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The Best Laptop Cases, According to (Tasteful) Tech Folk

By Karen Iorio Adelson

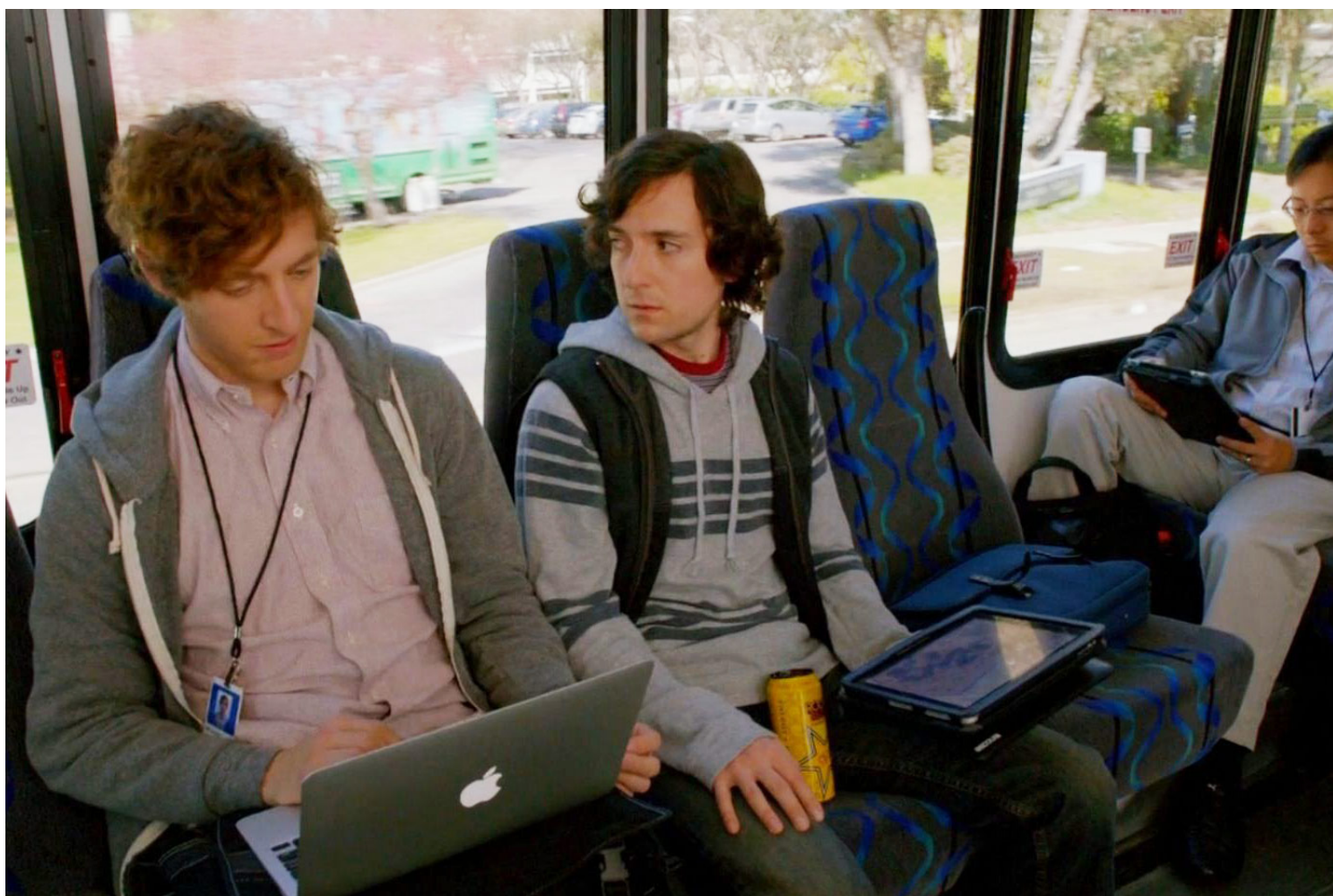


Photo: Courtesy HBO

Whether you have a top-of-the-line laptop tricked out for gaming or video-editing, or a cheap, bare-bones machine for basic word-processing and internet surfing, the last thing you want is to drop or spill something on your computer and end up spending hours — and lots of cash — at the Genius Bar. A sturdy case or sleeve goes a long way to keep your laptop safe from accidental damage. To find out which cases are best for different types of users, we asked some

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HDE Clear MacBook Pro 13-inch Case

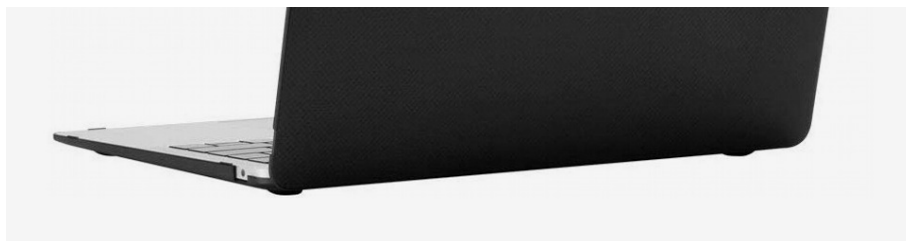
A hard-shell case, which attaches to your laptop, protects against dents and scratches without any added bulk. It can work on its own for daily use, or serve as an added layer of protection if you're carrying your laptop in another bag (like one of the [backpacks](#) or [messenger bags](#) below). Benson Chou, founder of [Work Hard Anywhere](#), a community and [app](#) for freelancers, likes that he can customize these basic HDE cases with stickers, changing them up as the mood strikes. "I think this solution not only helps with protecting the laptop, but also gives me the flexibility to change my mind often." Chou adds that the very affordable hard-plastic case is "keeping my laptop scratch free."

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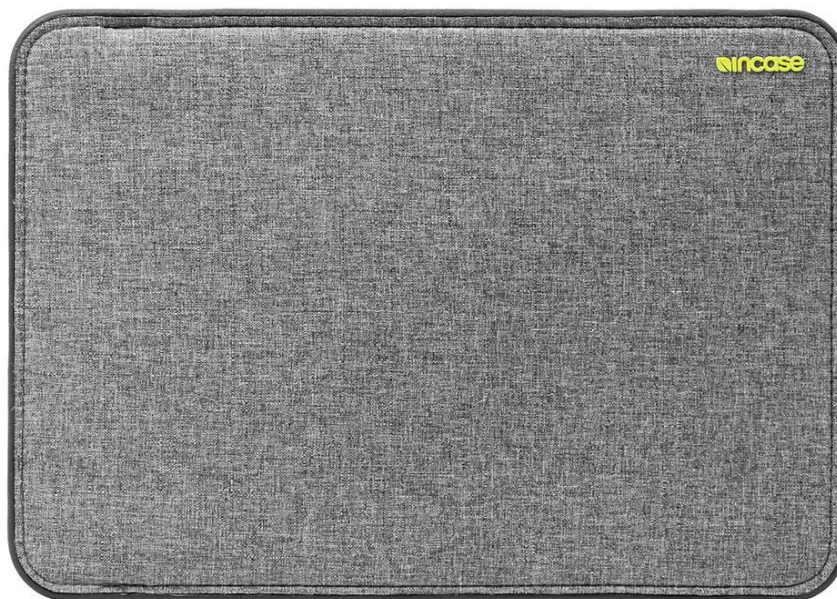
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Incase Hardshell Case for MacBook Air 13" with Retina Display

Photographer [Joe St. Pierre](#) also uses a hard-shell case to protect his laptop, opting for this textured, polycarbonate one from Incase. "It's sleek, minimal, and durable," he says. "As a [photographer](#) [who] uses [my] laptop frequently on the job, the size of the case makes for easy [transportation](#) and keeps the laptop cool."

Best laptop sleeves



Incase Icon Sleeve with Tensaerlite for MacBook Pro 13

Most laptop users who aren't taking their computers into extreme conditions can get away with using a laptop sleeve. "Sleeves are great when you don't need maximum protection, but simply an insulation against bumps and scrapes within a larger bag," says Matt Ham, of [LaptopMD](#) and [Computer Repair Doctor](#). "They're light, not bulky, and they come in plenty of sizes to be formfitting." Peter Lopez, also known as [Brooklyn Tech Guy](#), likes Incase sleeves, and this one is a favorite of [Justin Tse](#), a content creator who co-curates the workspace Instagram account [iSetups](#) and whose tech-review [YouTube](#)

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Mosiso Water Repellent Lycra Sleeve Bag

Lopez recommends that people look for “cases made specifically for their make or model laptop,” especially since a snug fit is essential. He says Mosiso cases work well for Macs as they come in very specific sizes (like 13.3 inches and 15.6 inches) that line up with Apple’s laptop measurements. This case also includes an extra pouch for storing a [charger](#).



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Elvis & Kresse Folio & Laptop Case

For something a little more unique, Muchaneta Kapfunde, who blogs about the intersection of tech and design at [FashNerd](#), recommends this sleeve, which is actually made from recycled fire hoses. Kapfunde likes that the British company that makes it, Elvis & Kresse, is “sustainable, ethical, and transparent,” and says the durable cases (they’re lined with reclaimed parachute silk) are worth the price.

Best extra-tough laptop cases

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Thule Gauntlet 3.0 15" MacBook Pro Retina Sleeve

\$47 | (was \$60, now 22% off)

For situations where you'll need extra protection — like putting your laptop in a checked suitcase that'll likely get jostled in transport — Ham says “you want a hard-shell bag or at least a bag with stiff corners. The hard shell will better insulate the laptop from rougher conditions.” Tse likes Thule's rugged and dependable cases for “heavy-duty” protection. This one has a rigid exterior for insulating your computer from outside impact and a soft, padded interior to prevent the case from scratching or denting your laptop.



Nacuwa Protective Laptop Case Computer Sleeve

\$29 | (was \$59, now 51% off)

Ham suggests this durable case with multiple inner pockets “to protect against jostling, banging around, and shaking,” but also adds that an extra layer of padding (like clothing in a suitcase) “would help with sharp impacts.”

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Aqua Quest Storm Waterproof Laptop Sleeve

\$35 | (was \$40, now 13% off)

One of the most common causes of broken laptops is water damage. “Laptop cases are usually thrown in backpacks and will easily get wet from drinks,” says Joe Silverman, founder and CEO of [New York Computer Help](#). “Being waterproof will protect against damaging liquid spills.” He recommends the Aqua Quest case because it’s completely waterproof and also padded for extra protection.

Best laptop messenger bags

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Manhattan Portage 13-Inch Deluxe Computer Bag

As Lopez points out, students' laptops are "the 'hub' of their portable office — their book bag," so many often look for laptop-friendly (a.k.a. protective) bags with lots of pockets for [computer accessories](#), [books](#), [pens](#), [notebooks](#), and whatever else they'll need throughout the day. This Manhattan Portage bag, [his pick for college students](#), features a number of compartments, including four pockets underneath the front flap for items that need to be accessed easily, and a padded laptop sleeve.



Timbuk2 The Closer

\$111 | (was \$149, now 26% off)

Former tech columnist and Strategist contributor David Pogue has been happily using [this messenger bag](#) since 2015. With nine compartments, including a "zippered, padded, waterproof" laptop pocket, it has space for everything from his [wallet](#) and [sunglasses](#) to a [water bottle](#) and [earbuds](#). Pogue also appreciates that the bag is "more handsome and briefcase-y than a typical messenger bag."

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Kopack Slim Business Laptop Backpack

\$33 | (was \$41, now 20% off)

If you prefer using a [backpack](#) to tote your laptop from class to class (or between home and the office), Silverman says to look for one that “is [waterproof](#), padded, has compartments for books, and charges phones on the fly.” He says this Kopack backpack — which we’ve singled out before as one of the [best-reviewed laptop backpacks on Amazon](#) — does all of these things and more. A detachable [USB port](#) keeps your phone charged all day, and a lockable zipper on the hidden laptop compartment helps prevent theft.

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Topo Designs Travel Bag 30L

Sean Kelly, a lead product designer for stylish [desk-accessory](#) brand [Grovemade](#), likes this Topo Designs bag, especially for keeping his laptop and tablet from banging against each other. “[The bag] has a padded back pocket for the laptop, which I can access from its own opening on the outside of the pack, and there is an interior pocket that fits my iPad and keeps it well protected without needing a case,” he says. “In fact the pack has so many wonderfully placed compartments that I can keep all my gear separated so it is organized [and] easy to find.”



Thule Pack ‘n Pedal Commuter Backpack

Students and office workers who [commute by bike](#) need a laptop backpack that’ll stand up to the elements, as well as potholes or other bumps in the road. Silverman says this Thule backpack is “the most solid I’ve seen to guard against liquid and bumps.” It also has reflective details for safe riding at night, and a special pocket for a [bicycle U-lock](#).

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