



BackpackGearTest

The most comprehensive interactive gear reviews and tests on the planet.



WEGNER EVOGRIP S18 SWISS ARMY KNIFE

TEST SERIES BY TOM CALLAHAN

FIELD REPORT

[INITIAL REPORT - April 04, 2010](#)

[FIELD REPORT - June 20, 2010](#)

TESTER INFORMATION

NAME: Tom Callahan
EMAIL: tcallahanbgt AT yahoo DOT com
AGE: 51
LOCATION: Seattle, Washington, USA
GENDER: M
HEIGHT: 5' 11" (1.80 m)
WEIGHT: 170 lb (77.10 kg)

For the past 20 years I have lived off and on in Washington State, backpacking in the Cascade Mountains. I get out regularly on day hikes and multi-day trips and usually try to include a good off trail scramble. During the winter I get out snowshoeing at every opportunity. I also enjoy glacier climbing, summitting prominent peaks like Mt. Rainier (14K ft/4K m) and Mt. Baker (10K ft/3K m). My pack weight will range from 15 - 50 lbs (7 - 23 kg) depending on the season and the length and type of trip.

INITIAL REPORT

PRODUCT INFORMATION & SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Wenger

Year of Manufacture: 2010

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

MSRP: US\$ 69.95

Listed Weight: 3.1 oz (88 g)

Measured Weight: 3.3 oz (94 g)

Listed Length: 3.25 in (8.25 cm)

Measured Length: 3.25 in (8.25 cm)

Measured Width: 0.85 in (2.2 cm)

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

The Wenger EvoGrip S18 Swiss Army knife arrived packed in a small white box. This is the Patagonian Expedition Race model which has a Patagonian Expedition Race logo etched in the handle on one side. On this same side is the Wenger Swiss logo with the white cross on a red background.



EvoGrip S18 Logo Side View

The knife is designed with ergonomic handles which have a long and a short depression on each side to accommodate the user's fingers and palm. These depressions are embedded with non-slip black rubber to enhance the grip. The plastic of the handles is a high visibility yellow.

The web site describes the knife as having 11 implements and performing 15 functions. While I counted 11 implements, I could only count 14 functions

(unless the ergonomic grip is considered a function?).

2.5" (6.3 cm) Locking Blade

2.75" (7.0 cm) Double-cut wood saw

2.4" (6.1 cm) Springless scissors with serrated, self-sharpening design

Flat head screwdriver

Cap lifter (part of flat head screw driver implement)

Wire stripper (part of flat head screw driver implement)

Can opener

Nail file

Nail cleaner

Phillips® head screwdriver

Reamer

Toothpick

Tweezers

Key ring



Knife Fully Open (Wenger)

All these implements fold down well in the knife. However, the locking tab for the main blade does protrude quite a bit.



Flip side showing Main Blade Locking Tab

The instructions that came with the knife were clear and brief, recommending the knife be kept dry and lightly oiled. There is a wrong use of the word "or", though, as it describes proper care will provide, "... a lifetime or trouble-free cutting pleasure." when it should say, "... a lifetime of trouble-free cutting pleasure."

TRYING IT OUT

Upon taking the knife out of its box I immediately checked out the feel of it in my hand. The knife was a little thicker than I expected, but other than that, it looked and felt like what I was anticipating based on the info and images on the Wenger web site. The ergonomic grip with inlaid black rubber felt good to the touch and the rubberized grip fit securely in my hand. When I opened the main blade and gripped the knife, the smaller teardrop shaped rubber on the ends of the handle near the base of the blade fit well against my thumb and forefinger. The longer rubber areas also fit well against my fingers and palm.

Next I checked out the other implements. They all opened smoothly and easily with a fingernail. The implements were clean and all cutting edges were very sharp. The main blade does lock in place securely and it folds back easily when the locking tab is depressed. On the web site the flathead screwdriver implement is described as locking, but that is not the case. It folds back like all the other implements (except the main blade).

SUMMARY

I like the look and feel of the Wenger EvoGrip S18 Swiss Army knife. The handle contours and rubberized grips really fit well in my hand. I'll be anxious to check out this grip when using the implements. With the varied combination of implements, I can see this knife being very handy to have on my backpacking trips. I also appreciate the sharp cutting edges of the various implements. I will be checking to see how they hold up after use. While I like the grip and feel of this knife, just going on initial impressions, I don't really like how the main blade locking tab protrudes from the knife body. It will be interesting to see how I feel about this tab after I've had a chance to use the knife during testing.

FIELD REPORT

FIELD LOCATIONS AND CONDITIONS

During this phase of testing I have taken the knife with me on 3 day hikes and 2 overnight outings. Temperatures have ranged from 25 to 65 F (-4 to 18 C). The spring season can be a real mixed bag here in the Pacific NW. I've been out in snow, rain and fortunately some sun (sometimes all in the same day!) Trails encountered have been a mixture of dry bare ground, sloppy muddy and deep snow. Typical elevation gain for a day would be 3,000 ft (900 m). In addition to having this knife with me and using it out in the mountains, I also used the Evo around the house when the opportunity presented itself.

PERFORMANCE IN THE FIELD

I have been very pleased with the performance of this knife and have used just about every function at least once. The locking blade snaps securely in place when unfolded. I used this blade for numerous tasks including cutting line, slicing hard salami and sharpening the end of sticks to make tent pegs. The wood saw quickly cut through sticks with a diameter of 1 in (2.5 cm). This was particularly handy when cutting sticks to size for tent pegs. While I did not have the occasion to use the flat head and Phillips head screw driver functions out in the field, these functions worked well for small tasks around the house. One weekend project involved taking out some old doors that were secured with a combination of slotted and Phillips head screws. It was nice to use the Evo, unfolding whichever screwdriver head was needed to remove the door. The can opener was tested in the kitchen and that worked smoothly, cutting

easily through the lids of different sized cans. I have found the cap lifter to be an extremely useful function, especially at the end of a hike when I need to hydrate with a cold, carbonated malted barley beverage. I have used the nail cleaner to get the trail dirt out from under my nails before dinner. The nail file has worked well to smooth off the edge of a broken nail during one of my overnight trips. This nail file blade is very sturdy, much more so than the file blades typically found in small nail clippers. The scissors cut very well through a variety of materials such as paper and duct tape. These scissors even cut through the piece of medium weight nylon webbing I keep in my emergency kit. This could be very useful in the event some type of emergency repair is needed to a backpack strap or a tent strap. I also like the tensioner on the scissors which helps keeps the blades open while cutting. The toothpick worked as I would have expected. I found the tweezers do not have enough stiffness to be very useful. When trying to remove even a small splinter, the tweezers material would bend rather than be able to firmly grasp the end of the splinter. I ended up using the reamer and did remove the splinter. I haven't used the wire stripper or the key ring and plan to do so during the long term testing phase.

During testing the implements have held up well and cutting edges function just as they did during the first use. I have sharpened the edge of the locking blade twice and this easily restored it to original sharpness. I found the different implements easy to access and open. The locking blade is easily unlocked by pressing the mechanism tab and then folds smoothly back in place. The contour handle with the inlaid black rubber provided excellent grip when using the various implements. I found this far superior to other folding knives I have used that had just smooth plastic grips. I did not like how the protruding locking mechanism tab felt in my hand and when the Evo was in my pocket. This tab sticks out quite a bit and while it appears consideration was given to making sure it had smooth edges it still has an awkward feel when holding the knife or when I had it bouncing around in my pocket. For my use I don't really need the main blade to lock. I realize a locking blade affords a degree of safety. But my preference would be to have a folding knife without such a protruding tab and a main blade that is held in place with a typical tension mechanism.

SUMMARY

Overall I have been very pleased with the EvoGrip Swiss Army Knife. This knife has a great many functions packed into a small package. The implements and functions would help address a range of tasks that may be come up on day hike or a multi-day trip in the mountains. The quality of the material and construction is very high and the knife has held up well during the Field

Testing period.

Things I like:

- variety of implements and functions
- excellent grip
- spring action on the scissors

Things I don't like:

- protruding locking mechanism tab
- tweezers that are really too light in weight to be of much use

This concludes my Field Report. Check back in about 2 months for by Long Term Testing report.