

# MULTI-TOOLS ON TEST

In the 18th Century the English 'steel city' of Sheffield became the principal producer of quality pocket knives, most of which were used to sharpen quill pen tips.



**The range of multi-tools now numbers in the hundreds, from tiny key-ring sizes up to Crocodile Dundee whoppers, but we've selected evaluation ones that we reckon suit most people's 4x4 travel and camping needs.**

The simple folding knife with a spring and one blade soon developed into multiple blade and tool knives – multi-tools. There were pocket knives for sailors, anglers, sportsman, gardeners, smokers, Boy Scouts, motorists and handymen.

As with most of its industrial initiatives, England surrendered its leadership and today the USA, Europe and China lead the charge.

The range of multi-tools now numbers in the hundreds, from tiny key-ring sizes up to Crocodile Dundee whoppers, but we've selected evaluation ones that we reckon suit most people's 4x4 travel and camping needs.

What type of multi-tool you buy depends on what you need it for. If you want a decent set of pliers, for example, you won't find the traditional Swiss Army tools suitable, but for ease of clipping to a key ring, they're unsurpassed.

Scissors are the bane of multi-tool makers and none of them is a substitute for real scissors, but for trimming thin fabric and paper most of them are fine.

Many designs have their fold-out tools on the inside of what become the handles for the pliers when the unit is opened up and this can make using the tools somewhat awkward and time consuming if

you need to swap from one to the other. Leatherman's Wave solves this problem neatly, by having small tools on the inside and the large blade tools on the outside.

We've listed these popular tools in order of size and weight, from pocket jobs, up to belt pouch or toolbox sizes.

## Wenger Classic 14



This compact Swiss Army Knife measures 85mm x 28mm x 17mm and weighs 74g. It has no pouch, but comes with a key ring. Finish is red plastic cheek plates over polished stainless frame and tools.

Tools open outwards and consist of fine blade, can/bottle opener with flat blade screwdriver, nail file, awl, corkscrew, small scissors, toothpick and tweezers. The tools have friction locks when open.

**RRP: \$65**

*We reckon this is the best buy in the small pocket knife or key ring knife class.*



## Wenger Evolution ST

This compact Swiss Army Knife measures 85mm x 28mm x 20mm and weighs 87g. It has no pouch, but comes with a key ring. Finish is black plastic cheek plates over polished stainless frame and tools.

Tools open outwards and consist of fine blade, can and bottle openers with flat blade screwdriver, nail file, awl, corkscrew, small scissors, toothpick and tweezers. The tools have friction locks when open.

**RRP: \$89.95**



## Wenger EvoGrip



This compact Swiss Army Knife measures 85mm x 28mm x 28mm and weighs 129g. It has no pouch, but comes with a key ring. Finish is red and black plastic cheek plates over polished stainless frame and tools.

Tools open outwards and consist of fine blade with positive lever lock, can and bottle openers, small Philips head and medium blade screwdriver, nail file, awl, corkscrew, small adjustable-jaw pliers and scissors, V-jaw spanner, toothpick and tweezers. The tools have friction locks when open.

**RRP: \$139.00**



## SOG Pocket Powerplier

This compact multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch with plastic belt clip, measures 110mm x 31mm x 13mm and weighs 144g. It has a polished stainless steel finish and drilled handles to let moisture or dust filter out. The handles are marked with Imperial and metric rules.

The pliers/wire cutter seem strongly made, but have no spring load action.

The tools open out when the handles are opened and lock in place with an over-centre cam action that's easily released. Tools consist of a two-sided file/screwdriver blade, small flat screwdriver blade, small Phillips head screwdriver, can/bottle opener and an auger.

**RRP: \$49.43**



## Gerber Crucial Pocket Tool

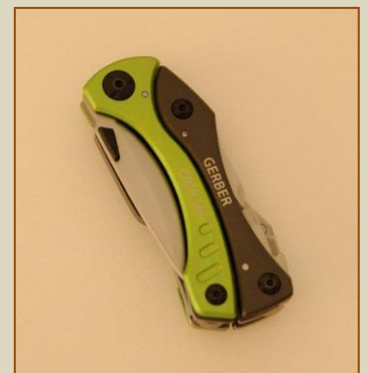
This Gerber is a compact mini-tool that measures 90mm x 35mm x 17mm and weighs 146g. It has a spring-steel pocket clasp and anodised grey and green cheek plates.

The tool handles open to reveal pliers/wire cutter that seem strongly made, but the shape of the handles suits small hands, rather than large ones.

Tools consist of: combined fine/serrated knife blade, medium Phillips head and blade screwdrivers, and a snap hook for attaching to a lanyard or a strap.

All tools other than the pliers can be accessed with the unit closed up. The tools lock in place once opened and close only after a simple release tang is pressed.

**RRP: \$99.95**



## Leatherman Kick

This compact comes in a leather pouch with belt loop, measures 102mm x 31mm x 16mm and weighs 150g. Finish is satin-polish stainless and the cheek pieces have rules in Imperial and metric scales.



The pliers/wire cutter/stripper seem strongly made and the opened handles have finger mouldings with plastic strips to cushion the hands, but no spring action.

The tools open from inside the handles and consist of a fine blade, small and medium blade screwdrivers, a medium Phillips head screwdriver and a can/bottle opener. The tools are tricky to open, but lock open with cam friction.

**RRP: \$74.95**



## Wenger Ranger

This medium Swiss Army Knife measures 130mm x 34mm x 25mm and weighs 160g. It has no pouch, but comes with a key ring. Finish is black plastic cheek plates over polished stainless tools.

Tools open outwards and consist of combination fine/serrated blade with positive button lock, can and bottle openers, medium Philips head and blade screwdrivers, and awl with thread eye. The tools have friction locks when open.

A loop on the blade allows rapid opening by hand or lanyard.

**RRP: \$95.00**



*This is s great boating knife.*

## Bushranger Multi-tool



This medium multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch with belt loop, measures 115mm x 30mm x 18mm and weighs 223g (297g with the included driver tool pack). Finish is polished stainless steel and the cheek plates are marked with Imperial and metric rules.

The pliers/wire cutter/stripper seems strongly made, but the handle edges are sharp when applying pressure and there's no spring-load return action.

The tools open out when the handles are opened and lock in place with an over-centre cam action that's released only by opening an adjacent tool.

Tools consist of a fine blade, wood saw, two-sided file, fish scaler, small scissors, awl, bottle and can openers and a square socket drive. Separate drive tools are three each of Phillips head and blade screwdrivers and five Allen keys.

**RRP: \$42.00**

*We've had one of these cheap yet useful tools for years and it's still going strong.*



## OzTent

This multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch, with Velcro closure and a belt loop. It's medium sized, measuring 110mm x 50mm x 22mm and weighing 238g, with black and grey finished, cut out-pattern cheek plates.

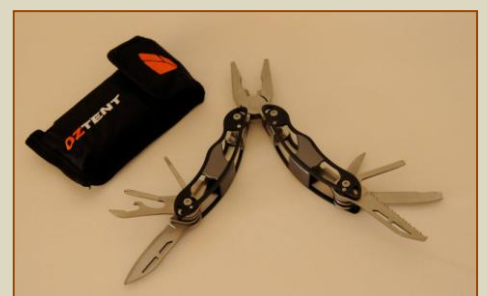


The tool handles open out to reveal pliers/wire cutter that seem strongly made and the handles are spring loaded, but the small coil spring is vulnerable. However, the reverse curve of the handles means that your hand slides forward when using force on the pliers

Tools consist of: two fine and one serrated knife blades, small Phillips head and blade screwdrivers, two-sided file and a combined can-bottle opener. Opened tools don't lock in place.

The OzTent multi-tool has to be opened up to access the tools and then closed to use them. The overlapping shape of the folded handles means that the housing restricts use of the blades.

**RRP: \$49.99**



## Leatherman Wave



This medium multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch with belt loop, measures 100mm x 34mm x 17mm and weighs 240g. Finish is satin-polish stainless steel.

The pliers/wire cutter/stripper seem strongly made and the handles have rounded edges for a comfortable grip, but there's no spring action.

Some of the Wave tools open when the handles are opened: hardened steel jeweller's screwdriver and small Phillips head screwdriver, medium blade screwdriver, small scissors and can/bottle opener.



Tools that open when the multi-tool is closed are: fine and serrated blades, wood saw and double-sided file. All tools lock positively when opened and shut after depression of a simple spring-steel retainer.

A safety latch prevents the blades being accidentally opened when the Wave is in 'pliers mode'.

RRP: \$189.95

*Expensive, but the most versatile tool on test. We've been using the older model for the past five years. We chipped a plier jaw and it was repaired free of charge after four years – no questions asked.*

## Gerber Suspension Multi-Plier



This medium multi-tool measures 98mm x 45mm x 22mm and weighs 250g. It has grey-finished, cut-out pattern cheek plates.

The tool opens to reveal pliers/wire cutter/strippers that seem strongly made and the handles are internally spring-loaded. The handle span suits large hands, rather than small ones.

Tools consist of: fine and serrated knife blades, medium size Phillips head and medium and small blade screwdrivers, combined can/bottle opener, scissors and a lanyard eye. All tools can be accessed with the

unit closed up and all lock in place once opened. The scissors cut paper cleanly and have a spring-loaded action.

The locking mechanism is released by knurled slides on both sides of the tool, but the action is stiff. Fingernail access to some of the tools is difficult and needs some effort.

RRP: \$99.95



## SOG Power Lock with V-cutter

This medium multi-tool comes in a leather pouch with belt loop. It measures 120mm x 40mm x 18mm and weighs 263g. It has a polished stainless steel finish and drilled handles to let moisture or dust filter out. The handles are marked with Imperial and metric rules.

The pliers/wire cutter/wire stripper seem strongly made, but have no spring load action. The cheek plates are fitted with folding covers, to make the plier handles more user friendly.

The tools open out when the handles are opened and lock in place with an over-centre cam action that's released by pressing a hinged cam lever.

Tools consist of a combination fine/serrated knife blade, small and medium screwdriver blades, small Phillips head screwdriver, 1/4-inch socket drive, can and bottle openers, auger, two-sided file, wood saw and a V-cutter.

**RRP: \$77.68**



## SOG Powerplier



This medium multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch with belt clip. It measures 120mm x 40mm x 18mm and weighs 274g. It has a polished stainless steel finish and drilled handles to let moisture or dust filter out. The handles are marked with Imperial and metric rules.

The pliers/wire cutter/two-stage wire stripper/crimper seem strongly made, but have no spring load action. The cheek plates are fitted with folding covers, to make the plier handles more user friendly.

The tools open out when the handles are opened and lock in place with an over-centre cam action that's released by pressing a hinged cam lever.

Tools consist of a combination fine/serrated knife blade, small and medium screwdriver blades, small Phillips head screwdriver, 1/4-inch socket drive, can and bottle openers, auger, two-sided file, wood saw and ineffective scissors (the V-cutter model is preferable).

**RRP: \$77.68**

## Leatherman Super Tool 300

This large multi-tool comes in a leather and stretch fabric pouch with belt loop, measures 115mm x 36mm x 20mm and weighs 287g. Finish is satin-polished stainless steel.



The pliers/wire cutter/stripper/crimper seem strongly made and the cutter teeth are tool-steel inserts that are replaceable. The handle edges are rounded for a comfortable grip.

All tools open only when the handles are opened and lock with a spring cam that's easily released for tool folding. Tools consist of fine and serrated blades, wood saw, two-sided file, large, medium and small screwdriver blades, medium Phillips head screwdriver, can/bottle opener and auger with thread eye.



**RRP: \$169.95**

## Gerber Freehand Multi-Plier



This large multi-tool comes in a fabric pouch with Velcro closure and a belt loop. It measures 130mm x 44mm x 22mm and weighs 375g. It has anodised metal-finish cheek plates.

The Freehand has slide-out pliers/wire cutter and doesn't need to be opened over-centre like all other multi-tools. The pliers/wire cutter aren't spring loaded, but suit all sized hands.

The fine and serrated blades open easily from the closed unit, as do the large, strong scissors and the combined ruler/ large screwdriver blade. The smaller tools – small Phillips head, two blade screwdrivers and the can/bottle opener - are a little tricky to open. All tools lock in position when folded out and are released by a strong spring latch.

**RRP: \$169.95**

