INSTRUMENT CARE GUIDELINES
"It's Orange Peel Season!"

1) CLARINET – If you own a WOODEN CLARINET, it will need some extra care during the cold and dry months here in Colorado. If your clarinet changes too fast (i.e. temperature and/or humidity), it is possible for it to crack, which can ruin a clarinet or lead to costly repairs. To prevent this from happening, here are some tried and true methods to keep your instrument in good playing condition:

- Use **Orange Peels**! This is an easy way to maintain the HUMIDITY levels in your case. It is the least expensive and simplest way to take care of your clarinet. Use at least 5-6 1" pieces and they should be changed out every week. If orange peels dry out, so does your clarinet, so keep them fresh!
- As an alternative to orange peels, you can buy the Boveda 2-Way Humidity Control Packs (Subscription Recommended) for about $15/ea. If you use these, you also need to buy a Hygrometer. This is used to monitor the humidity level in your case. You must check it regularly to ensure the levels stay between 40-60% RH.
- **"Clean & Dry"** - Make sure to swab your instrument regularly (silk swabs are the best) and check the pads to remove any excess water before you put it back in the case. You can use cigarette rolling papers (un-gummed is best) to dry the pads. *Extra water under the pads, just like water that freezes and thaws in the sidewalks, leads to... you guessed it... cracks!
- Watch the TEMPERATURE! An **insulated case or case cover** is a great investment to protect your instrument from rapid temperature changes. As we travel from home to school to performance hall, the clarinet can experience a wide temperature range. Keeping the temperature as consistent as possible can be the difference between a usable instrument and costly repairs or shopping for a new instrument.
- If you have a *plastic/resin instrument*, be grateful that your life is much easier in the winter. The most important thing is just to keep your instrument clean and dry. Make sure you're using a good swab!

2) MOUTHPIECE - Avoid the plague, clean your mouthpiece at least once a week!

- Clean your mouthpiece with *cold water* and lemon juice OR a 50/50 cold water and hydrogen peroxide mixture OR a 50/50 cold water and white vinegar mixture.
- If you'd prefer to use a traditional mouthpiece cleaner, you can look for Sterisol Germicide Solution (the red stuff is specifically for rubber mouthpieces).
- While cleaning your mouthpiece, make sure to keep the cork dry!

3) <u>REEDS</u> - Keep your reed rotation going!

- All clarinetists should have **at least four reeds in their regular rotation** and at least three of them should be good enough to play at a lesson or a performance.
- If you have been sick, throw away your old reeds! *This is just like changing out your toothbrush. Stay healthy!
- I know it's hard to throw away good reeds, so if you'd like to try and keep a good reed after being sick, you can soak it in a 50/50 cold water and hydrogen peroxide mixture for 1 minute. This will change the reed, but it will clean it and give it new life for at least a few days (just enough time to break in some new reeds).

<u>A few final thoughts:</u>

1) Never play on a very cold instrument!

2) If the tenon rings are loose, do not play your instrument! In this case, your instrument is too dry - add some fresh orange peels and contact me right away.

3) Make sure to clean your swab regularly (especially after being sick)! I recommend hand-washing and air-drying it.

2) Keep your case clean - there's nothing worse than a grimy clarinet case! Use a vacuum and/or a cleaning cloth.

3) Keep a microfiber cloth and a small brush (paintbrushes work great) to clean off any dust and dirt that might build up on your instrument. DO NOT USE LIQUIDS on wooden instruments!

4) Oil the keys regularly! If you haven't done this before, we can do it during your lesson. This should be done 2-4 times every year. Key oil can be purchased at any of the music shops.

5) As for COVID-19 and your instrument, the NFHS, NAfME and the NAMM Foundation received information from the CDC which suggest the COVID-19 virus can remain on the following instrument surfaces for the stated amount of time:

- Wood – Up to 4 Days
- Plastic – Up to 3 Days
- Cork – Up to 2 Days

So, if you need a few days away from your instrument, that is okay!