

## No. 272: The Microcutter

Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR, 715 N. Dries Street, Saukville, WI 53080-1664  
(262) 268-1949 [wb9rqr@att.net](mailto:wb9rqr@att.net)

There is no doubt that proper tools can make jobs easier. A good tool can make the swearing level as small as zero, while a poor tool or the wrong tool can escalate the swearing level considerably. Let me share a recent discovery of mine, at the risk of hearing from some of you that "Oh, I have been using those for years!"

Most of us cut wires in our ham radio pursuits, and sometimes this requires cutting precisely and working in tight spots. I do even more cutting than the average ham, in connection with my rewiring of lamps as a hardware store service – many of you know about this pursuit of mine. Proper trimming of wire leads in this case is especially important, since tolerances are often tight and 110 VAC is unforgiving. The old, clunky side cutters of past years sort of work OK, but now there is a new kid on the block that makes the job easier. Microcutters.



Here is a picture of one. These CHP-170 microcutters can be purchased on Amazon for about \$13 for two units, including shipping and sales tax. The cutting head is only about 8 mm long, so it will fit in tight spaces. The steel jaws are heat-treated carbon steel, angled at about 20° and will flush-cut wires made of soft copper or aluminum up to about 16

AWG. They are not made to work with larger diameter wire or wire that has been hardened in some way. But they are just right for the smaller stuff, down to and including your grandchild's battery-powered device that you just have to fix! I can attest to the fact that they are just perfect for trimming wire ends coming from underneath terminal screws in lamps and other devices.

That is it! Just a tip. Oh, yes, I have found another use for them. They are great for removing that split fingernail fragment that is driving you crazy! But, please take my advise from a previous life of mine. Dip them in ordinary rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) before operating on yourself. That concentration of alcohol (70% only, not less and NOT more) kills all bacteria and inactivates all viruses. Happy computing!