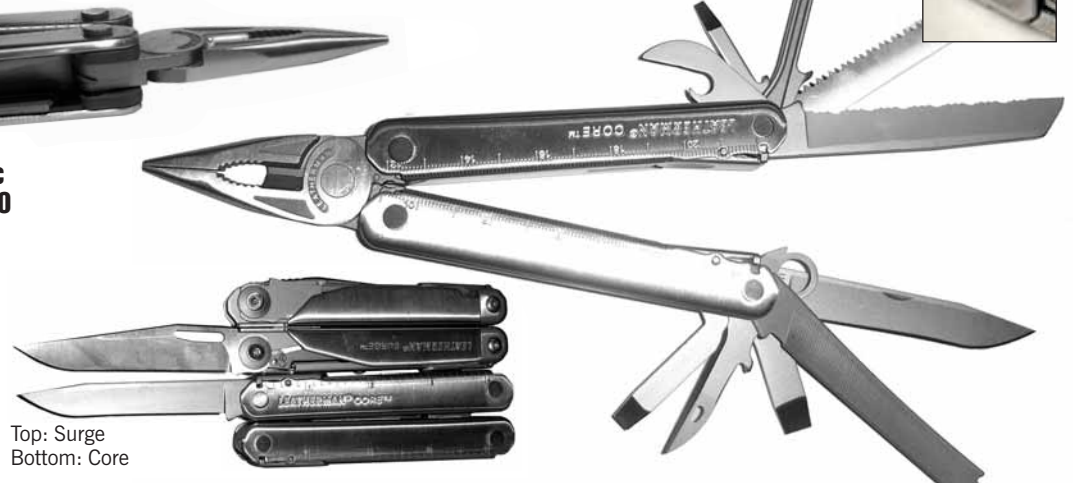


Leatherman Core



Manufacturer: Leatherman Inc
Cost : £79.95 / \$76.00
Origin: USA
Weight: 10.8 oz / 307g
Length: 4.5" / 11.5 cm

We last reviewed the Leatherman SuperTool in issue 34 when Leatherman introduced the updated Supertool 200. This time we have the Core which replaces the Supertool 200 and at first glance seems to be a retrograde step in design terms. The 200 looked a little slicker with spring releases that matched some of the other changes to the entire range at that time so it's a little odd that the new Core should now stand out as the only model with the original straight lines. Perhaps that was the intention in this day of retro design? On closer inspection what appears to be exactly the same blade range as the Supertool 200 has some subtle but vital differences. Firstly the blades are all a little larger. They were pretty big to start with, this was, after all, Leatherman's largest tool and about the heaviest 'professional' model on the market until the arrival of the Surge. The blades on the Core may be slightly larger and beefier than the Supertool 200 resulting in a weight increase of about one oz (41g) but overall the weight is 20z/89g lighter than the all-conquering Surge! That is a



Top: Surge
 Bottom: Core

significant weight difference considering the Surge lacks the robust driver blades of the Core. But though the Core continues to lack scissors which most mortals would find useful at somepoint it does now have the ability to accept a 1/4 hex drive converter. This costs £17.95 inc adapter, 5 double-ended bits, plastic retainer and leather wallet) - The entire Leatherman range can be adapted to accept additional bits and this is instrumental in transforming multi-tools into an even more versatile tools. The Core adapter kit shown below comes with a leather holster that despite the perspective in our photo, it is bizarrely too small to fit the Core multi-tool but way too large for just the adapter kit? This is a shame because this leather pouch is the same design as the Surge pouch - lower profile than the rather old-fashioned looking square leather pouch you get with Core plus it has a pocket for the adapter kit and extra bits.

The key changes from the Supertool 200 therefore are:

- The Main knife blade is increased from 75mm to 80mm in length
- The serrated knife blade is squared off but seems to remain at 75mm in length
- the file is now 80mm rather than 75mm and again squared rather than tapered.
- the phillips screwdriver is now longer and squared off to accept the Leatherman 1/4"bit driver
- The 3 driver blades are substantial - they are full size ground steel, pro blades that meet the standard trade screw sizes. No compromises here!
- the awl now has a threading eye
- the woodsaw is now a little wider at the head instead of tapering off.
- Unlocking the blades is achieved with a push button.

**FEATURES:
 IN ACTION**

The original spring blade release

Needlenose Pliers	Serrated Knife	Awl & Thread Loop
Regular pliers	Wood/Metal File	9"/22cm Ruler
Wire cutters	Saw	Bottle/Can Opener
Hard Wire Cutters	5/16" Screwdriver	Wire Stripper
Stranded Wire Cutters	7/32" Screwdriver	Lanyard Ring
Electrical Crimper	1/8" Screwdriver	
Clip-Point Knife	Phillips Screwdriver	All Locking Blades

proved to be a pain in the thumb so the new, smooth recessed button is brilliant. Had Core not been an attempt by Leatherman to hold onto a traditional design we'd have said they'd regressed in keeping the original all-internal blades that can only be used when the pliers are deployed. As it is we'll forgive that transgression! The driver adapter is a snug fit and there is virtually no play when force is applied. This is essential and expected of any quality tool because the result of any play is to minimise efficiency of the action and burr the sides of the driver and adapter and increase wear and inefficiency. The Adapter kit offers an odd assortment of bits which you can obviously change to suit your needs - however, as standard you get 4,5 & 6mm hex, 1/4" hex, #10 & #15 Torx, -0 & #3 Phillips and .075 & .2" screwdrivers. You can expand the range of double ended bits with Leatherman's own 42 Bit-Kit (see Surge Review). Back to the Core itself, and the largest driver blade is a reassuringly solid - it's actually exactly the same blade as in the Surge. The drivers really are a quality item on the Core and even the Phillips has been extended and reinforced (not that it is necessarily stronger than the previous version but it seems it!). The knife blades on the other hand aren't the largest in the Leatherman range any more though the file and wood saw could well be. The double sided file has always been a key blade and is certainly still one of the best you'll find on any multi-tool - we've lost count of the number of times this has been used to de-burr metal and even plastic.

At £79.00 the Core is £20 cheaper than the Surge or Wave, in fact, excluding the additional cost of a driver converter the core is actually cheaper now than the Supertool 200 was when we last reviewed it, how often does that happen?!

Let's be honest, this tool lacks the aesthetics and sheer range of options of the Wave and Surge (also reviewed in this issue) and at first sight you'd be disappointed if you won the Core and not the Surge in the Dept xmas raffle. But if you're moonlighting as a tradesman there will definitely be times when you'll be glad of the size and sheer grunt afforded by the Core' driver blades in particular. You can be proud that the Core is a far tougher character than the majority of multi-tools on the market and that it's a real 'man's' tool without pandering to soft hands with the brushed steel and rolled edges of the later generations of tools. But the rest of the time you can rightfully feel a little disappointed you didn't win the Surge!



FOR:

- Robust no-nonsense tool
- High quality, professional grade screwdriver blades
- Accepts a VERY useful 1/4" bit driver adapter

AGAINST:

- Boxy design with less accessible blades
- Still no scissors!

Contact Leatherman at

www.leatherman.com or in the UK www.whitbyandco.co.uk

