



SILVERLINE
90PC SOCKET SET
 PRICE: £84.31 (LIST PRICE)
 WWW.SILVERLINETOOLS.COM

TOP FEATURES
 58X METRIC, DEEP AND IMPERIAL
 6-POINT SOCKETS.
 16/21MM SPARK PLUG SOCKETS
 17X SPECIALIST 3/8-INCH BITS
 1/4, 3/8 AND 1/2-INCH DRIVE RATCHETS
 10-19MM SPANNERS
 HARDENED, TEMPERED AND
 MIRROR POLISHED

I'm struggling to think of a mechanical job you can do on a car without a decent socket set. There's no question that you need one, it's choosing the right one that's the problem because not all sets are equal, not by a long shot.

We can all understand why pro mechanics will pay thousands for their tools, sometimes over a £100 for a single ratchet, and that's because it's their living – no fixing stuff means no food on the table. Broken items and missing pieces are not an option. But if you don't work on your car every day do you still need a good quality set for the odd bit of modding? The answer is yes, yes you do.

In the simplest of terms if you haven't got one that fits nuts and bolts properly, you'll be rounding stuff off all day long. You might as well not have one at all. The same goes for something that just explodes into bits every time you try and use it.

It's also a question of having everything you need. The more comprehensive a set, generally the more the price goes up. Choosing the right one for your needs is a balance between quality, comprehensiveness and price... so, on the face of it, this one could be just about perfect.

What you get

A mirror polished 90-piece socket set is quite a substantial offering, especially at this price point. What's good to see though is that, unlike some of the more unscrupulous manufacturers, Silverline haven't tried to bump up the numbers with a load of power driver bits or cheapo, blunt pliers. The best thing here, apart from the price, is that every one of these items is actually useful, there's no padding. It's a proper workshop-worthy socket set, with a few decent spanners as an added bonus.

Packing all the essential metric and imperial sockets (including plenty of useful deep items), what's pretty out of the ordinary is all three common ratchet 'drive' sizes are covered instead of the more usual one or two. They haven't skimped on the actual ratchets either, they all have a reassuringly smooth action with professional push-button releases.

What's also unusual is the inclusion of a load of 3/8-drive specialist bits for Torx, Hex, Phillips and PZD fittings, there's even a couple of spark plug sockets.



Midge's Verdict

It's easier than you might think to test a humble socket set. After looking at intrinsic value of all the actual bits and pieces included (there's a more than substantial amount here) the best thing to do is smash them about a bit and get a feel for the quality. This is where the vast majority of cheaper sets let themselves down. Remember, as long as you have all the essentials, it's not always about how many pieces are included either, the thing to watch out for is that what many throw in is just, well, rubbish. Next time you come across an entry-level socket set have a close look at the actual fit and finish of the hardware you'll be surprised how common miss-shaped socket holes and nasty flimsy spanners are. Luckily there's none of those problems with these hardened and tempered items. This set may be designed with DIY mechanics in mind but the actual quality can easily compete with big household names – even some of the high-end trade ones.

What's good here is this set is not expensive but it's not too cheap either. For a good quality comprehensive kit like this, even an unbranded one, you're often looking at £150 plus (which is still pretty reasonable). I think they could have easily listed this one for a lot more than 85-quid.