

GEAR + GADGETS

Tools for the road are designed to make travel a snap

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Here are reviews of some new travel tools to take on the road.

● **Balanzza** pioneered the small **handheld digital luggage scale**. It clips onto the handle of a bag, and, when lifted, displays the bag's weight, beeps, and then keeps the weight displayed so it can be read when the bag is set down. But what if you want to weigh something that has no handle — such as a box or books? No problem with two new Balanzza accessories. **Strapz** are double straps that buckle onto the scale's strap and wrap around boxes for weighing up to 100 pounds, the scale's maximum. **Harness** is a spacious sling that holds loose items weighing up to 50 pounds. Both are lightweight nylon and pack practically flat.

Balanzza Ergo Scale is \$25. **Strapz** and **Harness**, \$10 apiece, at www.balanzza.com, or, in Miami, 305-424-5022.

● The folks at **Zelco** have come up with a new twist on the **lighted pen**, which lets you see what you're writing in the dark. While most lighted pens have a battery operated LED light set behind the tip of the pen, so only the tip is illuminated when the LED is activated, **Zelco's Multi-Task Light Pen** has a tiny flexible gooseneck light

attached to the top of the pen's casing. That means you can direct the little lamp wherever you like — down toward the pen tip to provide light for writing, or up at a book page or at something you're fixing. The pen and light have independent controls, so you can use one or both. The light runs on three included button batteries.

Multi-Task Light Pen is \$10 at www.amazon.com; 800-201-7575.

● No more struggling to sink your beach umbrella into unyielding sand. **Rio Brands' Sand Anchor** is a 14-inch-long nylon/fiberglass umbrella anchor that easily corkscrews into sand or lightly-packed soil. Once it's buried up to the hilt, just slide an umbrella pole (up to 1 3/8-inch diameter) into the **Sand Grabber's** open top, and secure with the built-in metal screw mechanism. The anchor holds firm in pretty stiff winds (the manufacturer estimates up to 30 mph gusts), as long as the sand isn't too loose.

Rio Brands Sand Anchor is about \$20. Buying info: 800-727-8790; www.riobrands.com.

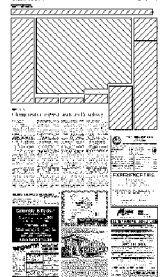
● The **Zibra Open It multi-tool** may quickly earn its keep in a glove compartment or suitcase. At first glance, the 10-inch-long tool looks like a pair of clunky wire cutters — which it is. But the spring-loaded double-bladed steel shears can also

cut open tough plastic clam-shell packaging and blister seals on lids. In addition, one arm of the handle houses an interchangeable Phillips and slotted mini screwdriver, for opening small battery compartments on toys and electronics. The other arm contains a slim retractable utility knife (with a safety lock) that can slice through CD cellophane or cardboard boxes. Best to pack in a checked bag if flying.

Open It is \$13 at www.enjoyzibra.com; 866-869-7544.

● For adhesive label-making on the go, **Dymo's little Label Buddy** provides a simple, battery free — albeit labor intensive — solution, one click at a time. Just turn and click your way through numbers, letters, and punctuation, which emerge embossed in white on 3/8-inch-wide label tape. Then cut the label loose with the press of a thumb, peel, and apply to whatever. Includes one pre-loaded 12-foot-long label-tape cartridge in glossy black with white embossing. Additional cartridges sold separately. Not a bad way to keep kids occupied during long hauls — and you might even get in a spelling lesson.

Label Buddy (item 12813) is \$8; 5-roll pack of matte, 4-foot-long tapes in a variety of colors (99786), is \$4.19; 2-roll pack of glossy 12-foot-long black tapes (99741), \$5.19; at www.cableorganizer.com; 866-222-0030.





LIGHT WEIGHTS: Balanzza's handheld digital luggage scales, above, and Zelco's lighted pen.



SMALL WONDERS: The Zebra Open It multi-tool, above; Dymo's little Label Buddy, below left, and Rio Brands' Sand Anchor.

