

Pocket pick sets

Carrying around a bag full of lock picking supplies isn't always prudent for every adventure, so a less bulky option might be desired. Pocket and micro type pick sets are almost always a less desirable compromise when compared to using a full size lock pick and full size tension wrench.

I have searched out and tried as many different types of pocket pick sets as I could find and have developed a few opinions about the tools available...

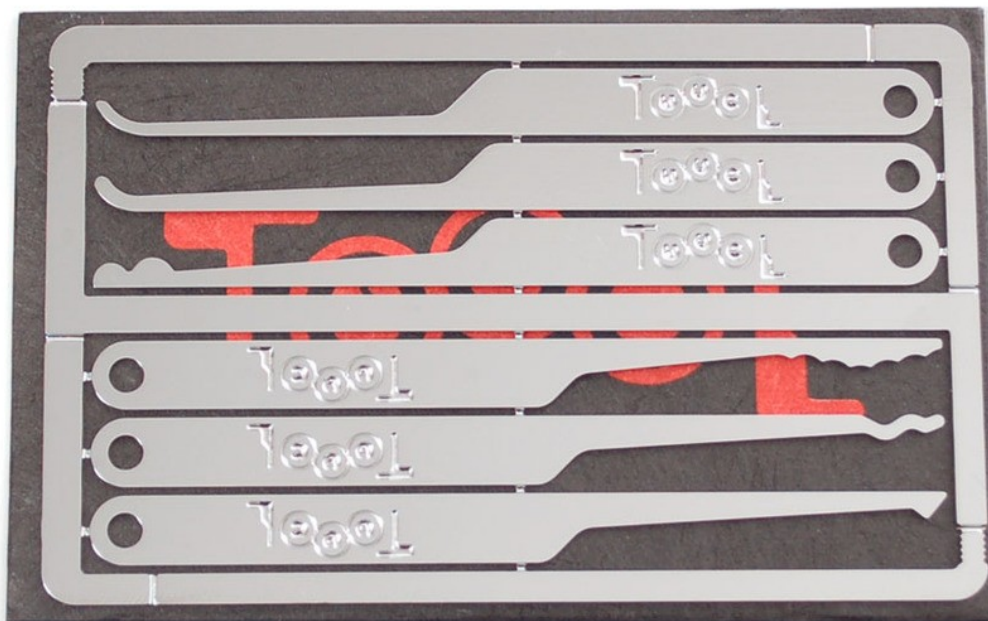
Credit Card Sets

There is a TON of variation here with all but the worst, being adequately functional in a pinch.

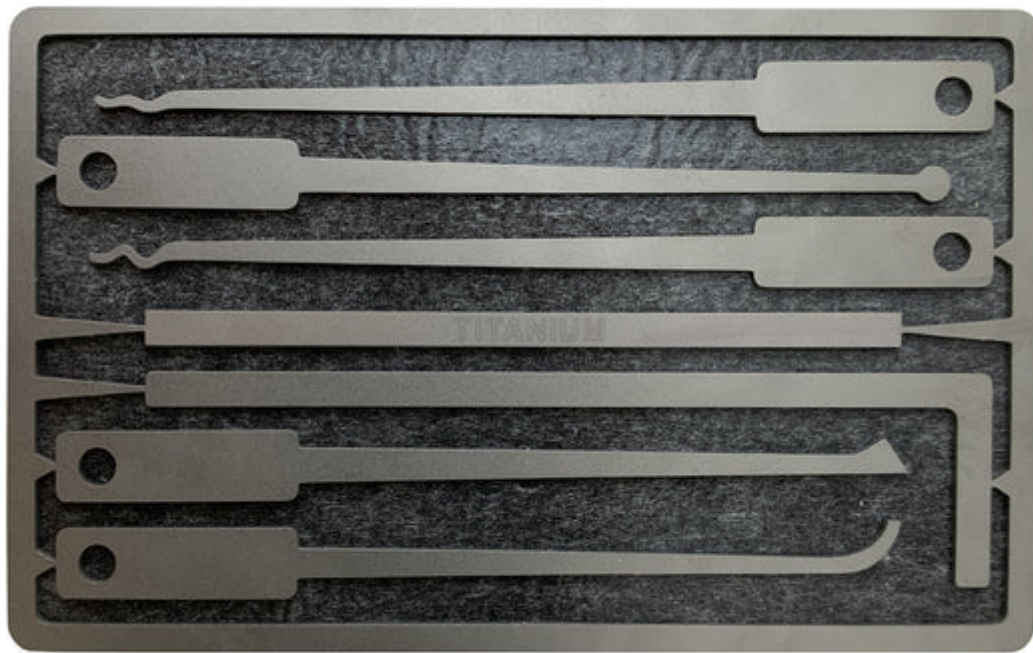
- Plastic Tray style "Credit Card" sets are usually a vacuum formed plastic tray and sliding sleeve cover to hold 3 to 6 short handle pocket picks... and the ubiquitous cheesy 1970s MasterCard sticker that makes it look like a child's toy.
 - These sets are all fairly similar with typically thicker picks, around .020" (.5mm) to .030" (.6mm), and a top of keyway tension wrench to round out the set.
 - **My Opinion:** These are usually very thick, making them difficult to carry in most wallets and some sets can rattle in the pocket



- Laser cut stainless steel “break-a-part” style cards come from many sources with their major differentiator being thickness. With a range from .009" to .030" (.21mm to .6mm) in thickness, their stiffness and overall usability can vary significantly. These are intended to be carried in a wallet for that "Hour of need", but in most cases will need replacement if ever used.
 - **My Opinion:** They are useful as a backup, but can take 5x the time to use them when needed



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- CountyComm Lock Pick card tools are made from .030" (.6mm) titanium in the “break-a-part” style, but with a twist since the metal card is mounted to a sticky foam pad, enabling the occasional use of the pick tools while still being able to store them neatly back in the wallet. The only downside is the increased card thickness, of ~2-2.5mm total, not allowing the card to fit in some wallets with tighter credit card slots.
 - **My Opinion:** This is a truly viable option for occasional use wallet carry



Jackknives

These dense little tools use the "Pocket Knife" form factor, typically somewhere around 3" x 3/4" x 1/2" (76mm x 19mm x 13mm).

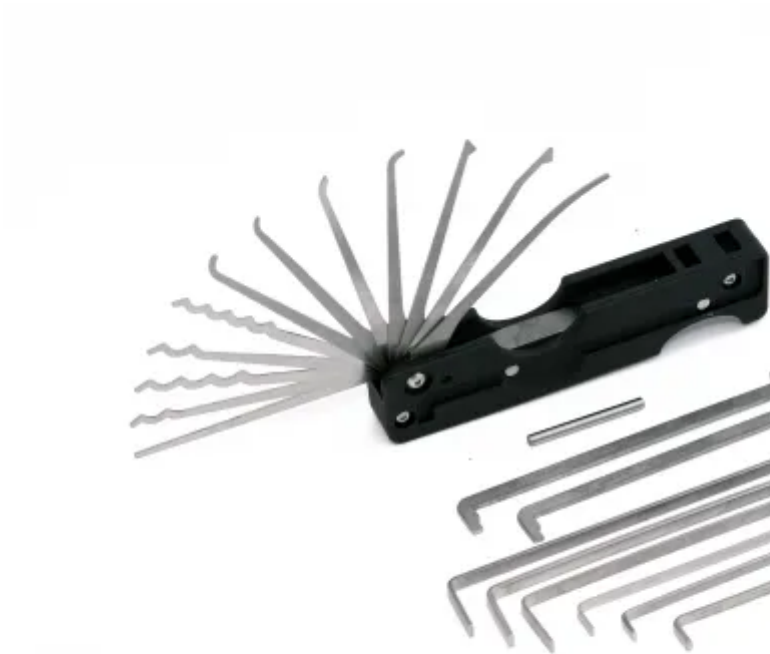
- Generic Cheap Jackknives - I have had dozens of these over the years and much the same experience with them all. They are CHEAPLY MADE; this is not a problem IF we are willing and able to spend HOURS of our time filing, sanding, polishing, and maybe significantly modifying the tool. If we are looking for something that works great out of the box, look elsewhere!
 - Between 4 and 10 picks
 - Typically a single wiper blade style wrench
 - **My Opinion:** Not worth the time to make them usable



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- High Quality Jackknives (ie: Southord Jackknife JPXS-6, Multipick Jackknife Pocket Pick Set, etc.) - These well-made tools are what all those cheap "wanabe" jackknives were aiming at...but MISSED! These are the great quality, usable out of the box, and "exactly what you expected" kind of pocket tools.
 - <https://www.southord.com/products/jackknife-pocket-lock-pick-sets>
 - <https://shop.multipick.com/en/pick-set/jackknife-pocket-pick-set-blackline-edition-multipick>
 - **My Opinion:** Great tools, but can be a little heavy if the housing is made from Zinc instead of Aluminum



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- SWICK - So many turners with lots of picks in a super light slip joint style package.
 - 12 Picks .020" (.5mm) thick picks
 - 6 wiper blade style tension wrenches
 - 2 double ended top of keyway wrenches
 - **My Opinion:** The lightest of the Jackknife style tool, and my most carried jackknife



- Covert Companion - Great option for carrying the kitchen sink.
 - Most available tools compared to other jackknife style tools
 - Completely customizable with both ends being user reconfigurable
 - Much more expensive compared to other options
 - Can get heavy & bulky in the pocket when most of the available tools are included
 - **My Opinion:** None of the tools lock in place, but a very capable tool kit
 - **Update:** They now have a detachable pick holder that locks



Minimalist/Ultralight

The smallest, lightest, and most concealable lock picking tools, for those times when other people... don't need to know.

- Minimalist Bogota Sets – These usually consist of a ~3.5" (90mm) long pick with the handle bent down by 45 degrees, enabling each pick to also be used as a tension wrench. The triple peak "Bogota" is most commonly paired with either a "Diamond" or "Medium Hook", though the King and Queen profiles are also fairly available. This set can be easily carried by either repurposing a click-pen spring or using a piece of heat shrink tubing to hold the tools together. Some of these sets even have expansion picks or extra wrenches available that can add significant functionality with minimal added weight or bulk.
 - *Stainless Steel*
 - The stainless versions usually measure around .022" (.56mm), and tend to fit nicely in most keyways.
 - **My Opinion:** Great usable option that is easily tucked out of sight

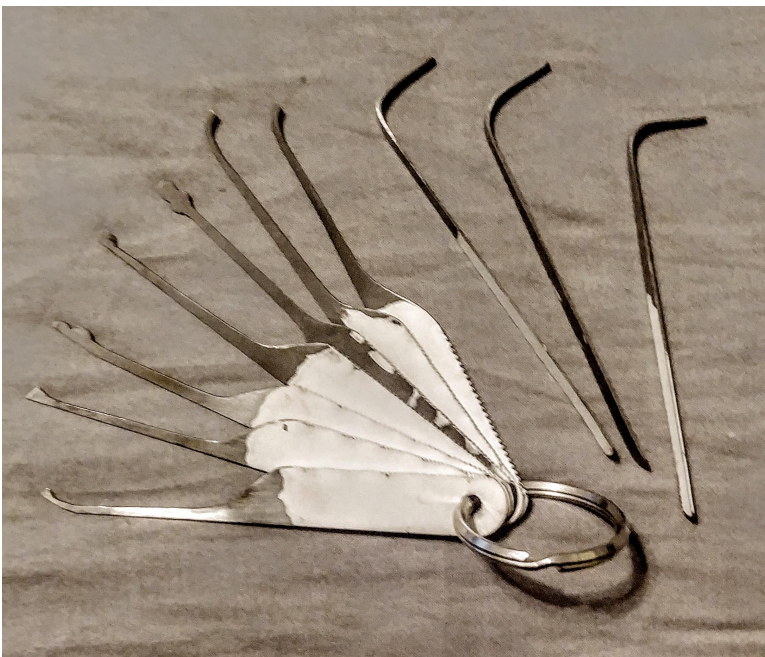


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- Titanium Alloy
 - The titanium models often measure quite thick at .031" (.8mm), yet are shorter in height to help them fit in more locks, even with the added thickness.
 - **My Opinion:** Not for those likely to pick lots of tight keyways, but I do like titanium!



- Hand Made

- Just as good as the purchased picks, **if** adequate time is spent on their creation
- A popular early style were made from Street Sweeper Bristles since they already measured $\sim .025"$ (.64mm) thick
- Materials to use - Old Lock Picks, Street Sweeper Bristles, Wiper Blade Springs, Shim Stock, Music Wire, Pallet Banding, Hacksaw Blades, etc. (Almost any tempered steel of desired thickness)
- **My Opinion:** Well worth the time to create a set from scraps



The above picture is NOT MY CREATION, but presents a fantastic example of what is possible with a little time!

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