



LAP 29 — ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Some of the people I race with really have it together when it comes to race weekend. They come to the track fully prepared for whatever problems may arise, this includes changing clutches, transmissions, and even engines. The degree of preparation is usually a function of time or dollars where those that have plenty of either usually show well. Money will buy you a big transporter, fully laid out by professionals that have the experience to know what is essential and convenient to have available at the track. If you don't have the money or inclination to buy the big transporter fully decked out with all the tools but you have the time to prepare for time at the track there are a few essential tools that you'll need that will make the experience more enjoyable.

First, buy two good floor jacks. Leave one in the shop and dedicate the other to reside in your trailer. Doing this has several advantages:

1. You'll have a spare jack that can be used in case of failure.
2. You'll never worry about loading the jack again before leaving for the track and it can be used to change a flat tire on the road.

Quite frequently, I see someone leaving their jack at home and spending the weekend borrowing someone else's. Along with the jack, buy six good jackstands, four for the shop and two dedicated to trailer use. Make pads for your jackstands you'll be using at the track because sometimes it will be necessary to use them in the dirt.

Purchase a top quality one-half-inch-drive battery powered electric impact wrench. Don't be cheap, buy a good one. Tire changing is the number one action in the pits and making it a non-event is key to enjoying your weekend. You need the ability to break lug nuts with the tire in the air and a strong impact is the only way to effectively accomplish this. Top quality electric impacts use Lithium-Polymer batteries that produce massive power for their size. Using a wrench like this, we commonly maintain tires on three race cars over a three day event and never have to change or even charge the battery. Purchase a dedicated 6 point deep well impact socket that fits your Mustang's lug nuts and leave it on the impact. Stop borrowing the one from your tool set every time you need it, leave it in the box where it belongs.

Buy an inexpensive one-half-inch torque wrench and dedicate it to the trailer for use only at the track. In my experience, the lower priced units found at discount tool suppliers work just fine for this purpose after you calibrate them using a known good torque wrench. This can easily be done by making up lug nuts in the shop using a "good" torque wrench and then adjusting the lower priced unit to the same value by checking on the tightened lug nuts. Since it's dedicated to lug nut duty, you won't be needing to adjust it again later. Purchase another dedicated 6 point deep well socket that fits your Mustang's lug nuts and leave it on the torque wrench. Make sure you don't over tighten your lug nuts using your new electric impact wrench. Snug them up

leaving the last one-half turn to be made up with your new inexpensive torque wrench.

A top quality large dial-type air pressure gauge is a necessity for establishing good air pressures. It's a good idea to buy at least a 4-inch diameter gauge with pressure hold and bleed off capability. Liquid filled is very nice but expensive and not necessary. A good gauge can be found for under \$50 at many performance parts dealers.

A 50-foot length of air hose dedicated to trailer duty will make life much easier than carrying an air tank around the car to each wheel. You can still connect it to your tank if you use one, but after one weekend you'll be glad you spent the money. Again, this can be purchased at discount tool supply stores for very little money. I prefer the one-quarter-inch size with the silicon style hose because it's durable, small, light and cleans easily when compared to rubber. You can get by with smaller hose at the track because you're not running air tools with it, just filling tires.

Last but not least are chairs, you want plenty of chairs. You want to create an inviting atmosphere in your pits and an excess of chairs does just that. Buy twice as many as you think you'll need because sooner or later an interesting visitor will walk up and you don't want to miss the opportunity to make a new friend by inviting them to sit down and stay awhile. Some of my best friends were made this way, relationships that I know will last a lifetime because we share the same love of the Mustang.

Gidde' up!

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Charlie Jones, a.k.a.

Roadracer

