

## Metal Detecting 101 - Introduction

Welcome to Metal Detecting 101. Often, anyone new to or considering the hobby has a lot of questions about getting started. These few pages exist to answer all of your questions, hopefully. Let's briefly talk a little bit about the hobby for those considering it.

Many people might be surprised to find out that metal detecting is hard work. Unless you spend all of your time on a beach, you have to dig a lot of holes, and that's hard on your legs, knees, and back. I personally know many people who didn't get into the hobby once they hear that and many more who get frustrated and quit the hobby. Metal detecting, like any hobby, is a passion, even an obsession.

Most of us are looking for coins and jewelry, but it's a good idea to learn about your local history. You want to go to the oldest places with the most history, and that requires research.

Of course you want to find the best stuff - gold, silver, and jewelry, and the always fantastic finds you've never seen before, including tokens, matchbox cars, buttons, marbles, etc. You're also going to dig up a ton of cans, small change, pull tabs, soda, beer tops, nails, nuts and bolts, and anything metal you could imagine. The places with history have it all. We typically look for a place developed before 1960. Silver dimes and quarters stopped being silver in 1964. You'll love the first time you dig a silver coin.

Be sure to look for your local metal detecting group on Facebook. They can help you once you're done reading this. You'll find that metal detectorists are a friendly, helpful bunch except for one thing - they rarely reveal where they found the latest goodies that they post, and you shouldn't either lest 100 people converge on your favorite spot. That said, occasionally, someone will post that they're looking to join up with someone to detect, and they might turn you on to a new spot.

Remember always to be an ambassador for the hobby. People will approach you and ask you if you found anything or general questions about the hobby. It's not unusual to spend a few minutes or much more talking to someone interested in metal detecting, just like you.

We talk more about getting started next, including what you need and where you can or can't dig on the final page.

## Metal Detecting 101 - Getting Started

Using a metal detector is simple - understanding your detector and targets can take hundreds of hours. Be patient, consider reading the manual, watch videos, and ask questions on Facebook groups or forums.

The most frequently asked question is where to start detecting. Start in your own yard. This

allows you to practice using your metal detector and dig plugs before you head out. My first wheat penny was in my back yard along with three matchbox cars and much more.

Learn how to pinpoint, then dig a plug or probe. To dig a plug, most will dig into the ground forming a circle. Many prefer to dig three sides, then pop up the dirt giving the plug a better chance to heal. When completed, you pop the "plug" out and check the hole with your pinpointer. When finished, you replace the plug and step on it. When done properly, no one can find the plug, and that's your goal. Some people will carry a small piece of plastic to catch the dirt, leaving no trace you were ever there.

Finding places to metal detect is mostly common sense but let's look at some examples of where you can or can't metal detect.

## **Where to Metal Detect**

Most people look for old parks, preferably parks that have been around for 100 years or more. You are allowed to metal detect most parks but watch for signs that say no metal detecting. Large parks that have an office might require a permit. It only takes a minute to stop in and ask. Many schools are easy pickings to get some practice in. You should avoid most ball fields.

One of every metal detectorist's favorites spots is asking permission to metal detect private property. Odds are you're the first one ever to do so, and it's pretty exciting. Ask your friends and family or ask on social media.

## **Where NOT to Metal Detect**

There's a saying that no matter where you are, someone owns that land. Keep that in mind. You shouldn't metal detect private property, graveyards, and especially historic sites. Historic sites won't just get you thrown out - you will be arrested and most likely charged with a felony.

## **Metal Detecting 101 - What You Need**

You not only need a metal detector; you're going to need some accessories and other items. Here's a list to consider. Most supplies can be found on Amazon. Read the reviews because metal detectorists purchase many of these tools exclusively for metal detecting. The odds are you don't need everything on this list, but eventually, you will.

1: Metal Detector - Do your research. The best choice in price and usability changes over the years, but one always stands out. Notice what other people are using in the field.

2: Shovel or sand scoop. One for dirt, one for sand.

- 3: Pinpointer. Garrett is the most popular and the most expensive.
- 4: Garden trowel - For precisely digging a target.
- 5: Gloves - You're going to get dirty.
- 6: Knee pads - You're going to kneel a lot.
- 7: Headphones - Headphones help you hear targets and not disturb others.
- 8: Magnifying glass - Many times, you want to know what you found immediately.
- 9: Small spray bottle - To rinse the dirt off a target. You don't want to damage a good find by rubbing it.
- 10: Wipes - Having baby wipes to wash off your hands when you head home is nice.
- 11: A gallon of water. Great for washing your hands or feet when there are no bathrooms nearby.
- 12: Extra batteries. Anything that uses batteries (pinpointer) should have a spare battery.
- 13: Screwdriver or probe - When digging, plugs aren't allowed.
- 14: Pouch. You're going to want to carry all this stuff and store your finds and trash.