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## Wenger EvoGrip S18 Swiss Army Knife

**Initial Report 13th April 2010**

**Field Report 20th June 2010**

By Mark McLauchlin



*Wenger EvoGrip S18 Swiss Army Knife  
Patagonian Expedition Race*

### **Reviewer Information**

Name: Mark McLauchlin

Age: 30

Gender: Male

Height: 1.76 m (5' 9")

Weight: 80 kg (176 lb)

Email: mark at swanvalleyit.com.au

City: Perth, Western Australia

## **Backpacking Background**

I have been hiking since 2006 with most of my hiking consisting of day walks averaging 16 - 22 km (10 - 14 mi) and short overnight trips where possible. Most of my hiking is along the Bibbulmun Track and Coastal Plains Trail. I consider myself to be a light hiker with an average pack weight of 6 kg (13 lb), which I am working to reduce. I generally sleep in my tarp tent or huts that are often scattered along the various hiking trails.

## **Product Information**

Manufacturer: Wenger

Year of Manufacture: 2010

Manufacturer's Website: <http://www.wengerna.com>

MSRP: \$69.95 USD

Listed Weight: 88 g (3.1 oz)

Measured Weight: 90 g (3.17 oz)

Listed Length: 3.25 in (8.26 cm)

Measured Length: 3.31 in (8.4 cm)

Colour: Yellow with black ergonomic grips

## **Initial Impressions**

The EvoGrip S18 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race Knife, hereafter known as the knife or S18. It is an Ergonomic 15 function compact knife.

As quoted from the manufacturers website, "*EvoGrip™ S 18 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race Swiss Army Knives are truly a symbol of our unwillingness to be satisfied with a classic – even after more than a century.*"

Holding the S18 gives a sense of robustness with all the functionality we have come to expect from a Swiss Army Knife, add to that a touch of ergonomic.

The below list includes the features and implements of the S18 which can also be seen in the image.

Ergonomic handles with rubber

Laser engraved WPER logo

2.5" (6.35 cm) Locking Blade

2.75" (6.99 cm) Double-cut wood saw

2.4" (6.10 cm) Springless scissors with Serrated, self-sharpening design  
Patented locking screwdriver

Cap lifter

Wire stripper

Can opener

Nail file

Nail cleaner

Phillips® head  
screwdriver

Reamer

Toothpick

Tweezers

Key ring

### **Initial Trial**

The Wenger S18 feels great to hold and there is definitely a noticeable difference between this model

with its ergonomic grip than those without. The ergonomic handles are positioned so that they are in contact with thumb, index, middle, ring finger and the larger Abductor pollicis brevis muscle of the palm.



*EvoGrip S18 with all 11 implements on display*

Like all Wenger knives I have had over the years the tools or implements are often difficult to draw out from the knife body, more so if you do not have long finger nails to assist. This has the advantage that the tools will not be released inadvertently and possibly causing injury however the disadvantages are obvious (It's really, really hard). Having said that each of the tools and implements does release smoothly and snap into position nicely before use. Each of the implements seems like it will function as designed and are built to perfection, absolutely free of any manufacturing faults.

An added feature of this model Wenger over others I have had experience with it the locking mechanism designed to hold the main blade in the open position preventing it from closing on the user. This works well, it is easy to use by holding it in and pushing the blade down, and is a great safety addition.



*EvoGrip S18 main blade locking mechanism*

The Double-cut wood saw is an interesting addition and something I am very keen to try. As I am a trail maintenance volunteer it could potentially come in very handy for the smaller shrubs that need pruning.

The high visibility yellow colour of the knife is also a nice addition, hopefully making it easier to find or be seen.

### **Reading the Instructions**

The instructions provided with the S18 advise on the Limited Lifetime Warranty and how to make a warranty claim. They also advise on how to care for the knife. Sourced directly from the instructions.

*"Please oil lightly all the pivot points on your knife. When storing your knife, be sure it is free from moisture and lightly oil all metal parts. Make sure you wipe the knife dry before returning it to your pocket. Follow the procedures and your Swiss Army Knife will give you a lifetime or trouble-free cutting pleasure".* I do suspect the last paragraph should read "...a lifetime of trouble-free cutting pleasure".

On the reverse side of the instructions there is also a tools and features diagram

covering a variety of Wenger Genuine Swiss Army Knives. All the directions are easy to read and understand.

I was hoping to find either here or on the manufacturers website a breakdown of the materials used, however this is not the case. I will email Wenger and ask this question.

### **Summary**

This looks to be a great knife that hopefully will last many years to come. I am really looking forward to testing out as many of the implements as possible out in the field.

### **Things I liked**

Robust feel  
Blade locking mechanism  
Ergonomic Grip  
Great selection of implements

### **Things I disliked**

Nothing at this stage

Thank you to Wenger and BackpackGearTest.org for the privilege of testing the EvoGrip S18

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## **Field Report**

*20th June 2010*

Since receiving the Wenger EvoGrip S18 I have only managed to take it out on two day hikes, with an average of 15 km (9.32 miles). On both trips the terrain was relatively flat with very mild temperatures and no precipitation. The day hikes were in the John Forrest National Park, and for the majority of the hike I followed The Heritage Trail which is well established.

I am the proud owner of several other model Wenger knives so the features and functions of the S18 do not vary a lot from what I am used to. The biggest difference I have found thus far is the ergonomic handle. This feature is excellent and has aided in the use of the knife immensely. I find that when I am using a tool with my hands for any prolonged period of time they tend to sweat. The ergonomic handle hasn't changed this, and nor did I expect it to, however it

has made gripping the knife easier and I feel that I am still able to maintain a firm grip and control. This is a great safety addition.

The 2.5" (6.35 cm) Locking Blade has seen the most use both on and off track. Usage has varied from opening boxes at work (daily basis), to slicing foods such as cheese and apples which I take out whilst hiking. I have also tried a little bit of whittling to see how sharp the blade really is. Like all Wenger knives the tools, and in this case the main blade are sometimes a little difficult to fold out from the body if I do not have finger nails with a little length on them, fortunately this is not a problem for me. The locking mechanism is also a great safety addition, very effective and easy to use. The blade still maintains a mirror finish and shows no signs of needing a sharpen at this time. Sharpening is the list of things to report on in the next report phase.

I found the wood saw to be of little value while out in bush as most often the size of branch that I would want cut is a lot thicker than this would handle. My main use is for a night time fire. I did however test the saw, as you would expect, and it did work fine when the diameter was roughly the same as an adult finger. Anything larger and the effort involved was too great. More recently I have been carrying a fold-up saw for trail maintenance which fits the bill better.

The tweezers and toothpick function well, quite basic in design so there is not a lot to report on besides the fact they work. They are easy to remove and return to the main body of the knife.

Quite surprisingly the scissors work very well, a big improvement on past models. With my other knives I have found that when cutting fabrics e.g. medical plasters, they become entangled in the material rather than cutting it. The S18 on the other hand cuts very well. Out in the field I tested this by cutting various lengths of plaster that could be needed to address blisters or cuts. Thankfully blisters are not something I suffer from, but it is good to know I could help someone else out.

The can opener tool has never really been something I am comfortable in using and the S18 has not changed this. I find it too difficult and inaccurate causing me more frustration than what it is worth. I have however seen others use it very well, perhaps it's just a matter of perseverance. I will give it another go and see how I get on.

I like the Phillips screwdriver, it is nice and easy to use and the tip seems to be

of such a quality that it fits the head of the screw well and does not round it out. I also like the fact that I am able to get a good even down pressure on the screwdriver. I was not able to test this out in the field, not often that there is the need for it, however it has been handy around the house and office.

I have not tested the wire stripper and reamer as yet however I will endeavour to report on these during the Long-Term Report.

Overall I am very happy with the Wenger EvoGrip S18 Knife and I have no complaints to make at all. I have recently ordered a leather pouch for the knife and expect to see that in the coming weeks. I am told this is specifically designed for this model so it will be good to see.

Thank you to Wenger and BackpackGearTest.org for the opportunity to test the EvoGrip S18.

This concludes my Field report.