



AIRSTREAM
TECH HELP GROUP

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The Airstream Tech Help Group has been established to provide assistance to the membership experiencing technical problems. We will respond directly to you in response to your email describing a problem. Examples of questions, modifications or upgrades that might be of interest to members will be published in the Blue Beret. We hope you will find this service of value in the care and feeding of your Airstream.

Tools: What Tools Should I Bring while Airstreaming?

Talking about which tools to take Airstreaming is similar to asking which child do you like most? We love them all, but we do also have our favorites!! And, I should admit that I have never met a tool that I didn't like, and wanted to add to my collection.

Let's start by looking at what are the tools that everyone should have in their BASIC tool kit.

- Screwdrivers - including Phillips, straight blade, and maybe a Torx or two
- Adjustable wrench, like a Crescent wrench, small to medium size
- Vice Grips, medium size
- Small combination set of open end/box wrenches and a set of 1/4" and 3/8" drive sockets in both SAE and Metric (buy a quality set and they will last). I have had my set of Crescents for 35 years.
- A set of Allen wrenches, both in SAE and Metric
- A few pliers, including a Channel Lock, diagonal cutter, needle nose, and standard slip pliers
- Since we are towing Airstreams, a good quality rivet tool, and an assortment of aluminum rivets



- A small multimeter, that measures volts, amps (both AC and DC), resistance, and continuity
- A HD set of scissors
- A folding knife, or better yet, a good multi-tool (Gerber or Leatherman)
- A medium sized hammer (if all else fails)
- Tape measure & a small level
- A pencil and a black and white permanent marker
- A headlamp or small flashlight, and a set of fresh batteries
- Gloves, both disposable nitrile and leather work gloves
- Safety glasses to use while

filling your lead acid batteries or using impact tools

- A First Aid kit, with plenty of bandages and anti-bacterial ointments



I know you will have a few more must have tools in your tool bag/box. That's great! This is just a good starting point.

The next must-have tool set is for **changing tires** on both the trailer and tow vehicle or your motorhome.

- A 1/2" drive breaker bar, 4" to 6" extension, and sockets that fit both the tow vehicle and trailer lug nuts



- A bottle jack and handle with a few wood blocks to get the jack up to the correct level to lift the vehicle
- A 1/2" drive torque wrench (don't buy the really cheap ones, they will not be very accurate or last). I have had my Craftsman torque wrench for years, and it is still going strong. Tip: Be sure to turn setting back down to zero each time you use it.
- Optionally, you could add a cordless impact wrench to speed up any tire change
- A good quality tire pressure gauge
- A bright safety vest
- Wheel chocks, or curved wheel ramps
- A set of flares/safety triangles or electronic flares



Remember that when jacking up your Airstream, only use the marked jack points behind the wheels to raise the trailer. You may need a number of wood blocks to get the jack high enough to raise the camper to remove the tires. Be very careful that you only change the tires on a flat, level surface and make sure to block the wheels on the opposite side of the camper. SAFETY FIRST!

The next set of tools I will recommend to make repairs or improvements more convenient and faster, and to make a great campfire.

- A compact cordless drill, with a small set of drill bits, and a set of screw drivers and bits. Include the charger and a spare battery.
- A small cordless soldering iron and a few feet of solder
- A small camp axe/hatchet with sheath
- A small camp shovel, either foldable or straight handle
- Capture some lint from your clothes dryer at home, and put in a sandwich bag to help light your campfire
- Paraffin based fire starter blocks
- A bucket to carry water to put out your campfire for the night



It is important to have spares for the many types of fuses and other consumables. This list is a good starting point. Your specific list will vary based on the age, type and configuration of your camper. If you don't have everything on the list, just start with what you have, and gradually add the additional items over time.

- Spare fuses for the trailer
- Spare fuses for the tow vehicle
- Spare taillight bulbs
- Spare interior LED bulbs for your particular fixtures



- Wire crimpers and a selection of wire crimp terminals
- A bag of various sized zip ties for holding things together
- A small box with a variety of stainless-steel screws
- A small bottle of Blue Loctite or equivalent



- A roll of Teflon tape
- A can of WD40
- A can of food grade silicone spray
- A roll of HD duct tape
- A roll of quality electrical tape
- A roll of masking tape
- A small bottle of Gorilla glue
- Dr. Tolley's Crack Seal
- A tube of Parbond sealant
- A small roll of 2" Dicor sealing tape
- A butane-based fire starter/lighter
- Spare water hose washers
- A roll of HD paper towels (I like the blue paper shop towels)
- A tube of ball hitch lubricant

So, quite a list?? How you organize the products is up to you. Putting similar items together makes some sense, allowing you to go to one place to find consumables, as an example.

I try to put the small hand tools in a small toolbox, to keep them together. I like open tubs for other things like tapes, zip ties, and lubricants. I put all my fuses, bulbs, and electrical connectors in flat boxes with many dividers, keeping things somewhat organized.

I hope this article gives you a good starting point to evaluate your current tool selection. You may want to add or subtract, based on your needs, and your comfort level with the various tools. There is no perfect list, but over time, you will adjust your tool selection to meet your needs.

If you have technical questions, please send them to techhelp@wbcci.org.

Happy Camping!