

# PLIER SETS

We get to grips with the very best sets of pliers and cutters. Which should be in your toolbox?

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WHEN working on your car, at some point you'll need some mechanical help to hold, cut, grip and turn – and this is where you will need a set of pliers.

There are various types and sizes, but the place to start is a set of at least the three most important types: combination for heavy work; long- (or needle-) nose for delicate tasks; and side-cutters for use on plastics, rubber and cables. Over and above those, some sets also include water-pump (slip-joint) pliers, and less common are flat- and bent-nose versions.



## How we tested them

WE judged the pliers' basic build quality and, importantly, their comfort during use. In particular, we expected them not to become slippery when exposed to oil or coolant. Jaws should open and close smoothly, and we assessed grip by turning nuts tightened to ever-increasing torques.

We tried cutters on various thicknesses of electrical wire, and on a Bowden cable running inside a sleeve, as with a motorcycle clutch. A form of storage is useful to keep them clean and neat, and finally we checked the best online prices.

## Auto EXPRESS Verdict

THE Silverline VDE set once again combines price, comfort and performance with electrical safety to take the win. And if you don't need the electrical capability, you can save a little cash by opting for the 633832 set. Sealey's six-piece mini set really impresses for times when you don't require such heavy metal.

1. Silverline VDE Expert Pliers Set 282501
2. Silverline Expert Pliers Set 633832 4pc
3. Sealey AK8381 Mini Pliers Set 6pc



## QUICK LINK TO BUY

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### Silverline VDE Expert Pliers Set 282501

Price: £23.05

Contact: 01935 382222, [silverlinetools.com](http://silverlinetools.com)

Pliers included: Combination, long-nose, side-cutters

Rating: ★★★★★

**BEST BUY** WITH one set of pliers measuring 180mm and two at 160mm, this has pretty much the standard sizes. They fit securely into the plastic tray, which has a fold-down flap at the front to further secure them, and a hinged carry handle on the rear. We like the stylish, corrosion-resistant satin finish and the lifetime warranty, and we found the two-tone, soft-grip handles were comfortable to use, especially with the protective slip guards. In our test they cut and gripped perfectly, and all are approved to work with electrics up to 10,000V, which adds to their safety and versatility.



### Draper 33057 Carbon Steel Mini Plier Set

Price: £19.14

Contact: 02380 266355, [drapertools.com](http://drapertools.com)

Pliers included: Flat-nose, bent-nose, long-nose, side-cutters, end-cutters

Rating: ★★★★★

THIS five-plier Draper set ranges from 105 to 120mm. The thin handle covering makes them less comfortable than the competition. They worked well in our test and could just handle the thicker wire, although as with the Sealey and Halfords mini sets, they weren't able to cut the Bowden cable. Again, sprung steel joints made them easier to use, but a case or bag would be good.



### Draper Expert Heavy-Duty Soft-Grip Pliers Set 69289

Price: £32.00

Contact: 02380 266355, [drapertools.com](http://drapertools.com)

Pliers included: Combination, long-nose, side-cutters

Rating: ★★★★★☆

WITH its solid, twin-catch, blow-moulded case, this set is similar to the Silverline 633832, but the price loses it points, especially as there are only three tools rather than four. They all felt good to use and easily cut our cables. The soft-grip handles were comfortable, with usefully large slip guards at the ends. The combination variation felt seriously heavy duty, and we particularly liked the extra-long long-nose pliers with smaller tips.



### Silverline Expert Pliers Set 633832 4pc

Price: £16.50  
 Contact: 01935 382222, [silverlinetools.com](http://silverlinetools.com)  
 Pliers included: Combination, long-nose, side-cutters, water-pump  
 Rating: ★★★★★



**RECOMMENDED** THE second Silverline set also produced a perfect test performance. The combination is the same size, with the long-nose and cutters a bit smaller, at 150mm, and all are chunkier. There's also a 250mm, six-position water-pump tool. The similar case has a flip-over locking section and rear holes for wall mounting. We liked the comfortable two-tone handles with slip guards. A good price and lifetime warranty make them our choice if you don't need electrical protection.



### Sealey AK8381 Mini Pliers Set 6pc

Price: £28.65  
 Contact: 01284 757500, [sealey.co.uk](http://sealey.co.uk)  
 Pliers included: Combination, 2 x long-nose, side-cutters, end-cutters, bent-nose  
 Rating: ★★★★★



**RECOMMENDED** SEALEY'S mini set looks good and oozes quality. We like the thick, comfortable handles that made them good to use, and they resisted oil and coolant well. The six (rather than the usual five) pliers cover most bases. There are two types of long-nose, and the bent version would be useful for car work when retrieving errant fasteners. Although more costly than some, the price per plier is reasonable for the quality and performance. We'd prefer to see them in a case, though.



### Teng TT440 Mega Bite Set 4pc

Price: £54.85  
 Contact: [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)  
 Pliers included: Combination, side-cutters, long-nose, water-pump  
 Rating: ★★★★★

A DECENT, if pricey, selection with a standard 180mm combination along with a longer-than-usual, 200mm long-nose pair, with quite small cutters and 250mm water-pump pliers. These excellent-quality tools cut and gripped as you'd expect from Teng, although the thin handle covering was not comfortable when applying a lot of pressure. The box is strong, with foam cut-outs and a removable lid, and it's all designed to fit into a tool-chest drawer and slot into other Teng cases.



### Halfords Mini Pliers Set With Pouch 5pc

Price: £12.50  
 Contact: 0845 057 9000, [halfords.com](http://halfords.com)  
 Pliers included: Linesman, long-nose, side-cutters, end-cutters, flat-nose  
 Rating: ★★★★★

RUNNING at £2.50 per piece, our third mini set is the cheapest on test. Its zip-up padded bag has Velcro-fastened interior loops to keep the pliers together. The range is good, and all tools have springs for ease of use. We found the handle covering to be a bit thin and the build quality lacking. Unlike our other mini sets, the cutters struggled on the thicker cables.



### Knipex Pliers Set 00 20 01 V15 4pc

Price: £118.90  
 Contact: [knipex.com/en-uk](http://knipex.com/en-uk)  
 Pliers included: Combination, needle-nose, side-cutters, water-pump  
 Rating: ★★★★★

AS expected at this price, this is easily the best quality here, with a foam tray designed to fit into a tool-cabinet drawer. The water-pump plier is great, having 20 positions released/locked by a spring-loaded push button. That said, it lacks the thick handle covering of the other three pliers. All performance was predictably top notch – a plier set to bequeath to your grandkids.