The invention provides surgical or diagnostic tools and associated methods that offer improved user control for operating remotely within regions of the body, and improved methods of assembling the tools. In some embodiments these tools include proximally-located actuator for the operation of a distal end effector, as well as proximally-located actuators for articulational and rotational movements of the end effector. Control mechanisms and methods refine operator control of end effector actuation and of these articulational and rotational movements. The articulation mechanisms comprise pairs of links, one link distal and the other proximal, configured such that movement of a proximal link is transferred to the distal link by way of tension bearing members. Embodiments of the invention include a guide for such tension bearing members that facilitates assembly of the tool. Embodiments also include improved methods for attaching tension bearing members to the links. The inventions disclosed herein may also be used with articulating devices outside of the surgical and diagnostic fields.