

Emergency Tool Kit  
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Recently, I found me stranded at an airport with an engine which would not start...and me without any tools. I do have an "airport" tool bag packed and ready for those times when I'm going to work on the airplane, but at 25 pounds, I don't carry it along if I'm just going on a short flight. After trying to undo safety wire with my fingernails and a pocket knife, I resolved to assemble a small number of "essential" tools which I would leave in my flight bag—so they'd always be available when I am flying. I sat down and deliberately considered what the bare essential list of "what it takes to get home" items might be, then assembled a kit. Your list might be different, and you might argue about the "essential" nature of some of it, but it works for me. Here's my list:



- 4-in-one screwdriver
- adjustable pliers
- adjustable wrench (which will open wide enough to fit spark plug caps) (mine is attached to a Leatherman tool)
- spark plug wrench (deep well socket and breaker-I chose a slider rather than a ratchet for weight considerations)
- wire cutter
- safety wire pliers
- magnifying inspection mirror
- magnetic pick-up tool
- awl/dental pick
- small file
- small flat blade screwdriver
- hex wrenches: 5/32" for avionics; 0.05" for setscrews on knobs
- assortment of #8 and #10 screws, nuts, and washers
- assortment of cotter pins
- assortment of zip ties
- safety wire
- electrical tape



(and, yes, there's part of a roll of duct tape which lives in the baggage compartment)

I dug around in the basement and found a scrap of canvas which my wife had left over from another project, spent a couple of hours with her sewing machine (you can tell I'm no tailor), and the result is a convenient if not pretty kit which fits neatly in the side pocket of my flight bag. At 3-1/4 pounds, it does add a bit of weight, but the peace of mind is worth the extra weight.