

The Ultimate Guide to Metal Detecting

Getting Started with Metal Detecting - Everything You Need to Know

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For a lot of folks, they hear the term ‘metal detecting’ and automatically imagine the crazy old guy they saw walking up and down the shoreline on their beach vacation last summer.

But when you look at this surprisingly addictive hobby, there’s so much more to it than just looking funny at the beach.

In this guide, you’ll learn what this hobby is all about, why it has become so popular, what you’ll need to get started, and so much more!

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Why do people go metal detecting?

Let's start off with a simple question: why do people go metal detecting, and what's so exciting about it?



As someone who loves this hobby and actively detects, this is such a hard question to answer because there's so much to say.

The first thing to understand is that different people have different reasons to detect. Here are just a few more of the common reasons:

- The love of history and thrill of being able to hold something in your hands that hasn't seen the light of day in hundreds of years.
- The love of coin collecting. Whether that be older colonial silver coins or more modern coins like wheat pennies.
- The love of being active and in the outdoors. Believe it or not, metal detecting can be a fantastic form of exercise.
- And of course financial gain from either selling your finds (gold/silver jewelry) or even gold nuggets.

Personally, my interests lie in the first three categories - as do most metal detectorists I know.

In fact, very few people I know are in this hobby for financial gain. Their finds are often more meaningful to them than a few extra dollars in their pockets.

Contrary to what a lot of people may think, people who metal detect are often history buffs and collectors who don't frequent the pawn shops.

Metal detecting can also be extremely addicting - especially when you find yourself digging up relics that are hundreds of years old.

One of my very first finds was a French Military button from the late 1700s. I dug it near an old colonial homestead that, through research, I determined was once owned by a French family hundreds of years ago.



Pulling items like that out of the dirt gives you a huge adrenaline rush. For me, this is my 'why' for metal detecting.



How To Get Started Metal Detecting

If my above personal account has your mouth watering, let's talk about how you can get started in this beautiful hobby.

First, let's briefly talk about the type of equipment you'll need, then we'll talk about places to hunt and research. Later in this guide, I go into depth on each of these topics.

There is so much equipment you can choose to utilize to make your hunts more productive, but let me simplify it for you.

When you're first starting out and not sure if you'll even like the hobby (or if budget is a concern), you'll want to get yourself an entry level detector.

That's really all you need to start. Some folks will say you need a 'pinpointer', extra coils, diggers, pouches, carry bags, scoops, covers, gloves, towels, probes, etc.

The amount of equipment is endless. While those things are all very useful for the experienced hunter, when you're first starting out all you really need is a detector.

After all, you don't want to be spending loads of money up front if you're not sure you'll like the hobby. We'll talk more about accessories later in this article, but for now, let's stick to entry level detectors.



At the time of writing this guide, a quality entry level metal detector will cost you anywhere from \$160 to \$400.

Anything over \$400 I consider to be midlevel.

Just to put this price into context, some detectors can cost up to \$10,000.

Yes, \$10k.

But machines that cost this much are meant for gold prospecting in areas where there's known gold in the ground like on old claims (see our [post](#) on gold panning kits).

For detectors that are more all-round machines, the maximum you're going to pay at the moment is about \$2,500 - and that's for the most advanced technology will all the bells and whistles.

The brands you want to look at when choosing any level of detector are:

- Garrett (most popular with beginners)
- Fisher
- Teknetics (same company as Fisher)
- Minelab (most advanced technology)
- Tesoro (older, classic-style machines)
- Whites



Click here to read my post on the [best metal detectors for beginners](#) or here for the [best detectors for kids](#).

A lot of folks will go with the Bounty Hunter brand when first starting out because they're so cheap and can be found at stores like Walmart .

But quite honestly these machines are very low quality and won't give you a great experience.

For a few extra bucks, you can get a detector that's so much better. And what's great about this hobby is that most of the equipment holds it's value like you can't believe.

So worse case scenario you don't like the hobby, just put your detector on ebay and get (most) of your money back.

So what entry level machine should you get?

Here all the most popular entry level models currently available for each of the brands I mentioned above:

- [Garrett ACE 300](#) (formerly known as the ACE 250)
- [Fisher F22](#) (my complete review [here](#))
- [Teknetics Eurotek Pro](#)
- [Minelab X-terra 305](#)
- [Tesoro Compadre](#)



These are all entry level machines. To get an idea of what's considered to be a mid-level machine, take a look at the [Garrett AT Pro](#).

Yes, there are cheaper models available in most of these brands, but these will give you the most bang for your buck.

You really can't go wrong with any of the above machines when you're first starting out.

What is the best metal detector?

Ok so all entry-level selection aside, let's talk about what is the best metal detector.

Quite honestly, there is no best detector.

A lot of people think certain machines will find better stuff or get better depth.

And yes this can happen if we're comparing a \$100 machine with a \$2,500 machine in neutral ground.

But for the most part, the 'best' metal detector is (sort of) a trick question.

The better question would be, what is the best metal detector for me?



Because the 'me' part of that question has a lot of variables such as:

- Where do you live - meaning what part of the country (or what country in the world for that matter)?
- What type of hunting do you want to do (coin, relic, beach, gold, etc)? More on this later.
- What's your budget?
- What's your experience level with metal detecting?
- How tech-savvy are you?

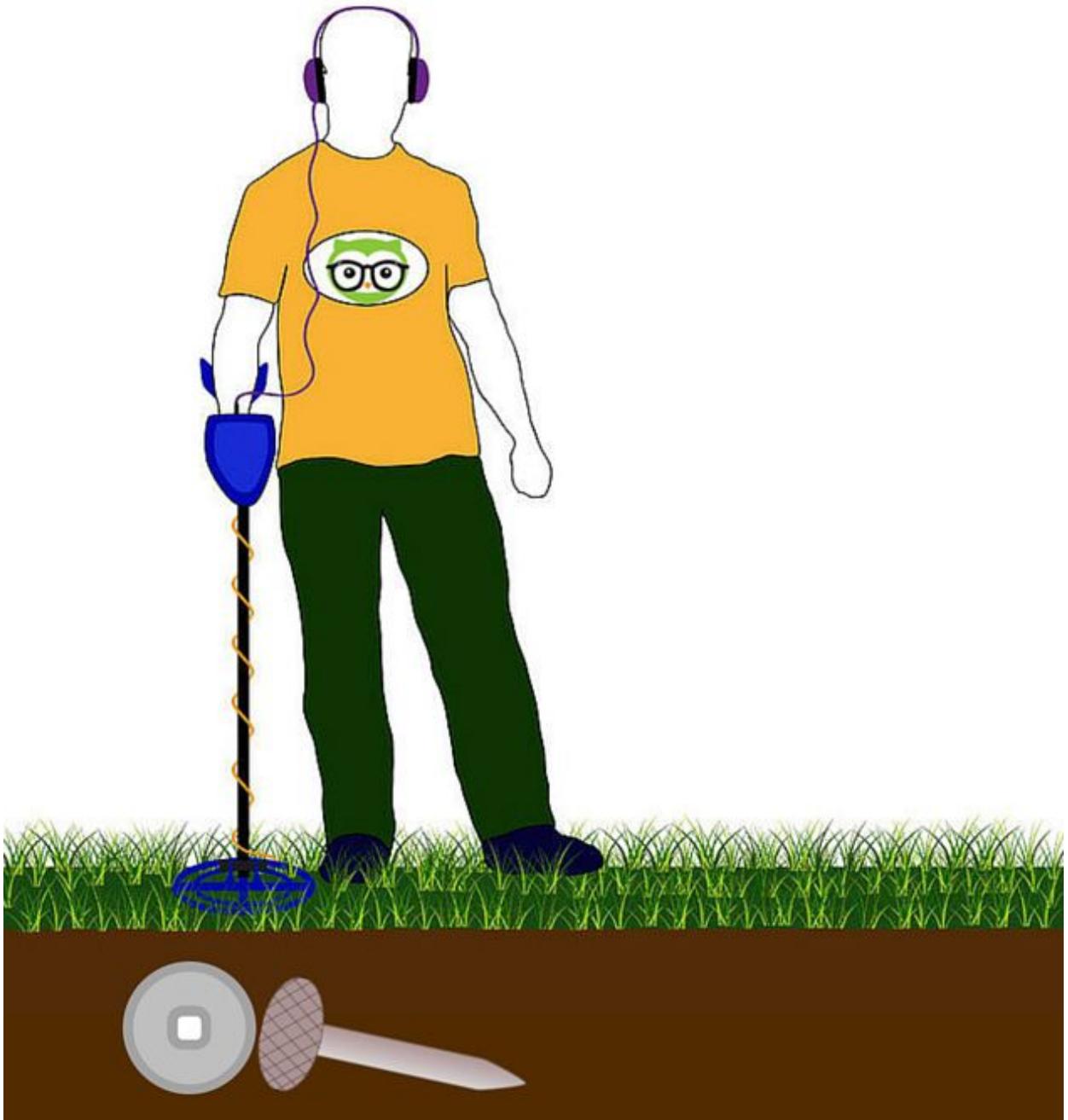
For simplicity sake, I am going to tell you that all metal detectors do the exact same thing - detect metal.

What makes certain machines more expensive than the others is the additional features and different technologies.

It's really that simple.

If I put a silver coin in front of you and hand you both a \$100 machine and a \$2,500 machine, they're both going to tell you there's a silver coin in front of you and that you best pick it up.

Now let's say I also put an old rusty nail next to that coin.



The \$100 machine will detect metal, but it won't be sure what the target is.



The \$2,500 machine will go so far as to tell you there are two targets in front of you, one that is a coin and one that is trash.

That is just one example of how the entry level machines differ from the more expensive ones.

Make sense? Good.

We'll talk much more about the technology behind metal detectors in future articles. Since this is an introductory guide, I don't want to bore you with too much more techy stuff.

So that's all you really need to know regarding selecting an entry level detector. You can't go wrong with any of the ones I mentioned above so take your pick and get out there!

I'll go into more depth on accessories later in this article, so let's continue with some other things you need to know to get started.

[Use this guide](#) to learn how to choose the best metal detector for your needs.

Learn more about the best metal detector specifically for coins [here](#).

One final point to make is that there is a huge market out there for [used metal detectors](#). So if your budget is a bit tight but you don't want to settle for a lesser machine, consider buying used.



Where to Metal Detect

The most common places to hunt are going to be:

- Public schools
- Public Parks
- Beaches
- Woods
- Private Property

Before I go any further on this topic, I want to mention that you always need to be 100% sure that you are permitted to hunt where you want to hunt.

Hunting places without permission is a huge no-no in this hobby. And even though a place is a public property, you still need to be certain that you're allowed to detect there.

For example, many public parks strictly prohibit metal detecting - especially parks run by the county and state. And you can pretty much assume that Federal Parks are off limits too.

So always check with your local government before stepping foot on public land with your metal detector.

When it comes to public schools, the same thing applies really. Get permission.



What I like to do is contact the Superintendent of the school district to get permission. This way I have permission for every school in that district.

When hunting in the woods on public land, be sure to keep an eye out for signs posted and/or property lines. It's not that hard to wander off into someone's private land when you think you're still on public lands.

Beaches are usually fair game - but again look for signs. Also, some beaches are privately owned or owned by State/Federal governments. These are almost always off limits.

Lastly, let's talk about private property. Hunting on private property will be the best ground by far for a few reasons.

- First, you can almost guarantee that no one else has ever detected there (as opposed to a public park or schoolyard).
- Second, the landowner can give you clues where to start your hunt. Maybe they noticed some broken pottery out in the woods in one spot of their land years ago. That would be an excellent place to start your hunt!

I cannot stress enough the importance of getting permission. While verbal permission will often suffice for private land, I always get written permission for any public or government-owned land.

Take the written permission (whether it's a letter or an email print out) and keep it with you at all times during your hunt. This way if



you're ever approached by someone, you have proof that you're allowed to be there.

Once you secure permission to hunt the land, let's talk about your code of conduct.

Metal Detecting Code of Conduct

- I will respect private and public property, all historical and archaeological sites and will do no metal detecting on these lands without proper permission.
- I will keep informed on and obey all local and national legislation relating to the discovery and reporting of found treasures.
- I will aid law enforcement officials whenever possible.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind, including fences, signs, and buildings.
- I will always fill the holes I dig.
- I will not destroy property, buildings or the remains of deserted structures.
- I will not leave litter or other discarded junk items lying around.
- I will carry all rubbish and dug targets with me when I leave each search area.
- I will observe the Golden Rule, using good outdoor manners and conducting myself at all times in a manner which will add to the stature and public image of all people engaged in the field of metal detection.



It's so important to read and follow the code of conduct in it's entirety. If not, you risk being able to metal detect in the future.

Landowners and government officials will no longer grant permission for you or others to metal detect if you're leaving unfilled holes behind and otherwise treating the land irresponsibly.

The thing to remember is that wherever you're hunting, you must leave that place looking exactly as it did before you got there - or better!

Now that we've talked about some possible places to detect, let's talk about doing research to make your site selection a bit more effective.

Research

While I could probably write an entire book on how to do productive research, this guide is going to touch on the basics and focus primarily on private land.

Before getting into specific sources, let's first identify why it's important to do research.

While the most important part of this hobby is just to have fun and enjoy yourself, it never hurts to create more productive hunts for yourself and walk away with better finds.

So instead of finding 87 cents in modern clad coinage in your two hour hunt, you could potentially walk away with coins and relics that are hundreds of years older.

Here are a few ways to conduct research:

Old Maps



Arguably the best method of doing research, looking at old maps of your town can give you tons of ideas on where to hunt.



It also can be the catalyst for a more granular form of research such as searching old newspapers for specific family names.

Depending on where you live, there's an online tool available to the public that's awesome for comparing old maps with present day maps.

It's a website called HistoricAerials.com.

You can type in any address and quickly view overlays of old maps. So for example, I can view a present day map of my house, and overlay a map from 1930 to compare how the area has changed over time.

What this allows you to do is to identify quickly things that no longer exist. If there once stood an old house in the woods near your house or point of interest, this tool can potentially tell you that.

This is an extremely effective way to find lost and forgotten homesteads and other structures.

I've done it many times with great success. Remember the French military button I told you about earlier in this guide?

The only limitation of HistoricAerials.com is that it doesn't have data for the entire county, and the data it does have will typically only go back about 100 years maximum.



But if a house that was built in the 1700s was still standing in 1930, you should be able to spot it (as I have).

You can also quite easily find much older maps of your town or areas of interest from both online map collections, your local library, and your local historical societies.

Here are some great online map resources

- oldmapsonline.org
- topozone.com
- loc.gov/maps/collections/
- davidrumsey.com
- flashearth.com
- historicmapworks.com
- Ancestry.com

As I mentioned above, your local library will often have invaluable resources to look at. Everything from old maps to old periodicals and microfilm can be found at your local library.

A lot of times this material will be in a special room under lock and key. But simply ask your librarian and they'll be happy to grant you access.

The same is true with local historical societies. These can often be even more effective sources of information because the people working there can be a major asset to you.



And who knows, you may even find yourself making new friends and becoming a member of the society!

Local history books

Staying on the topic of local historical societies, this can be your first stop for finding local history books.

Whether published by the society themselves, or self-published by a local historian, your local historical society can be a great source of lesser known books.

Beyond this, I would recommend doing some Google searches for historical books on your town. The 'Images of America' book series is very popular and can be found at most bookstores as well as Amazon.com.

Old newspapers

In addition to the old newspapers you came across on your trip to the local library, there are two other massive repositories to consider.

The first is Newspapers.com. This is a paid tool that's owned by the same company who owns the popular Ancestry.com.

The great thing about this site is that you can do keyword searches to narrow down what you're looking for. Whether you



want to find mentions of a certain family, place, or event, chances are you'll be able to find it there.

The only real limitation of this source is that it currently only has larger newspapers in its database (for larger cities).

So if you're searching for something that's super local or super niche, you may not have any luck.

The other, more well-known source to consider is microfilm.

Most county and state libraries will have a vast collection of microfilm to scroll through. You can even check to see if your nearby University Library has some to offer.

If you really want to get down and dirty with your newspaper research, ask your local librarian about a service called "Interlibrary loan."

In a nutshell, for a small fee your local library can 'rent' a specific reel of microfilm from other libraries and repositories anywhere in the country.

This can be a huge time saver as it prevents you from having to travel long distances to visit libraries who have specific films.

It does, however, require you to do a bit of research first to determine which reels of microfilms you want to rent (i.e. specific dates and newspapers).



State-specific treasure guides

Another way for finding great spots to detect in your area is to buy a 'treasure book' for your state or area.

You can find these at your local metal detecting shop or on amazon.

But essentially these books include things like historical sites and events, local folklore, old maps, known military battle sites/ campgrounds / marching routes, and more.

While these books can pack a ton of great information, most of the information isn't practical because a lot of the sites will be off limits and require special permission or a permit. But they certainly are entertaining!

Landowners

Last but not least, an often overlooked strategy for research is talking to the older members of your community as well as landowners of older homes/property.

A lot of people who like to hunt for Revolutionary and Civil War-era relics often ignore this suggestion because they figure, hey how is someone who was born in 1932 going to help me?



What I say to that is just because someone was born in 1932, doesn't mean they don't remember something from their childhood that once existed - a building, a home or any structure that no longer stands today.

Sometimes first-hand accounts can give us some of the best clues to discovering an old homestead that we would have never found otherwise.

As I mentioned above, a lot of times landowners (especially those who have several acres) might remember things that could guide your hunting. Like the example I gave with a landowner digging up old broken pottery on one section of his/her land.

I've seen some colonial homeowners have brief histories of the home and land that's been passed down from one homeowner to the next. This can provide invaluable clues and help you laser focus your detecting area.

While there so many more forms of research you can do, these are often the most effective and easiest to conduct.

Now that you've hopefully found some stellar areas to detect, let's talk about getting permission!



Getting Permission to Metal Detect

For whatever reason, this seems to be one of the most common obstacles to getting access to great detecting spots.

Many people get nervous or feel silly knocking on someone's door to ask for permission.

And understandably so in some cases.

Let's face it, metal detecting is not super common in certain areas of the country, and people living in those areas might not have any idea what you're talking about.

Likewise in areas that are more suburban and full of beautiful, well-kept green lawns, a lot of people might tell you to bugger off.

After all, they've spent so much time and money on their lawns and don't want you coming in to dig it up.

While this can be a dealbreaker for a lot of homes, it can sometimes help to show the homeowner how exactly you dig small plugs for targets and explain your process of only digging good signals.

Because if you remember from our metal detecting code of ethics, you're going to leave the property exactly as you found it. You just have to convey that to the homeowner.



If you don't feel comfortable knocking on someone's door to start, some alternatives are to send them a letter, drop a flyer/business card in their mailbox, or even call them on the phone.

Either way, just be honest and straightforward with them.

The deal that is most often made between the detectorist and homeowner is that the detectorist keeps everything they find unless the homeowner specifically asks to keep something.

The detectorist is also obliged to return any lost items, jewelry, and family heirlooms to the property owner. This is also just good ethics.

Now that you've got permission and access to a great property, here are some tips to digging responsibly.

How to Dig Responsibly

As a rule of thumb, a hand digger should be used on properties that are less than two acres. Anything over that you can start to think about a mid-sized digger for faster digging.

The hand digger tool of choice for most detectorists is the [Lesche digging tool](#).



This tool can sometimes be referred to as a digging knife.

The digger is serrated on one side for easy digging and cutting through roots.

Typically if you're right handed, you'll want the version that is serrated on the right side. Likewise, lefties will want serrations of the left side. Here's why:

When you dig for a target, you want to dig what they call a 'plug.'

Learning to dig a plug is a must for detecting on well-manicured lawns, as well as public parks and schoolyards.



While it's much easier to demonstrate visually, I'll try my best to explain exactly how to do this:

5 Steps to Digging the Perfect Plug

1. When you come across and pinpoint a target that you want to dig, take out your hand digger and get down on your knees. From the exact spot your target is, back off about 3-5" and stick your digger in the ground.
2. In a counter-clockwise motion, start cutting away at the grass sod until you've formed a horseshoe-like shape around your target (you're not cutting a complete circle). When cutting into the grass, be sure to go down a minimum of 3" (even if your target is only 1"). This will ensure you're not killing any of the grass roots.
3. Once you've cut around your target, use your digger to pry open and flip the plug onto its head. Remember you cut the plug in a horseshoe shape so the part that you did not cut will now act as a hinge to flip open your plug. The grass of the plug should now be completely upside down on top of the grass adjacent to the hole.
4. Take out your towel (I like to use a 1x2' towel) and lay it down in the grass directly in front of the hole. If you don't see your target right away, use your handheld pinpointer to first check the plug, then the hole. If you need to dig away



additional dirt from either the plug or the hole, put it on your towel.

5. Once you've recovered your target, lift up both ends of your towel and slide any dirt back into the hole. Flip your plug back over and press down firmly. Step on it with your foot a few times to make sure it's in there good. Use your hand to brush the grass so it's not matted down.

Like I said, easier to demonstrate visually than to write out.

This may seem like overkill for some, but taking care of the land you're detecting is imperative and part of the code of ethics.

So take it seriously.

Now that you've dug your target let's talk about what to do with your finds.

How to Carry Your Finds

So let's talk about what to do with your finds to keep them safe during the rest of your hunt.

If you remember from the metal detecting code of ethics, we will also be disposing of trash responsibly when we detect. And the chances are good that you're going to have a lot of trash.

That's why you need a belt pouch that has at least two pockets - one for your good stuff and one for your trash. This makes disposing the trash at the end of your hunt much easier.



Now, what if you were to find something really nice like say a silver Morgan dollar or a diamond ring?

You probably don't want to just throw it in with the rest of your finds because it could very well become damaged.

What I recommend is that you also carry with you (usually in your carry bag, not your pouch) a special plastic case stuffed with cotton balls.



I just use an old fishing tackle case. Doesn't have to be fancy. You just want something that you can transport valuable finds without getting damaged.

Ok now that you've successfully protected your finds, let's talk about how to clean them.

How to Clean Your Finds

The most important thing you need to know about cleaning your finds is that you must be absolutely certain what the find is and what (if anything) it's worth. This mainly applies to coins.

The reason for this is that if you do plan on selling your find, you could actually ruin the value just by cleaning it. Serious coin collectors consider coins that are cleaned to be damaged.

Because I don't intend on selling any of my finds (unless it's women's jewelry that my wife doesn't want) I don't really concern myself with this.

I actually carry a soft bristled toothbrush in my pouch so I can do some light cleaning in the field when I'm having trouble identifying a find.



In terms of cleaning while you're home, well you probably want to stick with a soft bristled toothbrush, warm water, and dish soap. Avoid strong chemicals as these can eat away at the metal.

For seriously crusted iron relics, many people opt for a procedure called electrolysis. This is not for an entry level guide, but I may go into the process in future articles.

Another way people clean their finds (especially things of low value like wheat pennies) is to use a rock tumbler. Again I will create an entirely separate article on this topic in the future.

Just to be crystal clear, never clean any of your finds if you're not sure of the value, and there's even the smallest possibility you may want to sell it. It could seriously ruin the value - especially with rare coins.

Now that you've cleaned up (or not) your finds for the day, you're probably thinking to yourself, this hobby rocks!

If that's the case, then it's time to look at some other tools and accessories to make your detecting more productive.

Tools and Accessories

When you're first starting out, a lot of the accessories you use can be things you have laying around the house like an old fanny pack, tool belt, backpack, digger, gloves, etc.

But if there's one single accessory you should buy, it has to be a quality pinpointer.

Pinpointers

What is a pinpointer?

A pinpointer is a small, handheld metal detector that does exactly what it's called - pinpoints your target.

So while your normal metal detector will pinpoint a target to within a few inches, a separate pinpointer will tell you the exact location in the hole or plug.

Garrett Pro-Pointer® AT



The way to use a pinpointer is after you dig your plug, take your pinpointer and stick it in the hole. Once you get within a few inches of the find, your pinpointer will start to beep (or vibrate).



Why are pinpointers so valuable and do you really need one?

Simply put, they allow you to recover your targets 10x faster and easier which means you'll be able to spend more time detecting, and less time digging.

And more time detecting means more finds at the end of the day. It's as simple as that.

But hey, don't take my word for it. Go out on a few hunts without using a pinpointer and tell me how much time it took you to recover your target after digging your plug

What the best pinpointer? ([click here](#) to see my top five picks).

While there's not a huge amount of debate about this (although some folks have their preferences) the best pinpointer is the [Garrett Pro Pointer AT](#).

If you're strapped for cash, you can also get the little brother to this model that's called the Garrett Pro Pointer II.

Let's talk about some other equipment you may want to consider if you're serious about getting into this hobby and making your hunts much more productive.

Diggers

I won't go too much into the various types of diggers, but here are my recommendations:

- Public parks, schools, private lawns: use a small hand digger. I recommend the Lesche digging tool.
- Woods, farm fields, large properties without manicured lawns: use a mid-level digger like the Lesche Sampson, Relic Hunter or Ground Sharks.
- Beaches: use a sand scoop. Don't bother with plastic unless you want it to break the first time you use it. And speaking of breaking, don't use a hand held scoop unless you want to break your back. A hand held scoop is fine if you're just playing around at the beach on vacation with your kids, but serious beach hunters use long handled scoops.
- Rocky areas: use a hand pick along with a hand digger.
- Rivers: if you're relic hunting, use a hand pick that has a powerful magnet attached to the butt of the handle. This will allow you to easily pick up ferrous, magnetic targets without having to see them first in the flowing water. For non-ferrous targets in flowing rivers, a hand digger is often your best bet. Serious river hunters will often use a diving mask and snorkel.

For a more in-depth list of the best diggers for metal detecting, [click here](#).



The biggest thing you have to remember when choosing any digging tool is to spend a few extra dollars to get something that's high quality.

Cheapo diggers that you can get at big box stores today break way too easily. The last thing you want is to be out in the middle of the woods on an intense relic hunt and have your digger snap in two.

It's happened to me, and it's not fun.

The only brand of diggers I recommend is Lesche.

These diggers are really top notch and best of all, made right here in the USA. With heat treated steel and aircraft-quality tubing, they are the Rolls-Royce of diggers.

Headphones

While headphones come stock with most mid to high-end detectors, they don't often come with entry-level machines. So do you need headphones?

If you're just hunting in your back yard or for fun with your kids, then no you don't need headphones.

But if you're doing more than that, then yes you absolutely need headphones.



Why do you need headphones?

Well contrary to what a lot of people think about detecting, the proper way to identify a target is by listening to the audio signals - not using the visual display on the LCD screen.

The visual target indicators serve as a supplement to audio and should not be used as your primary means of identifying a target.

Because of this, you want to make sure you really hear what your machine is telling you.

You cannot allow noises such as traffic, the wind, or kids screaming get in the way of hearing the sounds your detector is making.

This is especially true on the beach where the noise from the wind and waves can be quite loud.

Coil Covers (Scuffs)

Coil covers come stock on some brands of detectors like Minelab and Tesoro, but not on others like Garrett, Fisher and Tekentics.

Coil covers are used to protect the search coil from scratches and dinks. Too much wear on a coil can dramatically alter its performance, and you'll be forced to buy a replacement coil.

The \$10 it will cost for a coil cover is well worth the money.



Pouches/Carry Bags/Backpacks

Pouches that connect to your belt are invaluable in my opinion. If you're just out for a 20-minute hunt for fun, then yes you can probably put everything in your pockets.

Anything more than that and you'll want a pouch.

Remember the things you will be carrying around with you on your person: finds, trash, towel, pinpoint, toothbrush, car keys, and whatever else you want to stick in there.

Carry bags I also find to be an important piece of equipment. The main difference between a carry bag and a backpack is that with most backpacks, you'll have to break down your detector to fit in a backpack.

That means disconnecting and unraveling the coil wire then breaking down your detector to 3 pieces - a pain in the backside if you ask me.

Carry bags are much longer in size and allow you to fit your entire detector without having to take it apart. A huge time saver and way fewer headaches.



In fact, the only times I would recommend using a backpack is if you're hiking or biking long distances to reach your detecting destination or if you're traveling on an airplane.

Other than that, go with a detector carry bag.

Extra Coils

When you start to get serious about metal detecting, you'll want to add a few extra coils to your arsenal.

Every detector comes with one search coil that's built for your average hunt. The manufacturer also makes accessory coils for each detector for different applications and circumstances.

Accessory coils come in all different shapes, sizes and configurations to help you get the most out of your detector.

Here are some of the more common reasons you might need to get yourself an accessory coil.



- If you're hunting wide-open spaces like farm fields or beaches and don't mind a little extra weight on your arm, then a larger coil might be a good idea. You'll be able to cover more ground with each sweep and also get more depth.
- If you're hunting on in tight areas like playgrounds or areas with lots of large rocks, then a smaller coil might be useful to help you maneuver around all the obstacles.
- If you're hunting in public parks or urban areas with loads of trash, you probably want a Double D configured coil to help you separate targets easier. More on this and search coil configurations in a future article.
- If you're in a part of the country with extremely mineralized soil like Virginia or the Pacific Northwest, you probably want a smaller coil to better cope with the noisy ground. More on this in another article.

These are just a few of the more common reasons you might want to consider an accessory coil.

Gear

Just for fun, you may also want to pick up the latest gear from your detector brand of choice.

For example, if you end up buying a Garrett detector, get yourself a Garrett hat, t-shirt or polo.



Each manufacture will also have their own branded bags, pouches, backpacks, cover-ups, etc.

None of this is needed but can make you look pretty official!

Odds and ends / safety

I mentioned this a few times throughout this guide, but I also carry with me a soft bristled toothbrush for in the field cleaning. It goes a long way to help quickly ID a target caked in mud.

Some of the other odds and ends I always carry with me are:

- First aid kit
- Spare batteries (both for the detector and pinpointer)
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Gloves
- Coin Field Guide
- Battery charger (if you're using rechargeable batteries)
- Pocket knife / multi tool
- Whistle (in case you run into a bear)
- Delicate finds case (fish tackle container stuff with cotton balls)

Certain accessories and gear also make great gifts. Check out this article for some [great metal detecting gift ideas](#).



Metal Detecting Magazines

One last item I thought I should mention is metal detecting magazines.

If you're serious about mastering the hobby of metal detecting, you should consider investing in a subscription.

These magazines cover things like the latest treasure news, tech talk, detecting tips, new detector models, manufacturer specials, and stories of great finds and adventures.

Here are some of the more popular magazines:

- [Western & Eastern Treasures](#)
- [Lost Treasure](#)
- [American Digger](#)

You can purchase a subscription online for any of these magazines, or buy current issues at your local metal detector shop.

You can also check out WE Treasures and Lost Treasure current issues in bookstores like Barnes & Noble.

These also make great gifts!



Have Fun!

So there you have it. Everything you need to know about metal detecting, what you'll need, and how to get started.

Now take the first step and buy yourself a metal detector. Get out there and enjoy yourself.

Happy hunting!

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