

Margret Löbner
Blockflötenzentrum
Bremen

A small guidebook on how to oil a recorder

In order to have long-lasting joy with your recorder, many wood types require occasional oiling. Through oiling the internal bore gets impregnated and is so protected from unwanted moisture. Unpainted instruments can also be wiped externally with an oiled cloth in order to protect them from shakes and for an optical refreshment.

For oiling best suited is sweet almond oil. It does not cure and feeds nicely into the wood. Never use line seed oil for oiling your recorder. Those kind of oils are used as a paint alternative to seal wooden surfaces. The internal bore of a recorder however should always stay open-porous. Sweet Almond oil shall not be used for oiling the key mechanics. Please use acid-free shutter- or sewing machine oil.

The frequency of oiling complies to the absorbability of the wood and the level of stress by use. If your flute is played every day, it should be oiled every 6 to 8 weeks. Best is to observe your instrument precisely. It becomes essential to oil the flute if the color of the woods` internal bore and the tenon are not appearing "luscious" anymore, but rather blunt and gray.

Before you start oiling, the instrument has to be completely dry. You are best of waiting for 12 hours after playing it last. Otherwise the oil compasses remaining moisture into the wood. Except the windway, block and cork, all parts of the recorder can be oiled. Pay special attention to not get the block in touch with the oil, since the cedar wood loses its absorbent characteristics by oiling it.

For the oiling process you need a cleaning rod or "oil stick", a cotton cloth and a fine brush. After oiling the flute all parts should be put upright on a post. Remaining oil is wiped off with a dry cloth after 12 hours.

The following is to show you the individual steps:



Pour a bit sweet almond oil onto the oil stick...



...or onto the cotton cloth.



Now pull the cloth/oil stick through the foot joint...



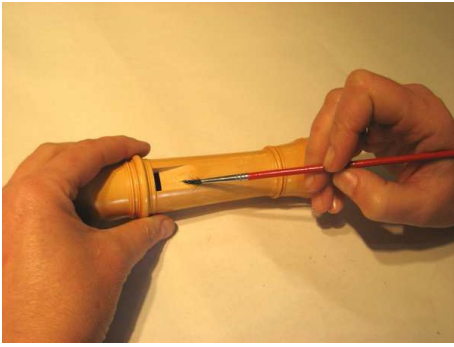
... and the middle joint, enough till the internal bore is covered by an evenly shining layer.



Before oiling the head joint, carefully apply a paper ball into the inner parts in front of the block to prevent potential contact with the oil.



Now carefully wipe the head joint with circular motion until its internal bore is evenly coated with oil.



Afterwards oil the labium with a fine brush and take special care to not touch the block with the brush.



For the finishing lightly rub the whole recorder with an oil cloth. Painted recorders shall not be oiled externally, as they might develop gross stains from it.



When you have completed the oiling process, set up your flute vertically on a post and let it rest for 12 hours. After that time of rest wipe off remaining oil with a dry cloth properly.

Handcrafted instruments require, in either case, frequent oiling (about every 6 weeks). Serial-produced recorders made of the following woods should be also oiled regularly: boxwood (European and Tropical boxwood), plum (prune), palisander, cherry, rosewood, king wood, bubinga, satinwood, olive, grenadilla, ebony as well as maple from early Baroque and consort- instruments. Simple School-instruments made of maple and peach tree are paraffinized

For further question on the maintenance of your recorder, please just call us (0049-421-702852) or write an email (info@loebnerblockfloeten.de). We will be glad to help you.