

TESTING GLOVES FOR WORK

Work gloves have gone modern, with new materials and designs that provide fit, flexibility, and versatility. Spandex and artificial leather yield gloves that can be washed without getting stiff; spandex also makes it possible to create a truly fitted glove. And, as our tests show, the new materials can work well.

All but the Tomboy Tools gloves are made from artificial leather, and most have some amount of spandex. Most come in at least three sizes, including extra extra large.

We asked 20 men and 7 women to use the gloves for their normal home- and auto-maintenance chores, carpentry, and heavy yard work, then tell us which were well-suited for the work and which they preferred for comfort and fit.

We had the panelists do specific tasks—thread a nut onto a bolt and flip the switch on a small power tool, for example—so we could gauge usefulness in detail work.

In general, lower-rated gloves have bulky seams inside the fingers, which made the gloves uncomfortable. They also tend to have extra padding, which panelists said got in the way. Panelists often said that the higher-rated gloves felt like a second skin.

The bottom line. Best overall: the Custom Leathercraft Handyman, a CR Best Buy at \$10. Or consider the Mechanix Original and Mechanix Series 2.0. Gloves marketed for women are sized for smaller hands; but that's also true of the gender-neutral Mechanix and Ringers gloves.

POINTING FINGERS

Useful features in work gloves:

Stretch nylon on sides of fingers.

Padding on palm and fingertips for extra protection.

Velcro straps on cuff.

Quick Ratings Work gloves

Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Within types, in performance order.

Brand & model	Price	Test results	Sizes
		Heavy work	Detail work
		Extra small	Extra extra large

FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Brand & model	Price	Heavy work	Detail work	Extra small	Extra extra large
CR BEST BUY Custom Leathercraft Handyman	\$10	●	●		●
Mechanix Original	25	●	●	●	●
Mechanix Series 2.0 High Dexterity	20	●	●	●	●
Ironclad Wrenchworx	26	●	○		●
Ringers Authentic	25	○	○	●	●
Wells Lamont Talon Grips	19	●	○		●
Craftsman (Sears) Professional	25	○	○		
Ironclad WorkForce AT	23	○	○		●

MARKETED FOR WOMEN

Ironclad Evolution	23	●	●		
Tomboy Tools	13	●	●		

talk Sunglass savvy

THE talk

There's no disputing the need for shades:

Ultraviolet rays can increase your risk of developing problems such as cataracts. But effective sunglasses don't have to be

expensive, our tests have shown. And you can choose almost any color lens (rose isn't recommended), because color doesn't affect UV blocking. Look for a label that specifies UVB protection of 95 percent or more. Here's more helpful lens lingo:

ANSI: The American National Standards Institute, a private, nonprofit organization. It oversees development of voluntary standards for sunglasses and many other products.

Impact-resistant: The Food and Drug Administration requires all sunglasses to withstand an impact test without fracturing but not to be shatter-resistant.

Lens types: Special-purpose lenses block the most UV; cosmetic lenses, the least.

Mirror coating: Reflects light instead of absorbing it. UV protection varies with the type of mirror.

Photochromic: Applies to lenses that lighten or darken in response to the intensity of sunlight.

Polarized: Blocks glare from reflective surfaces. These lenses are ideal for water sports, bicycling, and driving.

Polycarbonate: A plastic that resists impact well.

YOU CAN HAVE A BALL WITH THIS ICE-CREAM MAKER

One of the most entertaining products we've tested in a while is the UCO Play & Freeze Ice Cream Maker. It makes about a pint of ice cream in 20 minutes or so, providing some fun in the process.

You fill a metal cylinder in the middle of the ball with ingredients: sugar, cream, vanilla, and other goodies. Then you fill the space around the cylinder with ice and salt; rock salt is recommended, but table salt will do, we found. Roll and shake the ball for about 20 minutes and you have ice cream. The batches we made were akin to a very good supermarket ice cream.

Rolling the ball becomes a game at a picnic or a beach outing. The ball can weigh 7 pounds when loaded with ice and other ingredients. We found that very young children tired of the game before the ice cream was ready. But the young-at-heart ice cream devotees on our staff happily kept the ball rolling.

The UCO Play & Freeze ball sells for about \$30 by mail or online from L.L.Bean or from www.ucocorp.com. Expect to pay about \$3 a pint for basic ingredients, ice, and salt.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD
Rolling the UCO Play & Freeze ball makes a pint of very good ice cream.

