intermediate level)**
 - a better mouthpiece may make it easier to play and will sound better
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start

You can get most of the care items you need (and some you don't need) in an Instrument Care Kit.

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

- 1. Metronome and Tuner**
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
 - A digital tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
- 2. A better mouthpiece**
 - trumpet - Bach 7c, 5c, 3c
 - French horn - Farkas (Holton) MDC
 - baritone horn - Bach 7
- 3. A better instrument**
 - trumpet - Bach TR200 (Yamaha is OK, too)
 - French horn
 - baritone horn
 - or, ask me about decent brands
- 4. Mutes**
 - Straight mute, cardboard or metal (metal sounds better)
- 5. Tuning slide cream**
 - one container will last you a lifetime
- 6. A "Snake"**
 - long, flexible wire with a brush for cleaning the inside of the tubing of the instrument
- 7. Optional items**
 - valve covers can help keep the lacquer looking new by keeping acid from the hands off of the instrument

Trombones

Beginners (1st year)

- 1. Trombone Slide Cream**
 - you smear this cream on the slide periodically to keep it moving smoothly
- 2. spray bottle for water**
 - spray mist on the slides every time you play - the water beads on top of the cream on the slides
- 3. Soft Cloth and some handkerchiefs**
 - you should wipe the fingerprints off with a soft cloth
 - handkerchiefs are handy for cleaning the mouthpiece, catching water drips, etc.
- 4. Tuner**
 - A digital chromatic tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
- 5. Optional items (recommended for intermediate level)**
 - a better mouthpiece may make it easier to play and will sound better
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start

You can get most of the care items you need (and some you don't need) in an Instrument Care Kit.

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

- 1. Metronome**
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
- 2. A better mouthpiece**
 - Bach 7
- 3. A better instrument**
 - ask me about decent brands
- 4. Mutes**
 - Straight mute, cardboard or metal - metal sounds better
- 5. Tuning slide cream**
 - used on the tuning slide
 - this is not the same as slide cream (see #1)
- 6. A "Snake"**
 - long, flexible wire with a brush for cleaning the inside of the tubing of the instrument

Strings

Beginners (1st year)

- 1. Rosin**
 - rosin is rubbed on the hair of the bow to increase friction with the strings
- 2. Shoulder rest**
 - for violins and violas
 - a shoulder rest will raise the instrument up closer to the chin
- 3. Cello floor stop**
 - helps to keep the peg from sliding on the floor when playing
- 4. Soft cloth or a handkerchief**
 - you should wipe off the rosin dust from the strings and the bow after playing
- 5. Tuner**
 - A digital tuner will help you fine-tune your notes
 - should NOT be a special “string” tuner
 - get a chromatic tuner
- 6. Optional items**
 - humidifier - this is a long, thin sponge that is moistened and kept inside the case with the instrument to help keep the wood from cracking (recommended if you own your own instrument)
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

- 1. Metronome**
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
- 2. Step up your instrument**
 - check your size as you grow
 - get a full-size instrument as soon as you are big enough
- 3. A better instrument**
 - ask me about decent brands
- 4. A better bow**
 - ask me about decent brands
- 5. Humidifier**
 - this is a long, thin sponge that is moistened and kept inside the case with the instrument to help keep the wood from cracking (recommended if you own your own instrument)

Percussion

Beginners (1st year)

1. Snare Drum
 - you need to get a snare drum with a concert snare drum stand (drum set stands are too short)
2. Snare drum sticks
 - you should get Vic Firth General SD1 or any 2B sticks - no plastic tips
3. Optional (recommended for intermediate level)
 - many percussionists buy their own stick bag - especially when they start accumulating several pairs of sticks and mallets
 - a metronome is **HIGHLY** recommended right from the start (as it is with all instruments)
 - a practice pad will allow you to practice silently (a favorite with parents)

Intermediate (past the 1st year)

1. Metronome
 - If you haven't gotten a metronome already, now's the time
2. Bell Set
 - In order to learn how to read pitches, you need to have **EITHER** a bell set, **OR** a piano or keyboard at home.
 - If you are renting your snare drum, you can trade it in for a PLK (percussion learning kit) that includes a drum **AND** bell set for the same price.
3. Optional, but nice to have
 - many percussionists buy their own stick bag - especially when they start accumulating several pairs of sticks and mallets
 - a practice pad will allow you to practice silently (a favorite with parents)