

Knives & Multitools



1. Victorinox Swiss Army Cybertool Victorinox was making multitools when Tim Leatherman's great-grandparents were in diapers. Their Cybertool line packs the usual Swiss Army blades like knives, saw, scissors, and file, but it also adds 'puter-centric tools: DIP switch setter, mini-hex driver with four double-ended bits, a wrench, even a light. \$82–\$139 [swissarmy.com](#) —JB

2. SOG PowerLock EOD Multitool My new baby is a SOG Specialty Knives B61-N. It's tough as nails, uses compound leverage for stronger pliers, and packs a Colonel Kurtz-esque black oxide finish that makes Leatherman tools tremble. \$120 [sognives.com](#) —JB

3. Gerber Artifact When folding utility knives first appeared, I enthusiastically signed on. Now, instead of sharpening my blade, I can just replace it when it gets dull. But these knives are usually big and clunky, enclosing

a blade-swapping mechanism that's flimsy or fussy. Gerber's solution? Shrink the blade! Their Artifact mounts a folding #11 hobby blade. These are common, cheap, and small enough to be safely retained in a compact folding frame by a mechanism that doesn't requires tools. Besides this cleverness, the Artifact incorporates seven other handy implements, including some, like a pry bar, rarely seen in multitools, all in a package about the size of a pack of gum — and only slightly more expensive. \$15 [gerbergear.com](#) —Sean Michael Ragan

4. Colt Cobra II Tactical Folding Knife Here's an interesting innovation: a laser-cut serrated edge. It provides the advantages of traditional serrations (easier cutting of fibers and ropes) without their main disadvantage, that they're difficult to sharpen. The serrated and non-serrated portions of this blade can be sharpened using

the same strokes. \$20–\$60 [online retailers](#) —SMR

5. Case Pocketknives There's one tool I carry all day, every day: my W.R. Case and Sons Peanut pocket-knife. They've been around since 1889, and are still handcrafted in Bradford, Pa. The ingredients list is refreshingly familiar — surgical steel blades, brass bolsters, bone or wood handles — and the knives have a satisfying heft and always-sharp blades. Case makes dozens of styles, from tiny to titanic. With mine I sharpen pencils, slice salami, cut zip ties, and open boxes. Yes, these are beautiful pieces of American workmanship, but first and foremost they're damn fine tools. \$35 and up [wrcase.com](#) —Jeremy Jackson

6. KISS 5500 Folding Knife The KISS (Keep It Super Simple) from Columbia River Knife & Tool has a chisel-ground blade with an angular, uncurved profile, which makes it about as easy

to sharpen as possible. The locking mechanism is effective, foolproof, and beautifully minimal, being integrated into the single bolster, which also features a removable clip. The PECK (Precision Engineered Compact Knife) model 5520 is a later, lighter model with all the same advantages, plus a sheepfoot blade that's even easier to sharpen because it has only one sharp edge. \$40 [crkt.com](#) —SMR

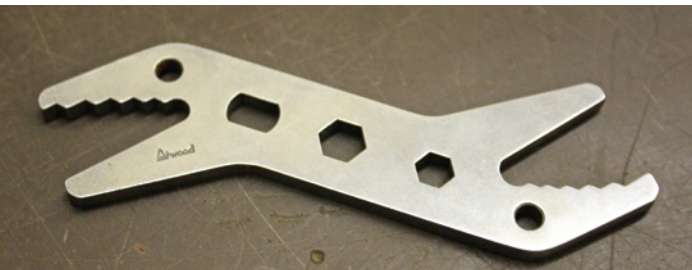
7. Sebenza Integral Lock Folding Knife I was sent this amazing knife to review for *National Geographic Adventure* and I cherish it. It's gorgeous, Zen-like, very simply constructed with impeccable craftsmanship and high-quality materials. And it has a titanium body, so it feels like air in your hand. A friend once said to me: "A good blade — it wants to cut you." I was bleeding moments after taking it out of the box (getting the feel of its one-handed opening). \$330 and up [chrisreeve.com](#) —Gareth Branwyn



Leatherman Juice CS4 (aka "Make: Can Open 'er") This full-size multitool is smaller and more lightweight than the other "full-size" lines that Leatherman carries (Skeletool, Surge, Wave, Crunch), while offering a decent-size 2.6" knife blade, scissors that are actually bigger than on the Wave, bottle/can opener, corkscrew, awl, and flat/Phillips drivers. This is a great kitchen-drawer-and-tackle-box kind of tool. \$75 [makershed.com](#) Product Code MKOSCS4

Leatherman Squirt ES4 (aka "Make: Bomb Defuser") An admirable keychain multitool, this Squirt has wire cutters and strippers (gauges 12–20) as the plier tool, with a needlenose tip, plus built-in scissors. You wouldn't want it to be your only multitool, but it's come in handy more than once, and it's a great tool for the dressed-up geek or gearhead. (You can't very well wear a Wave on your belt with your wedding 'n' funeral duds, but you can carry a Squirt in your pocket or purse, or on a garter holster for you Lady Derringer types.) The Maker Shed version has "Make: Bomb Defuser" laser-etched on the body. Also available in stealthy black "Make: Circuit Breaker" version. \$36 [makershed.com](#) Product Code MKLTM2

Leatherman Squirt PS4 (aka "Make: Warranty Voider") This Squirt has the same toolset as the ES4, but with needlenose pliers. Our version has "Make: Warranty Voider" etched on the body. \$36 [makershed.com](#) Product Code MKLTM1 —GB



Peter Atwood Pocket Tools

Peter Atwood of Turners Falls, Mass. makes his living as a knife- and toolmaker. He produces limited runs of unique items every few days, which he then posts on his blog, Planet Pocket Tool. His focus is small, wrench-like tools. However, Atwood creates a wide variety of metal items like rulers, steel shot glasses, whistles, pry bars, ring tools, and so on. Recently I interviewed him via email:

JB: When working in your shop, what metalworking tool do you find yourself turning to most often?
PA: My favorite tool is definitely my belt grinder. The 2×72 KMG is a wonderful machine and it is the workhorse of the shop. I have both vertical and horizontal units.

JB: What is the most difficult alloy to work with?
PA: They all have their quirks, but titanium is generally more difficult to work than steel. I haven't done any Damascus steel work in a while but that's another one that is very involved, especially with the finishing.

JB: Titanium has a mystique about it in popular culture. Tell me what it's like to work with the stuff.
PA: The mystique that surrounds it is overblown IMO. It's just another material. Titanium cuts easily on a metal cutting band-saw with a bi-metal blade. However, it's a pain to grind because the sparks and dust are very flammable even when using very slow speeds. Milling is a mixed bag because it tends to be very gummy. It's funny stuff to work with but I do love it, not only for its strength but because of the wonderful varied finishes that are possible with it.

—John Baichtal

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