

## How do I?

### An occasional series

### **This week: Must Have's You May Not Have Thought Of!**

A look at some very useful things you will want or even need.

As the song says “these are a few of my favorite things”.

There are admittedly not as much fun as a new (to you) radio.

Not in any particular order.

#### 1. **Multimeter**



I have a very good analog meter I bought at Sears a couple decades ago. But I find the newer digital ones can be a lot easier to read as the eyes get older. I now have a fairly good digital meter for home use and some cheap (think Harbor Freight) ones I carry in my gear bags when going portable.

#### 2. **Bongo Ties.**

Cannot imagine getting along without these. Whether used for securing a coil of coax, or radial wires, or mounting an antenna to a tripod, they are just awesome. I have never broken one either!



#### 3. **Connector adapters**

Got a new HT? Trying to connect it to an antenna and the connectors do not match? Not sure what you have? A coax connector adapter kit typically has about 30 different connectors, each with different ends. So if you need to go from an N connector to a PL259 to a SMA, you can do it.



#### 4. Anderson Power Poles<sup>™</sup>

Anderson PowerPoles<sup>™</sup> have become the standard in the emergency communications community for connecting equipment to power supplies. They are also very useful at home. Please do yourself a favor and buy the genuine item, not a knockoff. Yes they are expensive, but they work! A good set of crimpers is a once in a lifetime purchase.



OK, I get it. Real hams solder. I know. But sometimes you need a cable, or a connector went bad and you are just not near a soldering gun. Most of the commercial coax suppliers have switched to crimp connectors as you get a solid connection at a lower labor cost. And if you have priced coax lately, you know every penny helps. You need one designed for RF coax, not TV coax. Although a really good one can use dies for both.

#### 5. Coax Crimper



#### 6. LL Bean Pencil Case<sup>™</sup>



This may seem like a stretch, but if you never tried them, you do not know what you are missing. I found them by accident. I received a LL Bean gift card and there was nothing in their traditional lines I really needed. I found these pencil cases. I bought 5 or so and a couple of the Accessory Zip Pouches. I primarily carry them in my work back pack and keep things like batteries, USB adapters, USB cables, USB thumb drives etc. The amateur radio uses are unlimited.

Wait! I never leave the shack. Why do I need a flashlight? Ever have trouble reading the buttons on a non backlit radio panel? Ever really wish you could see better when removing a screw? Yep. I keep one right on the radio desk.

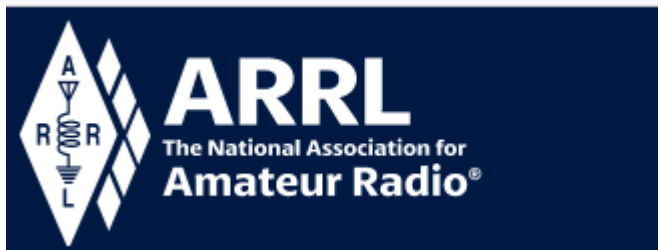


### 7. Maglite AA Flashlight



Whether a brand new ham, or been licensed a long time, you are missing out if you are not an ARRL member. ARRL is so much more than Field Day, license exams and study guides and contesting. It is the organization lobbying to keep amateur radio on the air.

<http://www.arrl.org/>



8.

9. What? You thought this was a Top Ten list? Nope. Just eight.

Catch 'ya on the air!