

How Temperature Changes Can Affect Your Instruments

As a musician, playing in extreme weather conditions can be a rather challenging experience. Regardless of what musical instrument you are playing — heat, cold, rain, and even high humidity can all make you feel uncomfortable and impact your performance. It won't be the same trying to play if the cold wind is whipping your face and your fingers are freezing, or conversely, if you can't stop sweating or feel like you can't breathe because of high humidity.

While bad for your performance, bad weather can affect your musical instruments too and can do so in unique ways to each instrument. While all musical instruments may face damage due to temperature and weather changes, string instruments, woodwind instruments, drums, and pianos will react differently. Proper instrument care is crucial to preserving your creative outlet and financial investment. Continue reading to discover helpful tips on how to prepare for seasonal changes and better protect your instruments.

String Instruments

In the case of string instruments like guitars, violins, and cellos, heat and cold can cause the strings to expand and contract. Simultaneously, these conditions can also cause the wood to warp or even crack, and the glue that holds the instrument together may start to dry and detach. In the best-case scenario, these will affect your sound quality, and in the worst-case scenario, the damage will be irreparable. String instruments should be stored in a weatherproof case in a temperature range between 72-77°F with humidity levels of around 45-55%.

Woodwind Instruments

Woodwind instruments are subject to various forms of wear, such as shrinking, expanding, drying out, and cracking. While avoiding excessive temperature swings is vital, managing humidity is essential. The recommended level of humidity your woodwind instruments should be exposed to is no more than 40-55%. As far as temperature levels go, try to avoid playing your instrument if it feels cold to the touch. Allow it to gradually warm up by holding it under your jacket for about half an hour before playing.

Brass Instruments

While less susceptible to damage from heat and humidity than other instruments, there are still some tips to keep in mind. When it comes to brass instruments, corrosion and bacteria growth are common in hot and humid environments. Therefore, you should

make sure you always keep them clean, oiled and stored correctly in a weatherproof case when not in use. Avoid temperatures higher than 78°F and humidity levels greater than 50%.

Drums

Drums can be a bit finicky as opposed to other instrument types. High levels of humidity can damage the wood in your drums and cause your drumheads to warp, while low levels of humidity can make them dry out and crack. Simultaneously, low temperatures can cause the wood to contract, making the drumheads tighter and resulting in a higher pitch. Try to keep the drums in a thermostable environment and avoid exposure to direct sunlight if possible.

Keys

As proper conditions produce better sound, how you take care of your instruments is vital to their performance. This type of musical instrument is also subject to the harmful effects of high temperature and humidity. In a piano, excess moisture and heat can cause the bushings to swell. As a result, the time between when you hit a key and when the hammer hits the string will increase, causing the keys to feel sluggish. Ensure adequate ventilation and humidity levels of around 40-45% for prolonged performance.

Do's and Don'ts

Although the recommended storage temperatures, humidity levels, and care process for each musical instrument may vary, there are some universal dos and don'ts to abide by when it comes to protecting your musical instruments.

- DO store your musical instrument in a protective weatherproof case when not in use. Always make sure it is secured and closed correctly.
- DON'T leave them exposed to extreme temperatures, as this can cause irreparable damage.
- DON'T leave it exposed to extreme humidity, as this will be detrimental to its performance.
- DO regulate the temperature where your instruments are stored with a space heater or air conditioner if needed.
- DO invest in a hygrometer, as well as a humidifier or dehumidifier, if needed. The first will help you measure the humidity level in the air, while the latter will help you manage and adjust it.

Get Full Instrument Protection

Sometimes, doing your best to protect your musical instrument during the seasonal changes may not be enough. Therefore, getting full protection with a specialized musical instrument insurance policy is something you should consider. Musical instrument insurance is here to safeguard your instrument and protect your investment.

At [Clarion](#) Associates, we have designed a unique, customizable musical instrument insurance policy. We offer worldwide coverage for damage caused by extreme weather conditions, as well as an array of many other [benefits](#) you won't find anywhere else. With over 40 years of experience, you can feel confident that we know about musical instrument protection and understand your concerns and needs. Contact us for a [quote](#) today and see for yourself why we are trusted by thousands of musicians and musical instrument owners the world over.