

This list is based on the article "[Create your own ultimate support tech toolkit with help from our members.](#)" by Mike Walton.

When a trip to an end user's machine is necessary, there's no time for fumbling for the right tool. But many times, you arrive at the user's desk and find yourself unprepared to fix the problem. In an ideal world, you'd have everything needed at your fingertips—a sort of ultimate toolkit. In the real world, you can still arrive prepared if you stock your toolkit with a few essential hardware items. Some of these tools may require some creative shopping, but you can find most of them in your local hardware store. The prices listed here are approximate.

1

Multibit screwdriver with nut drivers. Get a ratcheting grip if you use these a lot or find yourself in tight places with limited movement. A nut driver is handy when someone buggers up the case screws before you get there. (These can cost anywhere from \$6 to \$25.)

2

Needlenose pliers/cutters (straight and curved). Even if you have great dexterity, these multipurpose tools will help you manipulate little wires and straighten tiny prongs. (These can cost from \$6 to \$30.)

3

Hemostats. These function like needlenose pliers but have a locking mechanism, which is great for hanging onto jumpers or other small parts. (You can find these for \$3 to \$8 a piece at places like [Widget Supply](#).)

4

Parts claw/retriever. Never leave a dropped screw rattling around in a computer case. (You can get a 3-claw parts retriever as part of a \$12 toolkit from [Business Supply](#) or check your local hardware store.)

5

Small flashlight (optional accessories include headband holder, optic fiber extension). One of these can put a little light on the subject. Or use it to read those small part numbers. (You can find these for \$10 or less at most electronics or hardware stores.)

6

Small mirror on telescoping handle. This helps you to look around corners in tight spaces. (These are available for around \$6 at [Autopart.com](#).)

7

Tin or bottle with assortment of cable and PC screws along with motherboard jumpers. Support techs usually need plenty of screws and jumpers. Either they're missing from the user's PC when you arrived on the scene or they just got away while you were working. (You can usually scrounge some screws and jumpers off old equipment to save money. Reuse film cases or other small containers to hold them.)

8

Multimeter. There are times when using one of these is the only way to find out if a part is working as it should. (These can cost from \$5 to \$25 for a basic analog style at [multimeterwarehouse.com](#) and upwards of \$400 for a high-end digital [Fluke](#).)

9

Electrostatic discharge strap or pad. Save yourself the embarrassment of frying a chip with your electric personality: Use one of these. (They can cost between \$6 and \$70, depending on whether you buy a strap or a pad.)

10

Paper clip. This is a multiuse tool for ejecting CDs and disks or prying key caps off stubborn keyboards (Check the office supply cupboard for a box of these.)


11

Pen and paper. For recording preferences and other settings, drawing jumper diagrams, or doodling while waiting for Windows to restart, a trusty pen and pad are indispensable. (This is another handy tool you can usually find in the office supply cupboard.)

12

Phone and AC line testers. These are particularly useful in areas where utilities are questionable. (These can cost from \$5 up to \$99.)

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