

Pocketknives!



In the age of multi-tools like the Leatherman, pocketknives are passé. Still, you should have one on your person, and you ought to know what kind to get.

1. **Every pocketknife must have a locking blade.** A locking blade means that the blade locks into position when it is opened. This prevents the blade from closing by accident in use. You must unlock the blade to close it. You will be more likely to be able to count to 10 on your fingers if your pocketknife has a locking blade.

2. **A longer blade is not necessarily better.** Too long, and the cops will call it a dangerous weapon. A pocketknife with a blade about 3" long or less is perfect. But you still can't take it on a commercial airline flight, to school, or to court.

3. **One blade is enough.** A big Swiss Army Knife has tools to do everything but pop popcorn, but you seldom need all those tools. A *Leatherman*[™] multi-tool is larger and more useful, but you're still more likely to need a knife blade than wire-cutters. (*The Leatherman*[™] brand is the best of the multi-tools),

4. **Consider the blade:**

- A regular cutting blade cuts, but it needs to be re-sharpened.
- A serrated blade remains sharp, but it works better on rope than for whittling. A knife with a serrated blade is a saw.
- Knife blades that are half regular blade and half serrated combine the worst characteristics of both. Regular blade out towards the tip so you can't whittle. Serrated blade inboard, but not enough of it to be a good saw.

5. **A pocketknife should fit in your pocket.** If you have to get a leather case to carry it on your belt, it's too big.

6. **Some rules for using a pocketknife safely:**

- Keep the pocketknife's blades closed unless you're using them.
- **Always cut away from yourself.** NEVER cut toward you!
- Close the blades before you hand the pocketknife to someone else.
- Never carry a pocketknife with the blade open.
- Don't throw a pocketknife.
- Don't strike the pocketknife with another tool, such as a hammer.
- Don't use the point of a pocketknife blade as a prying tool. It breaks off.