

Saxophone Repairs

Leaks

Usually pads are stuck in with shellac which melts when a flame is applied to the key. This should not be attempted at home unless you really don't mind if you burn the lacquer off your saxophone or fingernails. A pad should seat against the tone hole with no leaks: if you can slip a thin sliver of cigarette paper in between the pad and the hole, there is a leak. If you are prepared to risk holding a flame under the key, you need to heat the pad cup up until the pad moves, lever up the part where the leak is with a screwdriver or similar, then very very gently close the cup to straighten the pad up still applying pressure with the screwdriver so the pad rests squarely against the rim of the tone hole. Repeat until either there are no leaks or you have completely ruined your horn and have to take in to a proper repairer.

Pads

If the pad has fallen out and you need to play, it's best to stick it back in with something that is not too permanent because the chances are you're going to want to get it repaired properly and your friendly local saxophone repairer will not be too happy about wrestling with super glue, although he/she will be able to dig the pad out.

A small blob of evostick should hold a pad in to get you through the gig, although getting it to set without leaks may not be easy. You can also use a hot glue gun if you have one lying around. If the pad has disintegrated you just get away with removing the old leather and wrapping it in a Durex. It might get you through the gig.

Corks

Always carry a piece of cork and evostick, ideally a few different thicknesses. If not you can cut a bit off a wine cork. You will need a sharp knife and steady hands. Glue on with evostick.

Compressed Neck Cork

If the neck cork has become too compressed or you have a new mouthpiece that's too loose for the cork, you can expand the cork by holding it in the steam from a kettle or wetting it and holding it over a gas flame, or a hair dryer. Hold well above the flame and rotate. Don't hold it so close that you burn the lacquer off the neck. Ideally wrap something protective (but non-flammable) round the neck to protect it from the heat.