

## How to Choose the Right Knife or Multi-Use Tool

Carry a knife or multi-use tool with you whenever you backpack. Sooner or later you'll need one—whether it's to slice food, make emergency repairs or cut some moleskin to protect a blister.

### Step #1: Consider Your Options

- **Straight knives**—Knives with straight blades that don't fold away can be hard to pack and dangerous to carry. They can also damage your gear if stored improperly. If you must carry a straight knife, make sure you carry it in a protective sheath.
- **Folding knives**—These work like straight knives but they're safer and easier to pack. The blades simply tuck away into the handle for compact, easy storage. Look for smooth movement between the blade and handle, and for blades that lock in place for maximum safety.
- **Utility knives**—These compact, lightweight Swiss Army-style knives are built to handle a variety of tasks. Different models have different assortments of lightweight tools—from knife blades to can openers to screwdrivers and more.
- **Multi-use tools**—These hard-core utility-style knives are built to handle tough jobs and complex repairs. In addition to standard blades, most have heavyweight tool accessories like pliers, screwdrivers and small saws.

### Step #2: Decide How Much Knife You Really Need

For basic trips, a folding knife or a utility knife with simple accessories should be more than enough. But for longer, more difficult journeys, carry a more advanced tool system (with tools like pliers, screwdrivers, a small saw) that can handle more demanding repairs.

When comparing models, consider both weight and size. Stick to the smallest and lightest option that will meet your needs. Also consider how easy each model is to use. Take a few minutes to try each tool feature so you know how easy they are to deal with and how well they work.