

Some of the Latest in Gadgetry



by Steve Maynard
July 9, 2019

Topics

These are the items I'll cover. Some of them are very practical, and some are just for fun.

- MacBook cable reel
- iPhone/iPad docking/charging stand
- Silicone grip for iPhone/iPad
- iPhone mount for bikes/motorcycles
- iPhone mount for cars
- Solar charger
- Travel organizer
- Great shirt!
- Waterproof iPhone case
- Backpack

Side Winder



I bought a Side Winder because I was tired of the tangled mess my charger cables made when I stuffed them into my computer bag. Now I think it's one of the handiest accessories I've ever bought.

Side Winder



- \$29 on Amazon
- 4½ stars out of 5

The Side Winder costs \$29 from both the seller and Amazon. Amazon customers gave it 4½ stars out of 5. At the bottom of the slide are some links to the manufacturer's web site and to the Amazon page where you can buy the Side Winder.

video — [BEST MACBOOK CORD ORGANIZER PERIOD- The Side Winder by Fuse Reel](#)

manufacturer — <https://fusereel.com>

Amazon — [Fuse Side Winder MagSafe Original Laptop Charger Organizer Compatible with MagSafe MacBook Charger](#)

Side Winder

Compatible with:



- 85W (15" MacBook Pro)
- 87W (post-2016 15" MacBook Pro)
- 60W (13" MacBook Pro)
- 61W (post-2016 13" MacBook Pro)
- 45W (MacBook Air)
- Does NOT fit Apple's 29W charger for 12" MacBook models.

Different MacBooks have different size chargers. The video mentioned the inserts for adapting the Side Winder to the different sizes. He mistakenly said the inserts will adapt to any charger, but that's not true. The Side Winder I bought accepts chargers for pre-2016 MacBook Pros with Magsafe connectors—the 85W chargers for the 15" MacBook Pro, and the 60W chargers for the 13" MBP. There is a second model called the "USB-C" model. It's built for the 87W and 61W chargers for the 15" and 13" MBP models made after 2016.

Side Winder

Compatible with:



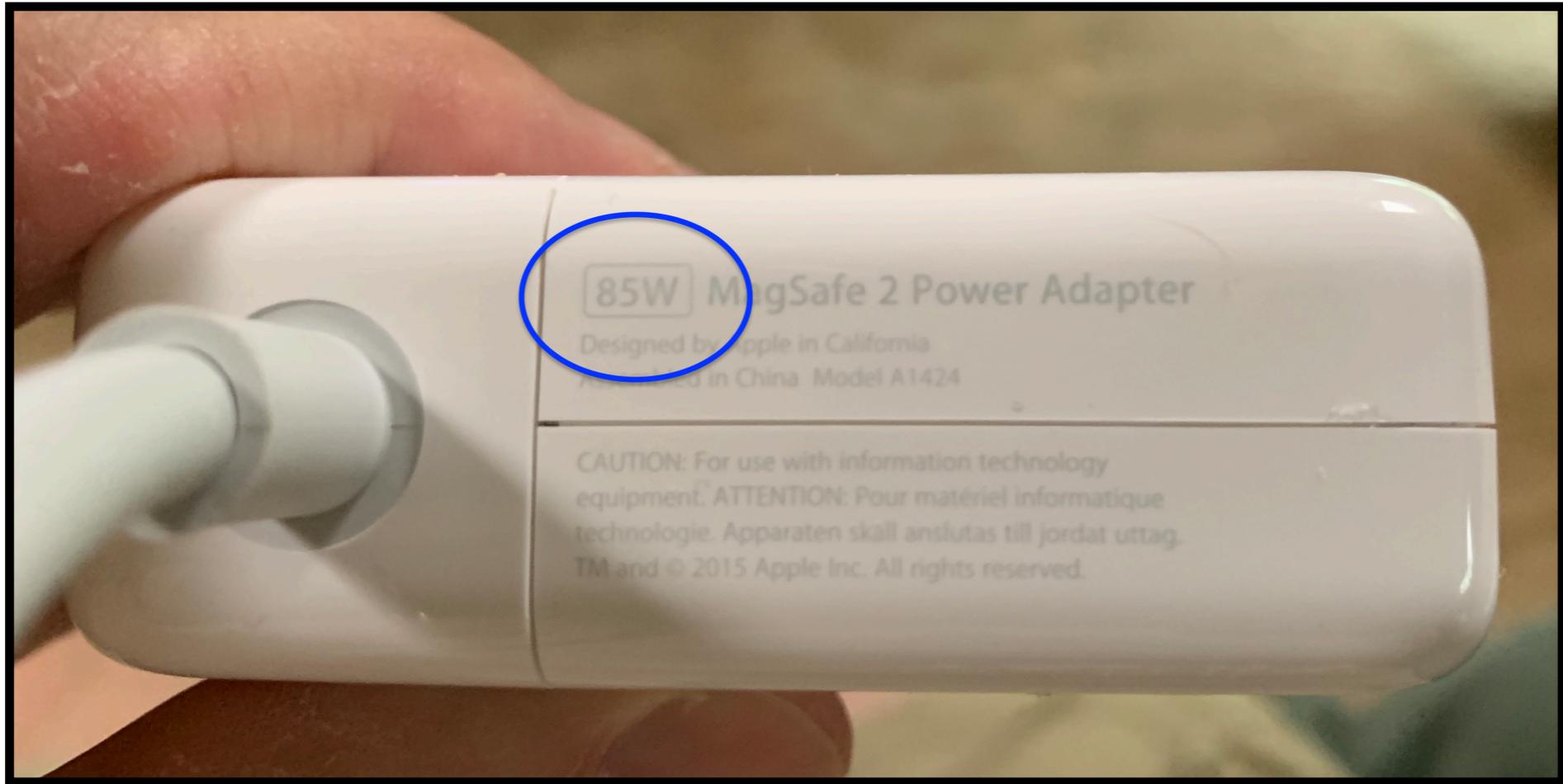
- 85W (15" MacBook Pro)
- 87W (post-2016 15" MacBook Pro)
- 60W (13" MacBook Pro)
- 61W (post-2016 13" MacBook Pro)
- 45W (MacBook Air)
- Does NOT fit Apple's 29W charger for 12" MacBook models.

There is no Side Winder for the 45W chargers for the MacBook Air nor for the 29W or 30W chargers for older 12" MacBooks. I wrote to the manufacturer, and they replied that they have plans to have models available later this year.

Be sure you are getting the device that will accept your laptop's charger.

Side Winder

How to find your charger's wattage:



In case you don't know your charger's wattage, it's on the side next to the cord that plugs into an outlet.

Side Winder in black



*And I'm sure you will be excited to know
you can also get a Side Winder in black!*

Elevation Dock 4



There are dozens of docks available for the iPhone, but a common problem with most of them is that the phone wobbles when it's connected. The Elevation Dock 4 has minimized wobble by making the height of the plug adjustable. The height and angle of the backrest are also adjustable.

Elevation Dock 4



The Elevation Dock costs \$50 on Amazon, and it gets 4 stars from customers.

The device is a combination stand and charging station. It's a good accessory for a desk or nightstand. Your mobile device leans against a backrest while the jack connects to the charging plug. The underside of the dock is actually an adhesive surface, so it works best on a smooth surface. I couldn't find out if the adhesive is permanent or if the dock can be easily relocated.

- \$50 on Amazon
- 4 stars out of 5

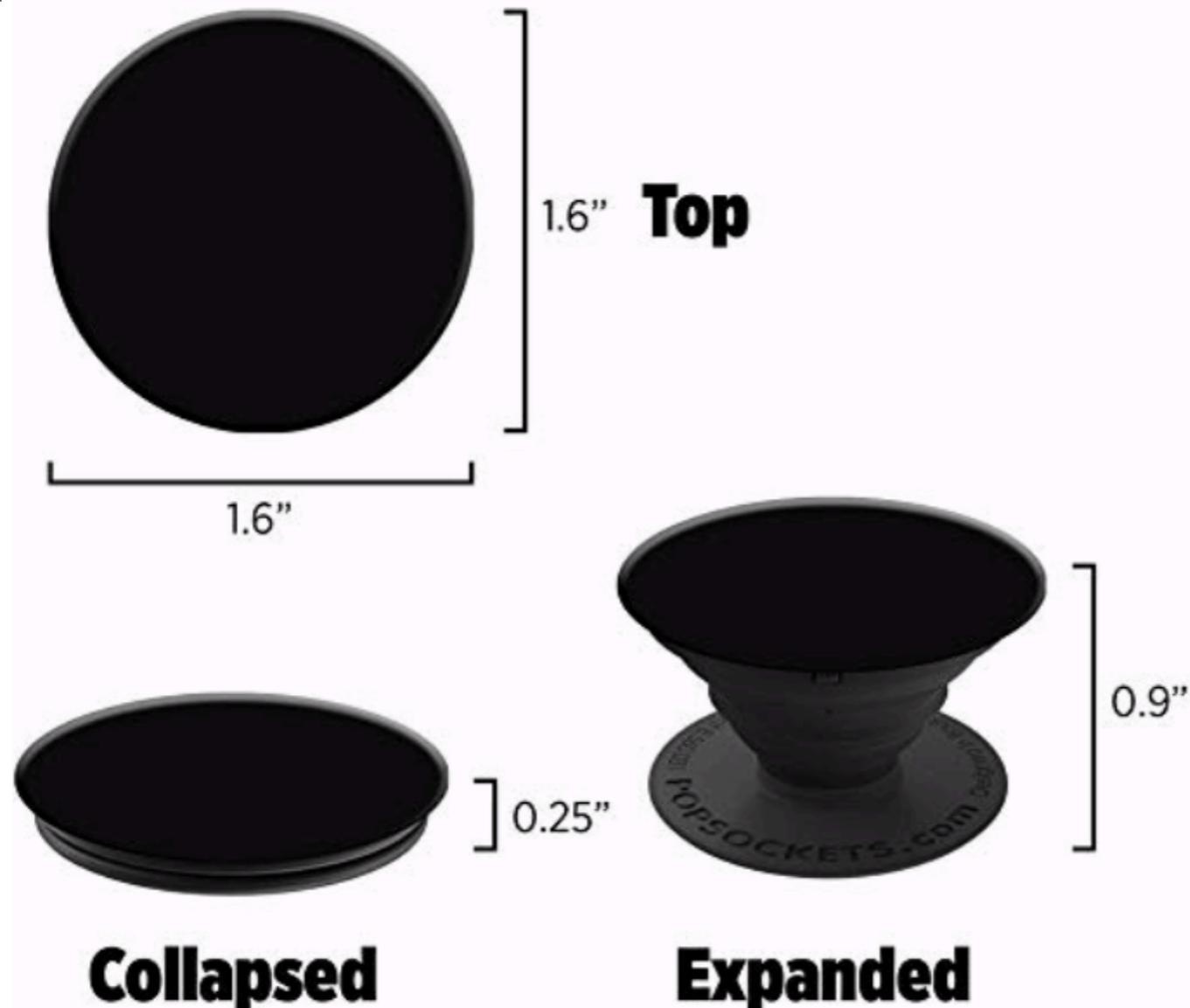
Amazon — [ElevationDock 4 - Apple MFi-Certified iPhone Dock with one-Hand undocking & Precise Adjustment. \(Matte White\)](#)

PopSocket



PopSocket is a grip about as big around as a silver dollar. It sticks to the back of an iPhone or iPad.

PopSocket



PopSockets cost as little as \$9.73 on Amazon. Some of the fancier ones are \$15 or more. Customers give the product 3½ stars. My wife has been exploring her Scottish roots, and she found a PopSocket with her clan's coat of arms.

The device is ¼" thick when collapsed and about 1" thick when it's expanded. PopSockets are popular among people who carry their phones in backpacks, briefcases, or purses. They probably would not work with some belt holsters.

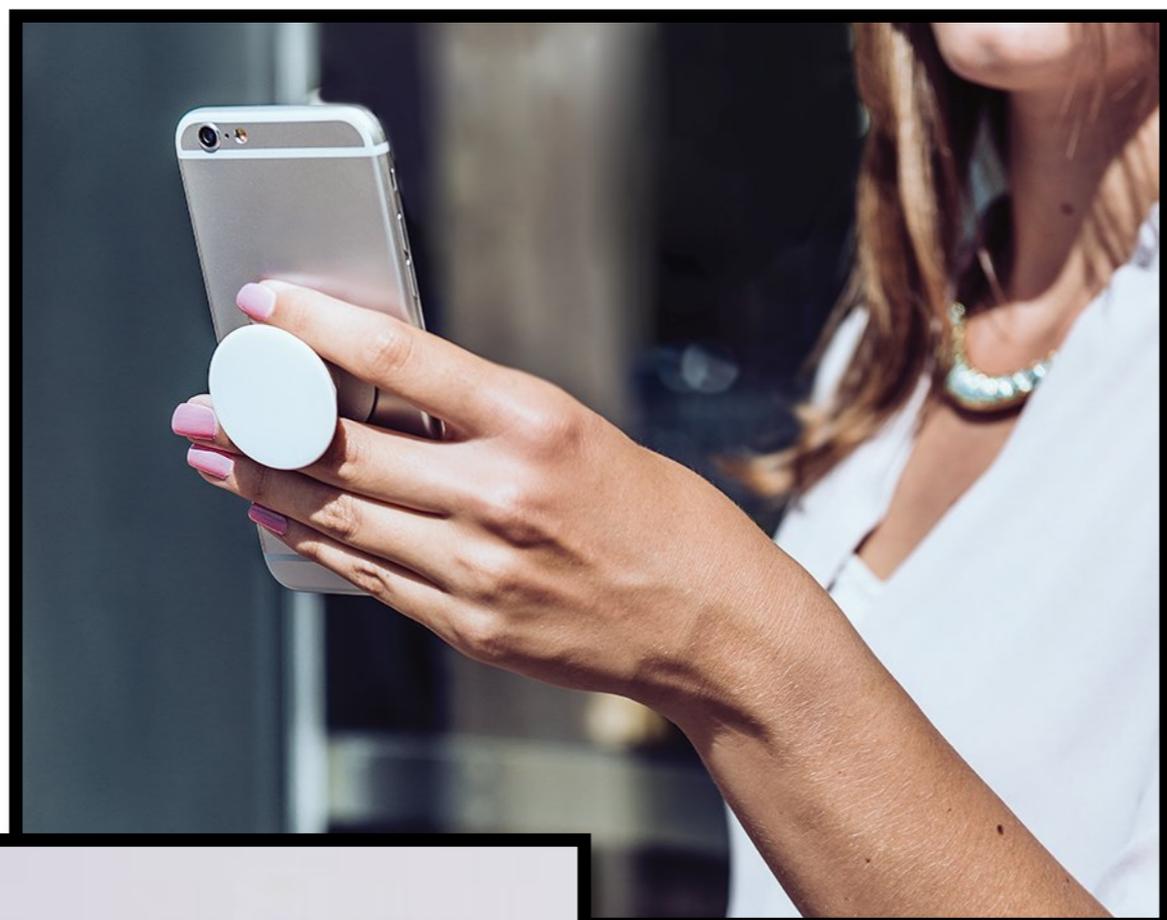
- \$10 on Amazon
- 3½ stars out of 5

manufacturer — <https://www.popsockets.com>

Amazon — [Swappable phone grip: Show off your style](#)

PopSocket uses

The PopSocket is made of silicone and is slightly sticky to the touch making it less likely your phone will slip out of your hand.



Some users have thought of other uses for a PopSocket, such as a reel for earphones or as an easel to hold a phone at an angle.



PopSocket

For a few dollars more you can add your own graphic or personalized photo.





Bike Mount

If you are a cyclist—or know one—this device could make a nice accessory. It's a hands-free way to keep your iPhone visible while riding your bike or motorcycle. And, of course, every user of these devices will pull off the road and stop when they need to text.

Bike Mount



- \$20 on Amazon
- 4½ stars out of 5

*The Bike Mount costs \$20 on Amazon, and it rated 4.4 stars.
There's a video on the Amazon page.*

manufacturer — <http://cawcar.com>

Amazon — [Bike & Motorcycle Phone Mount - for iPhone Xs \(Xr, X, 8, 7, 6, Plus/Max\), Samsung Galaxy or Any Cell Phone - Universal Handlebar Holder for ATV, Bicycle and Motorbike. +100 to Safeness & Comfort](#)

Ultimate Phone Holder



The “Ultimate Phone Holder” gets excellent reviews from online reviewers and from Amazon customers. It has a suction cup holder and an easy-to-use bracket to hold your phone. The manufacturer states it is big enough to hold the largest smartphones even those in a case.

Ultimate Phone Holder

- \$40
- \$29 on Amazon
- \$12 through Facebook



Website — <https://ultimatephoneholder.com>

Video — [ultimate phone holder](#)

Bagsmart



If you find yourself dealing with a lot of electronics clutter when you travel, check out the Bagsmart. It has lots of pockets for storing cables, batteries, small cameras, thumb drives, earphones, and so on.

Bagsmart



- \$15 from manufacturer
- \$18 on Amazon
- 4½ stars out of 5

The Bagsmart is one of the few items I've seen that costs more on Amazon than directly from the manufacturer. It's \$15 from the manufacturer and \$18 from Amazon. Customers give it 4½ stars. Video on the Amazon page.

manufacturer — <https://www.bagsmart.com/collections/travel>

Amazon — [BAGSMART Electronic Organizer Travel Universal Cable Organizer Electronics Accessories Cases for Cable, Charger, Phone, USB, SD Card, Grey](#)

RAVPower Solar Charger



The RAVPower is a charger for your iPhone or iPad when you're roughing it but don't want to cut loose from technology altogether.

RAVPower Solar Charger

15000MAH CAPACITY CHARGES TWO DEVICES

Large capacity with two iSmart powered 2.1A ports to simultaneously charge two devices multiple times



- \$24 from Amazon
- 4 stars out of 5

The RAVPower is a portable 15000mAh power bank (i.e., an external battery) that can recharge two iPhones at the same time. It also has a small solar panel to keep the power bank charged.

Be advised that if you try to charge your phone directly from the solar panel, it will take an extremely long time. Using the power bank, however, will charge your phone fairly quickly since it is a 2A charger.

When you're out hiking you can hang the charger on your backpack or belt. The charger also has a built-in flashlight.

manufacturer — <https://www.ravpower.com/p/ravpower-15000mah-solar-power-bank.html>

Amazon — [Solar Charger RAVPower 15000mAh Outdoor Portable Charger Solar Power Bank Dual USB External Battery Pack Power Pack with Flashlight \(IPX4 Splashproof, Dustproof, Solar Panel Charging, DC5V/2A Input\)](#)

5-11 Tactical Shirt

This is another smart purchase I've made lately, the 5-11 Tactical Shirt. You often see these shirts worn by police and other first responders, but anybody can buy them.

5-11 makes a variety of clothing for men and women and for all seasons. I particularly like the Tactical Shirt because they are so functional and durable. The shirts come in five colors.

You can buy the shirts online, but I would recommend going to the 5-11 store in St. Charles. It's in the same area as the Bass Pro Shop just off I-70 at the 5th Street exit. I recommend going to the store because the shirts tend to run a little large. All of the shirts are on hangers, so you can try one on for size.



manufacturer — <https://www.511tactical.com>

JOTO Universal Waterproof Case



This is a highly-rated accessory that will come in handy if you do a lot of water sports.

JOTO Universal Waterproof Case

- \$6 on ebay
- \$6.46 from Amazon
- 4½ stars out of 5



The manufacturer's name is JOTO, and the product is a phone case that is waterproof, and you can still use your phone while it's in the case. It's available on ebay, Amazon, and from the manufacturer for about six dollars.

manufacturer: <https://joto.waterproof-case.org>

Amazon: [Universal Waterproof Case, JOTO CellPhone Dry Bag Pouch](#)

ebay: [Joto Universal Waterproof Case - cellphone dry bag pouch](#)





Lifepack Backpack

If you like to carry your gear in a backpack, then here is a high-tech one.

LifePack Backpack

- Solar powered
- Bluetooth speakers
- Anti-theft
- 4½ stars out of 5
- \$159 from Amazon

This backpack has a solar collector that charges a battery pack. The battery pack is also a set of Bluetooth speakers. The manufacturer says the backpack is theft resistant by its retractable cable lock. There is hidden storage space for a passport, credit cards, or whatever.

manufacturer: <https://solgaard.co/products/lifepack?variant=11229596680239>

Amazon: [Lifepack Solar Powered and Anti-Theft Backpack with laptop storage](#)

reviews: [The Best Smart Backpacks for 2019](#)



LifePack Backpack

The compartments are described as Workzone and Lifezone. In other words, your work-related items, such as your laptop and documents are separate from a change of socks and underwear.

The dimensions are 12.4 X 19.5 X 6.9 inches.

I have included a link to a web page with reviews of several backpacks. They are rated according to their security, technology, and stylishness.



manufacturer: <https://solgaard.co/products/lifepack?variant=11229596680239>

Amazon: [Lifepack Solar Powered and Anti-Theft Backpack with laptop storage](#)

reviews: [The Best Smart Backpacks for 2019](#)



Questions?