

Retaining Ring (Circlip) Pliers

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Hand Tools



Photo: Windell Oskay — CC BY 2.0 — via Wikimedia Commons (Retaining_ring_pliers.jpg)

Retaining ring pliers open and fit internal and external circlips in grooves in shafts and housings, with tips that angle and swap for the many ring types. Without them, removing circlips risks injury and flying rings.

Key Features

- Internal and external jaw sets
- Interchangeable tip sets
- Straight and 45/90 degree angled tips
- Spring-loaded handles
- Tip sizes for small and large rings

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Remove and fit internal circlips
- Fit external rings on shafts
- Service bearings and gearboxes
- Replace rings in machines and vehicles

Safe Operation

1. Select the correct jaw direction and tip
2. Insert the tips into the ring holes
3. Squeeze (external) or spread (internal)
4. Lift the ring clear of the groove
5. Release slowly so the ring cannot fly

SAFETY NOTES

- Circlips fly - wear eye protection
- Keep fingers clear of the ring path
- Check the tips fit the holes
- Do not over-spread the pliers
- Store with tips retracted

Maintenance & Consumables

- Clean the tips and joint
- Check the tips for wear
- Replace tips per the set
- Oil the pivot lightly
- Store in the case

Specification & Buying Notes

A reversible circlip pliers set with interchangeable tips covers internal and external rings. Quality pliers with replaceable tips last; cheap tools bend the first ring.