

A Minimalist Way to Identify Metric Sockets, Version 1.2

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Before I raise the ire of mechanics everywhere, let me say that how you store your sockets is a matter of personal preference. I like them all in a compact little box. This makes it easy for me to pick up the entire set in one hand. The downside is that identifying the right socket can be tedious.



I must first pull out my best guess at size and then inspect those faint etching on the outside. Wrong one? Guess again. Is there a faster way that is also simple?



I have decided to try encoding the size on the top of each socket. No marks mean it is a multiple of 5. Even I can tell the difference between a 5, 10, 15, and 20 mm socket. Each tick mark is added to these base numbers. For example, The unmarked socket on the far left is 10 mm. The one to its right has two tick marks, so it is $10 + 2 = 12$ mm. To the left of the 10 mm socket is $5 + 4 = 9$ mm. The big socket to the far right is 22 mm.



With the sockets back in the box, I can clearly see these marks.

I won't know if this approach works until I am focused on a task and need to quickly access the correct metric socket. If it works, great. If not, acetone will remove the red dots, and I'll try something else. As Professor Panlilio told me over 50 years ago – “Assume something!” May his memory be a blessing.

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It later occurred to me that maybe this idea can be extended to metric wrenches.



If you are concerned about sockets laying on their sides, add rings:



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