



# The Reedery

Lakewood, CA 90715  
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## Oboe maintenance and repair at home

**Contact me** with any questions, or see additional pictures/videos

- [www.reedery.com](http://www.reedery.com)
- Instagram: thereedery
- YouTube: The Reedery Woodwind Repairs  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi2W0nIOCbVLRBXoqUYiLCw>

### Recommended Supplies

- Swab: large fabric, doesn't pull all the way through, such as Loree purple swab
  - <https://rdgwoodwinds.com/collections/instrument-cleaning/products/loree-swab-purple-microfiber>
- Screwdriver: 1.5mm and/or 2.0mm flat head (slotted)
  - <https://www.wihatools.com/screwdrivers/precision/slotted/precision-slotted-1-5-1-16-x-40mm>
  - <https://www.wihatools.com/screwdrivers/precision/slotted/precision-slotted-2-0-5-64-x-40mm>
- Teflon plumber's tape and/or dental floss
- Small soft paintbrush or makeup brush
- Pipe cleaners
- Pad paper or cigarette paper
- Yamaha powder paper
- Key oil
- Spring hook
- Duck bill pliers
- Parallel pliers

### Prevention

PREVENT CRACKS and WATER PROBLEMS:

- Warm up your oboe before you blow any air into it
- Swab early and swab often!
- Blow water out of the octaves and trills before putting the oboe away for the day
- Store your oboe in its case with pad paper or cigarette paper underneath the octaves and trills
- Avoid laying your oboe keys-down on your lap, always face the keys up

PREVENT BENT KEYS:

- Avoid touching the pinkie keys when assembling and disassembling your oboe.
- Avoid laying your oboe down on its pinkie keys or with the keys facing down
- Use cork grease or visit the repair shop if the oboe joints are difficult to assemble



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## Yearly inspection and maintenance

- Use a small soft brush to dust all around the key work
- Check for any loose pads, corks, screws
- Look for any rods, keys, or parts that look bent or “off”
- Clean the tenons with a clean, dry washcloth to wipe off old grease and residue
- Clean inside the sockets with a Q-tip dipped in plain water
- Make sure the tenons are fitting snug- not too loose, not too tight, not wobbly
- Waggle all the keys and check for excessive key noise
- Check the upper and lower joints for suction
- Tidy your case and vacuum the inside

## Quick Fixes

- Learn how to do your own adjustments:
  - <https://www.oboedr.com/adjust-your-oboe-1>
  - <http://carlosoboe.com/oboe-adjustment-guide/>
  - <https://www.onksws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Oboe-Adjustment-Guide-wDiagram-115.pdf>
  - <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0195374576/>
  - PRO TIP: use very thin cigarette paper and a very light touch on the keys when adjusting
- Sticking pads
  - Place pad paper underneath the sticking pads after swabbing. Store your oboe in its case with the paper under the pad(s)
- Temporarily repair loose, torn, or missing tenon cork:
  - Use Teflon plumber’s tape or dental floss to wrap around
- F# and below suddenly won’t play
  - Most common: F# key arm is bent down so it touches the G# too soon
  - Use your fingers or duck bill pliers to lift the arm up
- Low C/low Db suddenly seems messed up
  - Most common: right pinkie Eb key is bent down
  - Use your thumb to lift (bend up) the right pinkie Eb key
  - <https://youtu.be/vUqj59Cc5N0>
- Bridge keys won’t both line up
  - Use duck bill pliers to align them
- Low B/Bb won’t press, or won’t play, or D is not working
  - Most common: left pinkie keys are bent
  - Use duck bill pliers or your fingers
  - Make the keys line up parallel with the oboe
- Key flops around – spring came off
  - Use your spring hook to push or pull the end of the needle spring back onto the key
- Low C won’t spring back up
  - Most common: the post is twisted. Use small duck bill pliers to rotate the post. You might need to apply a small drop of super glue where the post attaches to the body of the oboe.
- Key doesn’t spring very well
  - Can be a twisted post, bent hinge, gummy/dirty hinge



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- If you remove the screw you can sometimes repair this. Clean the screw with alcohol on a paper towel and clean inside the key hinge with alcohol on a pipe cleaner. Apply a drop of key oil to the end of the screw and reassemble
- If a post is visibly twisted, use duck bill pliers to rotate the post. You might need to apply a small drop of super glue where the post attaches to the body of the oboe.
- Commonly needs to be professionally repaired – make an appointment with an oboe repair specialist
- Pad fell off
  - If possible, gently heat the key and reapply the pad.
  - You will need to visit an oboe repair specialist to install a new pad.

## Deep cleaning

- Most commonly, deep cleaning should be done by an oboe repair specialist. Visit [www.reedery.com](http://www.reedery.com) to schedule.
- If you wish to disassemble and clean your oboe, be aware of risks – do not lose any parts, and be aware that your instrument might not play correctly after being disassembled and reassembled.

## Stuck swab

- Put the oboe back in its case and schedule an appointment with an oboe repair specialist.
- Back away from the oboe. Do not make any attempts to remove the swab. You can only make it worse and you can possibly do irreversible damage to the inside of your oboe.
- Borrow another instrument to use until your repair appointment.

## Cracks

- Remain calm. Cracking is not the end of the world.
- Schedule an appointment with an oboe repair specialist to have the crack sealed and possibly pinned.
- If you would like to try to seal the crack yourself, see <https://www.oboedr.com/cracks>