



MG Tools Defined

by Dave Michel

Mechanically inclined by nature, MG owners are generally familiar with the wrenches and ratchets, screwdrivers and scrapers, necessary to service their cars. However, those MG owners who spend a bit less time in the garage than average may not be familiar with some of the 'special' tools which are frequently used to service MGs. A sample listing of some of these 'special' tools is given below.

HAMMER: Originally used for medieval metalworking, it is used by MG owners as a kind of divining rod to locate expensive parts not far from the object which they are attempting to hit; also used to destroy wire wheel knock-offs and hubs by applying force in a direction opposite to 'UNDO'.

UNDO WRENCH: A special device which is used to remove/install the octagonal wheel nuts which display the mysterious, arrow-shaped, marque 'UNDO' known only to owners who have MGs equipped with wire wheels; see hammer; see propane torch.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on boxes containing MG convertible tops (hoods) or upholstery.

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL: Normally used for spinning the steel pop rivets in MG convertible top header rails in their holes; also works great for drilling rollbar mounting holes in the floor of an MG at locations just over fuel or brake lines!!

PLIERS: Used to round off rusty bolt heads on MGs.

HACKSAW: One of a large family of cutting tools built on the Ouija Board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal the outcome becomes.

WISE-GRIPS: Used to round off rusty bolt heads, too; also may be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand and/or to pinch your fingers against sharp chassis components!

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used as a cutting tool to remove/modify/destroy MG body/chassis components; also used as a 'flaming wrench' to 'torch-off' old MG exhaust system bolts/components thereby setting the fuel pump and fuel lines on fire!; see sawzall.

ZIPPO LIGHTER: See oxyacetylene torch; see trouble light.

WHITWORTH SOCKETS and WRENCHES: Mysterious tools once used for working on older British cars, they are now used mainly for taking up space in your toolbox; see older MG owners for advice on usage!

DRILL PRESS: A tall, upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal objects out of your hands so that they smack you in the chest and fling your parts across the room, splattering them against the MG poster over the bench grinder.

WIRE BRUSH: Fits in bench grinder and cleans rust off old bolts, and then throws them somewhere under the workbench at the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and other hard-earned callouses super fast!

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK: Used for lowering an MG to the ground after you have installed a set of lowered road springs, trapping the jack handle firmly under your new air dam; may be used to crush rusty MG frame rails.

EIGHT-FOOT LONG 2X4: Used for levering an MG upwards off a hydraulic jack after installing lowered road springs; also used for unloading MG engines from the back of pickup trucks.

TWEEZERS: A special tool for removing wood splinters.

PHONE: Tool for calling a member of the MGCC Tech Committee to see if they will loan you another hydraulic floor jack.

JACK-STANDS: Devices designed to support the chassis of MGs which have been lifted off the garage floor to have a set of lowered road springs installed; also may be used to crush rusty MG frame rails.

SNAP-ON GASKET SCRAPER: Theoretically useful as a sandwich tool for spreading mayonnaise for garage lunches; used mainly for removing 'greasy grunge' from engines and transmissions.

E-Z OUT BOLT and STUD EXTRACTOR: A tool that snaps off in bolt holes and is ten times harder than any known drill bit.

TIMING LIGHT: A stroboscopic instrument for illuminating grease buildups on MG crankshaft pulleys; also useful for mesmerizing garage bystanders.

TWO-TON HYDRAULIC ENGINE HOIST: A handy tool for testing the tensile strength of ground straps and clutch hydraulic lines which you may have forgotten to disconnect prior to MG engine extractions.

1/2 X 24-INCH SCREWDRIVER: A large MG motor mount prying tool that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on one end and a handle on the other.

BATTERY ELECTROLYTE TESTER: A handy tool for transferring sulfuric acid from an MG battery to the new carpet in your car after determining that the battery is dead as a doornail, as you originally suspected.

RUBBER MALLETT: A tool which, when combined with a golf tee, may be used to plug holes in a rusty MG fuel tank (requires five firemen for installation!); a device which transforms kinetic energy into a nearly useless impact while providing a forearm massage.

AVIATION METAL SNIPS: See hacksaw.

TROUBLE LIGHT: The MG mechanic's own tanning booth. Sometimes called a 'drop light' (which is most descriptive of how it is usually handled), it is a good source of Vitamin D, "the sunshine vitamin", which is not otherwise found under MGs, neither day nor night. Health benefits aside, its main purpose is to consume 40-watt light bulbs at about the same rate as 105-mm howitzer shells during Desert Storm. More often trouble than light, its name is entirely misleading; see zippo lighter.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Formerly used to poke holes in the lids of old-style oil cans (paper-and-steel or all-steel) and splash oil on your shirt; can also be used to round-off Phillips screw heads or Posidrive screws.

AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty suspension bolts last tightened 40 years ago by someone in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, and wrings them off.

POSIDRIVE SCREW: A type of fastener frequently found on many MGs that is usually mistaken for a Phillips screw and is rounded off with a Phillips screwdriver; the realization by a new owner of an MG when, during the first solo drive of the car as the new owner, he/she realizes that he/she has been HAD by the prior owner(s)!!

SAWZALL: A tool used to cut through most MG parts which cannot be removed/modified/destroyed by any other tool; can be relied upon to cut through all MG garage B---S---; Jim Stuart's 2nd favorite MG service tool.

PROPANE TORCH: A low temperature version of the oxyacetylene torch; also used to remove 'frozen' wire wheels from MG hubs thereby setting the grease (and the hubs) on fire!; see oxyacetylene torch.

IMPACT WRENCH: An air (or electrically operated) tool which is used to over torque MG lug nuts thereby distorting disc brake rotors and brake drums; also used by MG mechanics to produce 'real' garage sounds of the loud, metallic variety; see air compressor.

BATTERY CHARGER: A device which transforms AC electrical energy into DC electrical energy to replenish the anti- "Prince of Darkness" device in all MGs; a 'must have' tool for all MG owners who have NOT cleaned the ground connections on their MG within the last year; see battery electrolyte tester.