**Selling, buying and carrying knives: the law**

**The maximum penalty for an adult carrying a knife is 4 years in prison and an unlimited fine. You’ll get a prison sentence if you’re convicted of carrying a knife more than once.**

**Basic laws on knives**

It’s illegal to:

* sell a knife to anyone under 18, unless it has a folding blade 3 inches long (7.62 cm) or less
* carry a knife in public without good reason, unless it has a folding blade with a cutting edge 3 inches long or less
* carry, buy or sell any type of banned knife
* use any knife in a threatening way (even a legal knife)

**Scotland**

In Scotland, 16 to 18-year olds are allowed to buy cutlery and kitchen knives.

**Lock knives**

Lock knives are not classed as folding knives and are illegal to carry in public without good reason. Lock knives:

* have blades that can be locked and refolded only by pressing a button
* can include multi-tool knives - tools that also contain other devices such as a screwdriver or can opener

**Banned knives and weapons**

It is illegal to bring into the UK, sell, hire, lend or give anyone the following:

* butterfly knives (also known as ‘balisongs’) - a blade hidden inside a handle that splits in the middle
* disguised knives - a blade or sharp point hidden inside what looks like everyday objects such as a buckle, phone, brush or lipstick
* flick knives (also known as ‘switchblades’ or ‘automatic knives’) - a blade hidden inside a handle which shoots out when a button is pressed
* gravity knives
* stealth knives - a knife or spike not made from metal (except when used at home, for food or a toy)
* zombie knives - a knife with a cutting edge, a serrated edge and images or words suggesting it is used for violence
* swords, including samurai swords - a curved blade over 50cm (with some exceptions, such as antiques and swords made to traditional methods before 1954)
* sword-sticks - a hollow walking stick or cane containing a blade
* push daggers
* blowpipes (‘blow gun’)
* telescopic truncheons - extend automatically by pressing button or spring in the handle
* batons - straight, side-handled or friction-lock truncheons
* hollow kubotans - a cylinder-shaped keychain holding spikes
* shurikens (also known as ‘shaken’, ‘death stars’ or ‘throwing stars’)
* kusari-gama - a sickle attached to a rope, cord or wire
* kyoketsu-shoge - a hook-knife attached to a rope, cord or wire
* kusari (or ‘manrikigusari’) - a weight attached to a rope, cord, wire
* hand or foot-claws
* knuckledusters

[Contact your local police](https://www.gov.uk/contact-police) to check if a knife or weapon is illegal.

**Good reasons for carrying a knife or weapon**

Examples of good reasons to carry a knife or weapon in public can include:

* taking knives you use at work to and from work
* taking it to a gallery or museum to be exhibited
* if it’ll be used for theatre, film, television, historical re-enactment or religious purposes, for example the kirpan some Sikhs carry
* if it’ll be used in a demonstration or to teach someone how to use it
* A court will decide if you’ve got a good reason to carry a knife or a weapon if you’re charged with carrying it illegally.

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