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Torch Difficulty Rating

Torch	User Level	Difficulty Rating	Fuel	Size of Work Done	Notes
Blazer Pencil Torch	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	butane	S/M	Beginners generally find this torch easy to use and adjust. No experience with this type of torch. The small tank size can be a drawback if frequency of refilling becomes annoying.
Proxxon Hand-Held	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	butane	S/M	Beginners generally find the torch easy to use and adjust. The only reason I recommend the Blazer over the Proxxon is the slightly higher temperature available with the Blazer Micro. The larger tank on the Proxxon is attractive compared to the Pencil torch above.
Blazer Micro Torch	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	butane	S/M	Beginners generally find this torch easy to use and adjust. Recommended as a good entry level torch for those working occasionally with jump rings and similar small tasks. Also good for use with PMC. Very easy to obtain fuel and refill. Hot enough to get the job done. Affordable.
Smith® SilverSmith™	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	room air/acetylene	M/L	One of our favorite torches, recommended for anyone who is serious about soldering or is planning to do larger work in silver. The variety of tips allows a wide range of work to be done. Not typically recommended for general jewelry repair as small or fine soldering jobs can be challenging. Easy to set up and use. And, although acetylene fueled, the handle prevents the black soot common with some oxy/acetylene torches. Excellent for large silver work, hotter than comparable torches in the industry. Very dependable.
Smith® Little Torch™	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	oxygen/propane oxygen/acetylene	S/M	One of our favorite torches. Its lightweight construction makes for easy handling, the variety of tips allows for a wide range of work that can be done, and the propane can do platinum. A very dependable torch. If not correctly used, however, the acetylene can be sooty.
Smith Versa-Torch™	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	oxygen/propane oxygen/acetylene	S/M	We recommend this torch for those who want to work with natural gas or who want one torch they can use for both casting and soldering.
Water torches	Beginner Intermediate Advanced	☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺	hydrogen	S	Beginners generally find this torch easy to use and adjust. We recommend them to anyone who cannot have tanks in their studios (for example, set-ups in a mall) or who want to do really small items or platinum.

KEY

Difficulty Rating (based on out-of-the-box usability with no training, using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the easiest and 5 the hardest):

- ☺ Easy (user will typically find no difficulties in lighting the torch and maintaining a set temperature on the flame; very short learning curve)
- ☺ ☺ Easy to Moderate (user may find it slightly more difficult to light and adjust flame)
- ☺ ☺ ☺ Moderate (user may find it more difficult to light and adjust flame; may need to select torch tips for different tasks; some training or demo on the torch would help)
- ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ Moderate to Hard (although lighting remains the same, more decisions are needed to choose the correct tip and flame for different jobs)
- ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ Hard (user will find it very difficult to use; most will need some kind of demo or personal training and some practice on the torch)

User Proficiency Level:

- Beginner = Person with no soldering skills and no experience with torches.
- Intermediate = Person with some knowledge of soldering techniques and has used a torch before.
- Advanced = Person with considerable soldering experience and has used a variety of torches.

Size of Work Done:

- S (small) Less than 1/2" square
- M (medium) Between 1/2" and 2" square
- L (large) Larger than 2" square.