



The
**Prepper's
Guide**

To the End of the World

**A Collection of
8 Best-selling
Survival Guides**

ROBERT PAINE

The Prepper's Guide to the End of the World A Collection of 8 Best-Selling Survival Guides

By Robert Paine

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And above all – Enjoy!

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Prepping 101: A Beginner's Survival Guide

Introduction

Have you watched the news lately? Most people would agree that the world has become a pretty scary place. There are natural disasters on an almost daily basis, we are running out of natural resources, our food is full of chemicals, and the ozone looks like Swiss cheese. There are threats of wars, terrorist attacks and jokes about zombie's taking over. The world economy is crumbling and we certainly can't depend on the government to help us out. They've "shut down" until they come to some sort of agreement over a hundred different issues on their plates, and, (let's be real here) the government hasn't agreed on much of anything since the Declaration of Independence was first signed. It's enough to send a person into a panic, isn't it?

If you are reading this, then you are among one of the many who are interested in learning how to protect yourself and your family from any and all of the inevitable disasters that could potentially happen. Welcome to the Survivor Family. We are a unique group of people. Some people call us Survivalists, Paranoid Crackpots, Doomsday Preppers, or Patriots. Whatever you may want to call yourself, if you're reading this, you are on the first step to becoming an Emergency Prepared Survivor (EPS).

If this is the first time you are reading anything about Emergency Preparation, **the first thing you need to know is: Don't Panic.** Being calm and using your training is one of the best weapons you

have, but common sense is often the first thing people lose in an emergency situation.

Being prepared is really not as complicated as a lot of people make it out to be. This beginner's guide will take you step-by-step through the process of preparing for anything from a simple power outage to what you need to do to be prepared to evacuate your home and live outdoors indefinitely. At the end of this book, you will find a list of supplementary books I highly recommend to purchase. No one book will ever cover the dozens of things you'd hope to know in a survival situation, and anyone that tells you otherwise simply wants you to buy *something*. Take a look at the recommend books, if you wish, and *I suggest you read them before you need them*. For now, all you need to know is the most basic of survival skills: Thinking like a survivor, and learning how to obtain water, shelter, fire and food – the four basics survival needs. You'll learn what tools you need and what to do in case of a basic medical emergency, as well as two of the most common forms of communication in survival situations.

Needing to know what to do in an emergency situation is a lot easier if you've studied the basics before the actual emergency occurs. In the next chapters, you will find the fundamental rules of basic survival, put in simple terms that even the most novice of beginners can understand and implement. For the more experienced EPS, this book may seem extraordinarily simple; however, you may find a few nuggets of wisdom, or a new method you've never thought about in quite the same way and, remember, we all had to start somewhere! As the saying goes, knowledge is power, and the more knowledge

you accumulate, the more powerful your arsenal of survival techniques will be.

Some of you may be wondering what qualifies me, of all people, to be teaching you about survival. I grew up in a Survivor Family. My father taught me and my brothers, since the time we were born, how to survive in a vast majority of situations. He wanted to make sure that, if anything were to ever happen to him, that we could all take care of ourselves. With over twenty years of camping trips, Scouts, and Search and Rescue training, I've learned a thing or two about how to live and survive with minimal modern conveniences and supplies. As an avid reader, I've gained even more knowledge of various aspects of survival over the years, and I learn more every day from other EPS's.

That being said, I'm not the most prepared person on the planet. I don't live up in the mountains in a remote cabin a thousand miles from my nearest neighbor. I'm not writing to you from an underground bunker somewhere, waiting for the world to explode. I imagine I am just like most of my readers. I live in a simple home, doing the best I can to protect my family "just in case" the worst-case scenario actually happens. Because it has happened to other people and it could happen to you to.

Chapter 1: The Psychology of Survival

A New Way of Thinking

The best EPS is someone who can analyze a situation, adapt to a situation and act accordingly. For some people, these skills come naturally, but for most of us, it requires a new way of thinking.

Human beings are creatures of habit and this is especially true of our methods of mental processing and behavior. In an emergency situation, you need to learn how to think like a survivor. It's best to begin thinking in terms of survival before you actually need to, so that you have the time you need to adjust to a new way of living.

You may be asking yourself, what it is you are supposed to be adjusting to? The answer is simple. *Learning to survive is about learning to live without everything you have grown to depend on to always be there.* Being forced to live without the everyday comforts we are used to can create a lot of stress on a person, physically, emotionally and mentally. Before you will understand psychological reactions in a survival setting, it is important to know how stress affects people.

Stress is not a disease that you cure, but is something that needs to be eliminated from your everyday life. It's not something you can avoid completely in life, but there are certainly ways you can most effectively deal with it. It is a condition we all experience on some level or another. Stress is simply a reaction to pressure around us. Stress is just a word we use to describe the experiences we have in response to life's many tensions.

A Need for Stress

We need stress because it helps us to respond appropriately to certain situations. Stress provides us with challenges. It lets us know that something important is happening that we need to deal with. It gives us chances to learn about our values and strengths. How we handle stress shows us how we handle pressure and how we can succeed. Stress tests our adaptability. Contrary to popular belief, it is *not* always a negative thing. Stress can be a motivating force in your life, if you allow it to be. We need to have some stress in our lives, to keep us on our toes. The goal is to have stress, but not an excess of it. Too much stress can take its toll on people mentally and physiologically. Too much stress leads to distress. Distress causes an uncomfortable tension that we try to escape and avoid. Listed below are a few of the common signs of distress you may find in yourself or others.

- Angry outbursts.
- Low energy level.
- Constant worrying.
- Trouble getting along with others.
- Hiding from responsibilities.
- Carelessness.
- Forgetfulness.
- Depression and Withdrawal
- Making too many mistakes
- Difficulty making decisions.

Stress can be destructive if you let it. Or it can motivate you. It can encourage or discourage, and make life meaningful or meaningless. In a survival situation, you choose whether you will live or die. It is your ability to manage the stresses you will encounter that determines how successful you will be. A survivor is a person who works with the stress they encounter and who lets it build them up instead of break them down.

Survival Stressors

Any event can lead to stress and, as we've all experienced, stressful events don't always come one at a time in a nice, orderly fashion. Often, stressful events occur simultaneously. 'When it rains, it pours'. These events that produce stress are called "stressors." Stressors are the cause, and stress is the response. In response to a stressor, the body prepares either to "fight or flee." This preparation involves a cascade of chemical and physical triggers throughout the body. The body releases stored fuels (sugar and fats) to provide quick energy. Breathing increases to supply more oxygen to the blood while muscle tense to prepare for action. Blood clotting agents are activated to reduce bleeding while senses become heightened, so that you are more aware of your surrounding. This protective posture lets a person cope with potential dangers that many people call an adrenaline rush. However, the body cannot maintain this level of alertness indefinitely. Prolonged stress reactions will cause health issues. The cumulative effect of minor stressors causes major distress if they all happen at the same time or if they are not dealt with properly. As the body's ability to handle stress wears down and the sources of stress increase, exhaustion occurs. When that happens, the ability to use stress positively goes away and distress

starts to take a toll. The ability to anticipate key stressors and learning coping mechanisms for stress will allow a survivor to effectively manage the stress they are facing. It is essential for a survivor to be aware of the types of stressors they will encounter. The following are the most common:

Fatigue, Injury, Illness, or Death

Injury, illness, and death are real possibilities a survivor is forced to face. Nothing is more stressful than being in an unfamiliar, life-threatening environment. Illness and injury can limit your ability to maneuver, obtain enough food or water, build a proper shelter, and defend yourself, if you have to. Being sick or injured makes us feel vulnerable, and in a survivor situation, that feeling can increase under pressure. Forcing yourself to continue surviving is not easy as you grow more and more tired. It is possible to become so fatigued that the act of just staying awake becomes stressful. It is important for the survivor to have courage and persevere despite the possible risks.

Uncertainly and Lack of Control

Some people have trouble reacting in settings where everything is in chaos. Some people feel the need to be in constant control of the environment around them and, often in a survival situation, this is exactly the first thing people lose. Nothing is guaranteed in a survival situation, and that means a person is automatically uncertain and not in control. It can be extremely stressful operating on limited resources in unfamiliar settings. The stress of uncertainty takes a toll emotionally and psychologically.

Environment

Even under the most ideal circumstances, nature is your most formidable enemy. A survivor will have to contend with the stressors of the elements, their surrounding and the wildlife. Survivors' surroundings can be a source of food, shelter and protection from predatory animals, or it can be a source of stress, causing anything from mild discomfort to death. It all depends on your ability to stay calm and adapt to what is around you.

Hunger and Thirst

Without food and water, a person will eventually die. Obtaining and preserving food and water is one of the most important factors for a survivor to contend with. The longer you are out of your comfort zone (your home where food and water are readily available), the more important thirst and hunger become. For a person used to having his basic needs easily met from grocery stores or by popping open the fridge, foraging for food and water can be incredibly stressful.

Isolation

There are some advantages to facing adversity with others. As people, we have become used to the community, socialization and communication friends and family provide, especially during times of confusion. Being in contact with others also provides a greater sense of security. Help is available if problems happen. A significant stressor in survival situations is that a person has to rely on his or her own resources.

The survival stressors mentioned in this section are by no means the only ones you may face. Remember, what is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Your experiences, training, personal outlook on life, physical and mental conditioning, and level of self-confidence contribute to what you will find stressful. The object is not to avoid stress, but rather to manage the stressors of survival and make them work for you.

Man has been able to survive many shifts in his environment throughout the centuries. His ability to adapt to a changing world kept him alive while other species died off. The same survival mechanisms can help keep us alive in our day and age as well. It is not surprising that the average person will have some psychological reactions in a survival situation. The important thing is how we choose to deal with them.

Are You Prepared to Live?

Your mission in a survival situation is simple: to stay alive. Fear, anxiety, anger, frustration, guilt, depression, and loneliness are all possible reactions to the many stresses common to survival. These reactions, when controlled in a healthy way, help to increase a person's likelihood of surviving. They prompt the person to pay more attention to their surroundings, to fight back when scared, to take actions that ensure sustenance and security, to keep faith and work with others in your family or group to make it through.

When the survivor cannot control their emotional reactions in a constructive way, these same emotions can easily bring him to a

standstill. Instead of rallying his internal resources, the person listens to his internal fears and becomes paralyzed by them, unable to do what is necessary to survive. This creates psychological defeat long before he physically succumbs. Remember, survival is natural to everyone; however, being unexpectedly thrust into the life and death struggle is not. Prepare yourself to rule over these reactions so they serve your ultimate interest--staying alive.

This involves preparation to ensure that your reactions in a survival setting are productive, not destructive. The challenge of survival has produced countless examples of heroism, courage, and self-sacrifice. These are the qualities it can bring out in you if you have prepared yourself. Below are a few tips to help prepare yourself psychologically for survival. Once you learn them you can guide your family in adapting a survival attitude as well.

Know Yourself and Anticipate Your Fears

Through training, family and friends take the time to discover who you are on the inside. Strengthen your stronger qualities and develop the areas that you know are necessary to survive. Don't pretend that you will have no fears. Begin thinking about what would frighten you the most if forced to survive alone. Train in those areas of concern to you. Become comfortable dealing with areas where you recognize you have the biggest need. The goal is not to eliminate the fear, but to build confidence in your ability to function despite your fears.

Be Realistic

Don't be afraid to make an honest appraisal of situations. Survival is not a time to sugarcoat or gloss over anything. See your circumstances for what they are, not as you want them to be. Keep your hopes and expectations within the estimate of the situation. When you go into a survival setting with unrealistic expectations, you may be laying the groundwork for bitter disappointment. Follow the adage, "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst." It is much easier to adjust to pleasant surprises about one's unexpected good fortunes than to be upset by one's unexpected harsh circumstances.

Train

Through military training and life experiences, using whatever means and methods are around you, begin today to prepare yourself to cope with the rigors of survival. Demonstrating your skills in training will give you the confidence to call upon them should the need arise. Remember, the more realistic the training, the less overwhelming an actual survival setting will be.

Learn Stress Management Techniques

People under stress have a potential to panic if they are not well-trained or if they are not prepared psychologically to face whatever the circumstances may be. While we often cannot control the survival circumstances in which we find ourselves, it *is* within our ability to control our response to those circumstances. Learning stress management techniques can significantly enhance your capability to remain calm and focused as you work to keep yourself and others alive. A few good techniques to develop include relaxation skills, time management skills, assertiveness skills, and

cognitive restructuring skills (the ability to control how you view a situation).

Remember, "the will to survive" can also be considered to be "the refusal to give up."

Short Term Survival Mentality

What is short-term survival mentality? *Short term is anything from three days to three months.* Do you recall the disaster and chaos of Hurricane Katrina? A majority of those people were not prepared, and were forced to wait on FEMA and other organizations to supply them what they needed to survive. It was utterly horrible, and we learned something as a nation: sometimes in disaster scenarios, it's best to rely on yourself. *You need to be prepared to survive without any outside help for at least three months.* That means having enough water, food, and hygiene products, sources of heat and shelter for you and your family. Hint - Don't forget to plan ahead for your family pets. Even the most lovable dog or cat *will* become vicious if they are starving. Another thing to think about - Do you need medications? Make sure you have extras from your doctor. If you explain you are looking forward and preparing for a worst-case scenario situation, they may be willing to help you stock up on your basic medications. This is especially important for anyone with a chronic illness, like asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or someone with a heart condition. If you have allergies, you need to be sure you have enough medication on hand. Ideally, you should have a three-month supply.

The best way to discover how prepared you are, is to practice surviving without these items before you are actually forced to go without them. **Try this for a week: Turn off your electricity. Turn off your water. Can you and your family survive just seven days? Three days? Can you even make it through 24 hours?**

Do you have enough bottled water, nonperishable food, blankets, warm clothes, flashlights, candles, pet food, medications, toilet paper and diapers for the baby? Are you physically fit enough to walk to the store and carry fifty pounds of what you need all the way home? Are you prepared to live outdoors? How would your children react? How would *you* react? These are things an EPS learns to think about and prepare for. For now, just try to go one week without electricity. After a few days you'll learn really quickly what you really *need* and *what you can learn to live without*.

Most of us have become spoiled and lazy with all of our modern conveniences. From the moment we start our day we “need” electricity. The human race has survived throughout most of history without electricity, and you can do it too. You know - if you have to. At the bare minimum, a survivor should be prepared to live without the modern convenience of electricity. Whether it is a simple windstorm that kicks out a transformer, or a flood, earthquake or other natural disaster, electric power is usually one of the first things to go, and there is no telling when it might come back on. Is your

family ready to survive without this one basic convenience? Better start preparing now.

In an effort to be prepared, figure out how much of everything essential you need for your family for one month, and multiply that by five. It's always good to have an extra months worth of supplies, in case things take longer to get back to normal, and another months worth of supplies if you need to barter for something you don't have. For example, if someone needs food, and you ran out of bandages or cough medicine, you can trade some of your extra food without worrying about your own family. Having more than you need is better than not having enough of what you need.

Be Prepared to Deal with Anything!

One of the biggest shocks for people forced to live in a survival situation is that they quickly realize they were ill prepared for the experience. They don't realize how much work it takes to do even the simplest things without modern conveniences and appliances. They don't realize how mentally and emotionally exhausting survival can be. That is why it is important to practice survivor skills ahead of time and to become comfortable working in those types of environments. Then, when needed, you'll have practical knowledge of survival skills at your disposal. How you think will determine your success or failure, not only in life, but also in survival situations.

So, what *is* the first thing you should think about?

Stay calm. First and foremost, do not panic. People who panic do stupid things. Doing stupid things can get yourself or other people hurt. The calmer you are, the easier it will be to keep others calm. How do you be calm? Take a deep breath. Speak in a normal, relaxed tone, and stay positive. If you have young children, be sure that they do not see you freak out. It will only scare them and create more panic. No matter how scared you may be, it's your job to keep a cool head.

In a group, the calmest, most prepared, knowledgeable and rationally thinking person should be the leader that others are willing to follow. People in groups have a pack mentality, just like wolves in the wild. Someone has to be the alpha dog, and if you are the head of your family, that person should be you. If you want to make sure you are the leader in a crisis, then your family has to be clear on that role you play, every day, not just when bad things happen. In a chaotic survival situation, it is NOT a time for your spouse to demand their way or your kids to pitch a fit. Make sure they understand that such behavior won't be tolerated, and that everyone's survival depends on it. Your responsibility is to make sure everyone is taken care of. Above all, it's your job to make sure you follow the 3 S's:

1. Are my decisions ensuring the group's **safety**?
2. Is my home/shelter/camp **secure**?
3. Is my family prepared to **survive** and thrive?

Assess the situation. Figure out what the most pressing need is, and handle it. A lot of the time, survival is about living in the moment and doing what needs to be done before or as things come up. If the power goes out, for example, the most pressing need is obtaining a light source. To prepare for this eventuality, you need to have candles, lamps, or flashlights readily available. Know where they are and make sure you have what you need, whether it is extra wicks or extra batteries. Whatever the need is, it's up to you to deal with it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Be a leader others look up to. A great leader can handle people diplomatically and learn to assess the group they are leading. If someone knows more about farming or emergency medicine than you do, delegate those responsibilities to the people who can best help the entire group. If you have children, make sure they feel included in the decision-making process whenever possible. Ask them about their ideas on how to do things. Even if you think you already know, making them feel important will help them to stay calm.

Children's brains solve problems differently than adults, and often their problem solving method is a common sense, simple solution. This creative attribute in children is what allows them to adapt and be resilient. Adults tend to over complicate things, while children see the problem and come up with the simplest solution possible. A great

leader listens to all the people they lead. You never know where the best answer will come from.

Be smarter than the average monkey. When people panic, they don't think clearly. A lot of survival is about common sense. You need water, shelter, heat and food (in that order) to maintain life. Survival isn't about comfort. If it comes right down to it, everything else is not important. So, be smart about what you choose to add to your survival pack. If something doesn't fall into one of those four categories, leave it behind. Not many people know how to think like a survivor. They will take the things they *think* they can't live without; meanwhile, they won't have the things they actually need. Many comfort items are useless. The only exceptions are in children's Bug Out Bags (BOB's). If you have room for things like: a deck of cards, coloring books, crayons, or mini games, bring them, especially if you have children. Non-electronic forms of entertainment go a long way to combat utter boredom. When people get bored, they get crabby. You don't want cranky children when you are trying to survive a chaotic situation.

Have a Plan (and Plan Ahead)

Your plan for survival will change depending on the circumstances surrounding it. ***Be Flexible!*** The more prepared you are to deal with anything that comes up, the easier it will be for everyone to stay calm and rational. You don't want to add to the panic by being part of the masses that are unprepared and frantically ransacking stores for supplies. Have your supplies ready and plan ahead. If you live in the

city, be ready to get out as fast as you can before looting and traffic jams make it impossible. Have a secondary location you are headed to out of the danger zone. If necessary, be prepared to leave the state. How do you know when it's time to get out?

I'm calling this the Survival Condition (SUVCON) Scale:

5. Normal Conditions: Regular day-to-day schedules followed. Preparations are made at leisure. There is nothing pressing to worry about at the moment, but the more prepared you are, the better off your family will be. Things you can do to be ready for anything:

- Continue stocking for food, medicine, and other supplies. Add items to your long-term shelter and your Bug Out Bag (BOB).
- Can and dehydrate as much food as you can. Store dry goods in freezer bags and put in waterproof Rubbermaid bins.
- Add money to your SHTF fund. Swap some of it out for gold. Watch the prices of gold. The higher the value per ounce, the more the economy is struggling.
- Invest in 5-gallon cans of gas. Fill them as often as you can afford.
- Consider swapping your electric stove for a propane gas stove, so that you have the ability to cook for your family when the power goes out.
- Make sure your home has properly insulated windows and doors. Have a supply of sandbags ready to go to block floodwaters.
- Replace batteries in fire alarms and other smoke alarms every six months.

- Have an emergency evacuation plan in case of fire.
- Make sure children know where they should meet you if they get split up, their parents' phone number, address, and emergency contact information.
- Invest in a set of cast iron cookware that can be used over an open flame, if necessary.
- Buy a pistol and learn to shoot. Have your kids learn too. It's not dangerous if you know the proper safety protocol. It doesn't matter what political views you have. You are in a life or death situation and no one else will care if you like guns or not. If you want to live, you will need to be able to defend your family.
- Take a selfdefense course and an emergency first aid course.
- Make sure your kids learn to swim. Get them involved in Scouts or some equivalent to teach them basic outdoor survival skills and so they will learn to appreciate and enjoy it.
- Practice your survival skills on weekend/summer camping trips. Plan at least one snow camping trip and be prepared to survive in winter conditions, if you live in such an area. Disasters can happen any time of the year.
- Buy books on survival, farming, hunting, food processing, gardening and long-term survival. *READ THEM BEFORE YOU NEED THEM.*
- Make sure negatives of family photos, heirloom jewelry and important documents are in a bank safety deposit box.

4. **Preliminary Alert Status**: A situation you've noticed is capable of escalating into a problem down the road, but it's just a possibility right now. There is a typical rainstorm or snowstorm warnings on the

news. Power may go out for a few hours or a week. Stay on your toes. Things you can do to be ready for this level:

- Check batteries in flashlights. Make sure that there is a source of light in every room of the house.
- Make sure you have enough water, toilet paper and hygiene supplies to last at least one week without dipping into your long-term storehouse supplies.
- Make sure you have enough fuel for a small camp stove. If you have an electric stove, make a few meals ahead of time that can be eaten cold, if necessary.
- Have a good supply of canned foods, meats and sandwich bread. Make a pot of coffee and pitchers of juice ahead of time.
- Make up pitchers of salted ice using cleaned milk jugs or two liters. They will help keep your freezer foods cold if the power goes out.
- Make sure all your dirty laundry is cleaned. Focus on towels, blankets, underwear and warm shirts. Have a bucket ready to wash clothes in as needed. Use spare sheets to cover windows and doors to help keep heat in.
- Have a bathroom bucket. You won't be able to flush the toilet. Use a bit of kitty litter to keep smells down.
- Have everyone take a shower before the power goes out. Being clean will help people from getting cranky. Be prepared to sponge bathe until the power comes back on.
- Have pens, paper, and card/board games ready to combat non-electronic boredom. Use the time to really talk to your kids about things they think about, find out what they are worried about, and talk about other survival situations.

3. High Alert Status: Cancel your plans for the weekend and gas up your vehicles. Things could get ugly REALLY fast. Flood, Earthquake or Hurricane warnings are on the news, and you may be advised to evacuate. Make sure your family understands that this is NOT a time to argue or debate. This is not a drill – this is serious. You are in charge, and they can just deal with it until you are all somewhere safe. Connect with family or friends outside of the danger zone and make sure they are ready to have you stay with them. Hotels fill up fast. You can call around to churches in the area as well. Some are equipped to take people in and stay with members of the congregation. If all else fails, head to a campground with your gear. Stay frosty. You may not have a home to come back to, so be prepared to stay awhile until you can get back you're your feet. Things you can do to be ready for this level of emergency:

- Get your family all in one place and make sure everyone has his or her Bug Out Bag (BOB) ready. Gather the pets together in cages, or on leashes. Pets should have their own BOB with food bowls, water, food, treats, medications, pet brushes, *etc.*
- Have a destination in mind before you leave. Make sure your maps are easily accessible and you have extra gas cans ready to go.
- Go to the bank and get as much cash out as you can and your items in the safety deposit box. This should be the only stop you make. The longer you spend running around town getting ready to go, the harder it will be to leave the area. The supplies you have on hand are what you are taking. This is why we prepare in advance.

- If you have the time, make sure that your elderly neighbors have a place to go, and help them weatherproof their homes and put together a go bag if they don't have one. You may need to rely on their kindness some day and a little effort on your part to make sure they are safe will be appreciated and remembered. Sometimes it's not just about you and yours.

2. National or Local Emergency in Progress or Imminent: You should be ready to go as soon as the evacuation is made mandatory, if not before hand. Take the back roads out of town, and head in the opposite direction as most of the people. You don't want to get stuck in a traffic jam. Get to where you need to be as fast as possible. Things you can do to be ready:

- Last minute checks on provisions, weapons, and family. Don't forget the pets.
- Vehicles are loaded and head to your escape locations BEFORE the highways get jammed. Take back roads.
- Bug Out Shelter or other family's home is ready for a long stay.
- Close and lock any perimeter enclosures and fencing.
- Unplug all electronics.
- Barricade windows, vents and sliding doors with plastic sheeting and sheets of plywood, as necessary.
- Take small family heirlooms and family photos with you, if you can. They can't be replaced.

1. **S has officially HTF:** This is the most major emergency you can think of. Loss or destruction of local or state infrastructure.

Government is down and nobody is coming to help. Difficult to travel due to traffic jams or damage. Ideally you want to already be out of dodge and somewhere safe ready to stay awhile. There is no telling when society will be up and running again. You are officially on your own. What you can do to be ready:

- Weapons should be loaded.
- No one goes anywhere alone.
- Listen to the radio for updates, if any.
- Hunker down and be prepared to stay a long while. Study the survival books for information related to your specific emergency situation.
- Start growing your heirloom seeds for food. They can be started indoors and transplanted outside later.
- Start collecting alternate sources of water.
- Begin hunting/fishing for alternate sources of meat. Build drying racks to smoke and dry meats for long-term storage.
- Have a daily routine. Each member of the family should have chores to do around the camp/shelter. No excuses. They depend on your efforts to survive, and you depend on theirs.
- Reinforce your camp/shelter for long-term defense and cold weather.

Chapter 2: The 72-Hour Pack or Bug Out Bag (BOB)

What is a Bug Out Bag and Why You Need One

A bug out bag is what will get you through the next 24-72 hours after an emergency or disaster. For example, if you are forced to evacuate from your home, you will want to be able to take some supplies with you, to get you by, until you can find someplace safe. Hopefully you'll never need it, but in the case of an emergency where you need to flee your home, car, or your city, packing essential safety and survival gear is the last thing on your mind but the most important. Disasters can happen at any time and it is best to be prepared.

Choosing the Right Bag

The average weight guidelines for a fully loaded backpack are no more than 25% of your overall body weight. For a 200-pound person (in good health), that would be 50 pounds for your BOB. You want to make sure most of whatever you put in your bag is as lightweight as possible. It's important to choose a bag that appropriately fits you, and has proper padding throughout the straps and hip area. A simple backpack isn't large enough for an adult bug out bag. You'll want a good-sized camp pack or hiking backpack, which distributes weight properly. Unless your bag is packed the right way, your center of balance will be off, making it hard for you to move quickly without injury.

Pack Smart – A bug out bag should be viewed as a life preserver in most situations, not a convenience store. Only take what is necessary to survive for 24-72 hours. Leave the rest.

What To Put in Your Bug Out Bag:

Below is a list of the absolute minimum requirements you and your family need to have with you in an emergency situation. In an adult BOB you need:

Water and Food

- A *minimum* of three liters of water. 1 per day, per person. More is better.
- Water purification tablets, canteen or water bladder system.
- A small cook stove and fuel.
- Waterproof matches, flint and tinder, a lighter. (One of them is necessary; all three is best)
- A mess kit that includes a cooking pot/large cup.
- A can opener.
- 9 'just add water meals', and high-energy granola or protein bars.
- Basic spices: Salt, Pepper, Garlic Powder, Chili Powder and Italian Seasoning make just about anything taste a little better. (Small amounts in waterproof containers.)

Shelter:

- A cold weather sleeping bag

- A tent or tarps. A family size tent is necessary for more than two people. A single person tent is barely big enough for one person, much less that person AND their gear. Two people need a 4-6 person tent. Anyone with kids or more than two people in their home need a family size tent or more than one 4-6 person tent.
- 1 sheet of large plastic. (Great for catching rainwater, or waterproofing your tent.)
- A silver reflective emergency blanket
- Use one of your tarps to cover over the roof of your tent. Use the second to cover your cooking area and a third to use to collect water. The fourth is a backup in case a hole gets in any of the others.

Clothing:

- A pair of water resistant boots that cover the ankle and have traction.
- A pair of long pants (preferably not blue jeans.)
- 2 Pairs of wool socks (not cotton), clean underwear.
- 2 Shirts (Maybe 1 long sleeve and 1 short sleeve for layering, not cotton.)
- A Jacket that is both warm and provides protection from rain (you'll be wearing it every day)
- A waterproof poncho
- Warm thermal underclothing.
- A winter hat, and gloves, if you live in a cold-winter area.
- A Bandana
- Dust mask and goggles

Other MUST Haves:

- Two sources of light. You should have at least one Maglight flashlight, and an LED lantern. Candles don't give off much light, and oil lamps can be dangerous if they topple over. Don't forget - Extra batteries.
- Camp saw to chop wood with.
- A personal defense weapon. A pistol is best – easier to store and carry than a rifle, powerful enough to do its job still.
- Plastic baggie full of: wash cloth, bar soap, mini toothpaste, and travel toothbrush, floss. Mini deodorant, shampoo and conditioner. Small hairbrush. Don't forget Toilet Paper!
- 2-3 plastic garbage bags.
- Emergency cash: \$10 in quarters, \$10 in ones, \$10 in fives, \$30 in tens, and \$100 in twenties.
- An emergency whistle. Also, a Signal flare, Compass, and a Waterproof watch.
- A fold up map of the state you are in or the nearby area, at a minimum. (laminated).
- Emergency documents: birth certificates, social security card, passport, and emergency contact information.
- A Cold Steel Folding Camp Shovel and Survival Knife, or similar dual-purpose tool.
- 100 Feet of braided Paracord, Various sizes of zip ties .
- A first aid kit AND *Emergency War Surgery: The Survivalist's Medical Desk Reference* – quite literally, a lifesaving book.
- An Altoids tin that has fishing line, hooks, sewing needles, and thread inside.
- A large roll of duct tape and two bottles of Gorilla Glue.

- Two way radio.

IF YOU HAVE ROOM FOR IT:

- Small copy of your chosen religious text.
- A deck of cards.
- Aqua shoes, so you don't cut your feet if you bathe in a water source. Protect those feet! (Shoes can dangle outside the bag so they don't take up room inside it.)

ESSENTIALS FOR BABIES:

- 4 Cloth diapers and safety pins, rash cream.
- 1-2 cans of formula (if you can't breastfeed).

If your baby has teeth, they are old enough to eat whatever you do. Just make sure it's cooked soft and in small portions.

- Baby carrier/sling
- Pacifier, teething toy
- Baby all in one Body Wash/Shampoo
- 2 Sleeper Feet Pajama outfits. (The really warm ones.)
- Baby mittens and socks. (2 pairs each.)

ESSENTIALS FOR CHILDREN 3+

Each child should have their own bug out bag. During a SHTF situation, it will be extremely important for your kids to feel as safe

and secure as possible. Having their own child sized Bug Out Bag, filled with familiar items and comfort foods, can be a real lifesaver during an emergency. With children, comfort items often become a top priority to ensure their overall mental health during a SHTF scenario. Make sure they are lightweight and age appropriate. Heavier items and gear should be in the adults' bags.

Remember, a child's bug out bag is not meant to be an adult BOB. Its main purpose is to comfort your child during a stressful situation and give them a feeling of control. Make sure you customize the bag for your child's age, personality, and overall fitness level.

Suggested items can include:

- Emergency whistle, and a compass strapped to outside of bag so they can easily find it.
- Laminated emergency contact list with name, home address, and telephone numbers.
- Small soft fleece blanket
- 2 (non cotton) shirts, 1 pair of pants.
- Clean underwear, and extra sets (non-cotton socks)
- Coat, Rain gear and boots, hat and gloves
- Their own granola bars, water and juice mixes.
- Their own mini flashlight/lantern and batteries.
- Small first aid kit, toothpaste, toothbrush, bar of soap and Toilet Paper. Remember: It's good for you to have extras of the little stuff.

These things are light enough for them to carry in the bottom of their bags.

- Dust mask and goggles
- Coloring book, crayons, stuffed animal, their favorite small book.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (AGE 8+)

Their bag should be age appropriate but with several pockets to store things. A child of 8 or 9 years old should know how to build a simple fire to keep warm and boil water. If they get separated from you, they will need to have a way to stay warm and boil water to drink. *In addition* to the list above, have them also carry:

- A prepaid cell phone AND \$10 in quarters.
- A decent pocket knife, and 100 feet of braided paracord.
- Flint and Tinder, Waterproof Matches
- Water purification tablets
- A deck of cards, 1 Battery operated game (yatzee, slingo etc.), a book.

CHILDREN 12+

Teenagers are plenty old enough to know basic first aid, learn to build a fire and a simple lean to, memorize Morse code, navigate with a compass and know how to read a map. They should be able to cook a meal without burning it. Their packs should hold much of the same stuff yours does. They should have their own:

- Small tent, tarps, rope *etc.*
- Camp stoves/fuel, mess kits *etc.*
- First Aid Supplies, Boy Scout Survival Book *etc.*
- Tools, Knives, Paracord
- Many of the small items listed in the Adult BOB

These above lists are *not* everything you could ever need in a bug out bag, but they are a good start. Customize your bag for your environment and your family. You can take your BOB out camping a few times to help you decide what you need to keep and what you need to replace with better gear. The BOB will be your lifeline in a 24-72 hour survival situation, so it's vital to have one ready to go.

Chapter 3: Water

How much do you need?

You use a lot more water than you realize. Some people say you only need three liters of water a day, per person to survive. Yes, you can survive on that much water, but ideally, you need three *gallons* of water, per person, per day, to thrive instead of just survive. So, let's say your power is out for three days. $3 \times 3 = 9$ gallons of water for just one person. Multiply that number by however many people are in your family and that is how much water you need for 72 hours. That may seem like a lot, but let's break it down. You need at least 1 gallon per person to drink each day, 1 gallon per person to wash with, and 1 gallon to use for preparing three meals a day. One gallon could be used for washing wounds, giving to pets, soaking dehydrated foods, or cleaning dishes. The more water you have on hand, the less work you will have to do to replace what you use. Can you get by on less water? Yes, you can, but you don't want to have to. *When it comes to survival, one is none, and two is one.* That means: have duplicates of EVERYTHING. You want to have more than enough, especially when it comes to clean water.

Water Storage

Because of our modern conveniences of plastic bottles, water is easy to store. Water should be stored in a centrally located area, preferably close to the kitchen or outdoor cooking area. That's where you will use a majority of it, and you don't want to have to haul water farther than you absolutely have to, not even through the house.

If you have the space in your pantry, line the bottom with gallon jugs of water. Better yet, clear out some space in a rarely accessed hall closet. You can turn it into an emergency pantry and store extra water, food stuffs, batteries, lanterns and medical supplies. You can easily stack cases of water against a wall, no more than five cases high (they could fall over). One 24 -pack of water bottles is roughly 3 gallons. No matter what you do, save your plastic bottles. They will come in handy for collecting more water down the line, or used for other things, like planting seeds in. Your BOB should have a water bladder system built into it, so that you can carry water on your back.

Finding Water

What do you do if you run out of water? The easiest thing would be to go buy more, but let me tell you something. Water will be the first thing to disappear from store shelves in an emergency situation. The best way to get clean water is to wait for it to rain and collect your rainwater. You can create a water drip system with a simple blue tarp, draining into a plastic food grade bucket. Be aware that if you choose to collect water this way, you'll want to be sure no one steals it before you've collected it. You'll want to guard your water source.

Another method of getting water requires a bit more effort. You'll have to find a natural water source and collect it from a stream. Water with a rushing current from a river is best, because it will be cleaner than stagnant, still water, say from a lake or pond. That means hauling water from that source. No matter how thirsty you

are, you should never, I repeat NEVER, drink or bathe in water straight from a source without making sure it is as clean as you can get it. There is a lot of pollution and various water borne illnesses to consider.

Water Borne Illnesses

Water is the most important resource a person will need in order to survive after an emergency or disaster. The average person can survive for three to four days without water. Unfortunately, water from lakes and rivers often can be contaminated with chemicals or germs, which can cause serious illness or death. Most of the world's deadliest diseases are waterborne. Water can carry parasites, giardia, cryptosporidium, bacteria, algae, viruses and fungi. Diseases like dysentery, typhus and cholera all are spread by contaminated water and cause more human deaths than virtually any other cause.

Many serious infections can result from ingesting contaminated water. Cholera, tularemia, typhoid fever and shigellosis are only a few of the diseases you can be infected with in this manner. These diseases mainly infect the digestive tract, and symptoms vary in severity. The bodily fluids of an infected individual have contaminated water that others will use. Water diseases are more common in less-developed countries where sanitation is poor. If water lines are contaminated, it's not uncommon to see widespread infection. Many waterborne infections that are endemic to certain areas don't cause disease in local residents and are pathogenic only to visitors. Some of the most common waterborne illnesses are below, including:

Shigellosis is the most severe type of dysentery, which is an inflammatory infection of the bowels. It's caused by the *Shigella* dysentery bacterium, a pathogen that's particularly hazardous because it produces a powerful poison, known as Shiga toxin, that damages the intestines. Patients usually experience fever, abdominal pain and blood in their stools. According to the American Public Health Association, shigellosis is responsible for 600,000 deaths a year worldwide.

Typhoid fever is found worldwide. It's caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*. Individuals become infected after coming into contact with food or water contaminated by an infected individual's feces or urine. Typhoid fever can be prevented with proper sanitation of water and food supplies, and effective vaccines for it have been developed. It also can be treated with a wide range of antibiotics, and it usually isn't fatal.

Cholera is a severe intestinal infection caused by the *Vibrio cholerae* bacterium. Symptoms are severe diarrhea and vomiting, which can quickly cause dehydration. If a water source is infected with this bacterium, a widespread outbreak will result. Cholera outbreaks have been reported worldwide, but now the disease is mainly confined to Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Francisella tularensis is the cause of tularemia. Tularemia is a dangerous infectious disease that causes skin ulcers, swollen and painful lymph glands, chills and fatigue. Tularemia can be infect humans through arthropod bites as well as through the ingestion of contaminated water. Tularemia is treatable with antibiotics but can be fatal if left untreated.

Making Your Tap Water Safe to Drink

If you are on a treated municipal or public water system, occasionally these water plants can fail and contaminants can enter the water supply, or a natural disaster such as a flood, storm or earthquake can cause your water source to become contaminated and unsafe to drink. In these situations, your first priority is making tap water drinkable. Boiling water is often a temporary measure, until your local water authorities can restore the water quality of your drinking water. If your water is just a little bit cloudy, you can run it through a simple coffee filter to get out some of the sediments before you boil it. Your water should be boiled for at least 10 minutes and allowed to cool completely. This is generally the safest method to destroy any disease and organisms.

In order to boil water you will need a source of heat either from a fire or a camp/emergency stove and a camp pot or cup. To purify the water, bring it to a rolling boil for a *minimum* of 60 seconds plus one additional minute for each 1000 feet above sea level you are, in order to ensure that all living organisms are dead. If the water tastes flat after boiling, you may aerate it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers.

If it is still cloudy or smells off (don't taste it), you will have to use other methods of water purification before using the water. Water purification tablets are the most lightweight and portable solution. Two common types of tablets are available: Iodine and Chlorine Dioxide.

If possible, I recommend chlorine dioxide tablets. Like iodine, these are also a lightweight and portable solution for water purification. Chlorine Dioxide is a stronger pathogen killer than iodine and will not discolor the water. To use these tablets, drop them in your water and wait at least 15 minutes before drinking as per the instructions on the bottle. The water will have a slight chlorine taste. You also can use liquid bleach found in your home. Be sure the bleach you have on hand for this purpose contains only sodium hypochlorite (5.25% solution) with no soap, phosphates, scents, *etc.* For one gallon of clear water, add 8 drops (1/8 tsp) of bleach. To five gallons of clear water add 32 drops (1/2 tsp.) If the water is cloudy, double these amounts. Do not use the measuring dropper or spoon for anything else. At the time the bleach is purchased, write the date of purchase on the bottle. Bleach that is over one year old has lost about half its strength, so the quantities you use should be doubled. After adding the bleach to the water, mix well and let it stand for at least 30 minutes before using.

Iodine also has its advantages, however. Iodine will kill pathogens that are heat resistant. When using iodine, drop the tablet in the water and wait at least 30 minutes before drinking the water as per instructions on the bottle. You also can use liquid iodine. If there are no directions on the iodine bottle use 12 drops to the gallon of water. If the water is cloudy, double that quantity. Again, mix well and allow to stand for at least 30 minutes. Iodine is a quick and easy solution. Pregnant women and people who have thyroid problems should contact a physician before using iodine as a water purifier.

Both chlorine and iodine will impact the taste of the water. Pouring the water from one container to another several times will help dissipate some of that taste by re-oxygenating the water. Tang or Kool-Aid also will help to cover or disguise these tastes. Personally, I prefer using bleach to iodine, as it doesn't taste quite as bad.

Water Filters will remove bacteria and parasites. Filters also can remove many waterborne chemicals and filter out "off" tastes that boiling or tablets cannot. These filters are made in various sizes and output capacities. Some are small enough to be carried in a backpack. It would be advisable to have several of these on hand. Filters are an excellent option when you have the need for something that you can carry and that will last long term. As with all things, plan ahead and practice with the different tools and methods to find which one works best for you.

Chapter 4: Food

Next to water, food is the thing that most people will not think about stocking until it is too late. One thing to keep in mind about survival when it comes to food is that you will get very weak and malnourished without proper nutrition. In a survival situation, the food pyramid is almost completely backwards. You want extra carbohydrates and fats in your diet, to give you energy and keep you going. Surviving is stressful business, and stress will cause your body to crave instant energy. In everyday life, when we are sitting around in front of the computer or TV all day long, you don't use that extra energy and it gets stored as fat. It's okay to be on a low carb diet, because you don't *need* that extra energy.

This is not true in a survival situation, especially if you are on the move, in the wilderness and exercising more than you normally would in a day. Your body will burn through food faster and require more replacement energy: food. You need to realize that what you used to eat may not be what your body now requires and you will need to adjust your diet accordingly. Whatever special diet you are on now means nothing when it comes to survival. In a survival situation, being picky and deciding you aren't going to eat potatoes because they are too starchy is just plain stupid, and may even lead to your demise. When you are hungry enough, you'll eat whatever is available.

Another thing to consider is that when you are in a survival situation, and you are not used to going without electricity to entertain you, it is easy to get bored. Very bored. When we get bored, what do we want to do? Something, anything, and usually involving eating. Some people want to eat more when they are bored. You must resist this urge in order to conserve your food stores. When you are in survival mode, and lacking food stores, you **MUST** have water to drink. Your body requires extra water when you aren't eating properly.

Vitamins and Nutrition

The best way a person can prepare themselves for a survival situation is by adjusting their diet ahead of time. Quit smoking, drinking, and if you have an addiction to sugary desserts, energy drinks or coffee, it's time to cut it out of your diet before you are forced to. You don't want to have to deal with weird withdrawal symptoms while you are just trying to make it through the day in a survival situation. If you are used to eating chemical laden fast food burgers, pizza, burritos, chips, soda, candy, ding dongs etc., you are going to have a very hard time adjusting to eating the bare minimum nutritional requirements that you will find in a survival situation. For the most part, nothing that comes in a box, bag, or man-made package is healthy. Just because something is advertised as food, or advertised as healthy, doesn't mean you should be eating it. Most modern food is so full of chemicals that make us sick and drain our energy, it's amazing we are even still alive. The more processed a food is, the less amount of nutrients it will have in it by the time it reaches your body.

As a general rule, if your great-grandparents would not recognize it as food, you probably shouldn't be eating it. The closer you can eat to the garden, the healthier you will be. It's just common sense. People thousands of years ago didn't have Doritos or DQ, and they thrived. So can you. That means replacing your morning pop tart with oatmeal and fresh fruit. It means replacing your McDonalds French fries and burger with a hearty vegetable soup, a salad and whole wheat rolls. It means replacing your take out Chinese or pizza with fresh fish, rice and roasted summer vegetables. It means replacing your sugary soda with a bottle of water. The more you become accustomed to eating real foods, the less of a shock your body will go through in an emergency situation. Not only that, you'll be much healthier in the long run.

I suggest keeping a food diary of everything your family eats AND drinks for an entire month. You may be shocked. Figure out how much you rely on prepackaged foods, processed sugars and convenient pre-made frozen dinners. You won't have any of those things to rely on when the SHTF and your body will attempt to reject real foods at first. The last thing you want in an emergency situation is a diarrhea problem to deal with. One of the best things you can do to prepare for a survival situation is get your family used to eating healthy, homemade non-processed foods.

Let's talk a little bit about vitamins. The more nutrients you put into your body through foods, the less supplements you will have to store or take. While a good multivitamin is important to give you a boost,

you should not be relying on them to give you what you need. The better quality of food you eat, the healthier you are. The old saying is true: You are what you eat. In a life or death survival situation, the healthier you are, the better chances you will have to live.

You'll also want to start filling your food storage space or food storehouse. The cheapest way to create a food storehouse is to purchase a food dehydrator, vacuum bags and 5-gallon food storage containers. Commercially packaged freeze-dried and dehydrated foods are very expensive to stock up on enough for you or your family. You will end up spending thousands of dollars for a 45-day supply. Invest in the food dehydrator and a vacuum bag system to create your own stores. Most new dehydrators come with an instruction manual and easy to follow guidelines for how long to dry foods.

It is best to grow your own fruits and vegetables if you can, but if you live in the city and that isn't an option for you, then watch for store sales and stock up on fresh veggies and fruits. Farmers markets usually have cheaper produce than regular grocery stores, and the produce is usually much more nutritious for you. You can dehydrate half of it for your storehouse. Keep in mind that you will have to soak dehydrated food in water for several hours before you can eat it. That's what some of your extra water is for.

Here is a quick list of healthy foods you should start working on storing:

FRUITS

- Apples
- Apricots
- Banana
- Blackberry
- Blueberry
- Cherry
- Kiwi
- Lemon
- Mango
- Papaya
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Pomegranate (Seeds)
- Strawberries

VEGATABLES

- Asparagus
- Beans
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Carrot

- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Collard Greens/ Swiss Chard/Kale
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Leeks
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Parsnips/Turnips
- Peas
- Peppers
- Pumpkins
- Radish
- Shallots
- Spinach
- Squash
- Tomatoes
- Yams
- Zucchini

CANNED FOODS:

- Nalley Chili (Can be eaten cold if you must.)
- Various Beans (You Should have Dried too.)
- Diced Tomatoes, Spaghetti Sauce, Tomato Paste
- Potatoes, Green Beans, Corn, Spinach Greens
- Mixed Veggies (Great for soups and stews.)
- Mixed Fruits, Applesauce, Peaches, Pears
- Tuna, Chicken or Ham

- Chocolate Sauce/ Baking Powders

OTHER FOOD THINGS TO STOCK UP ON IN THE HOME:

- Heirloom Seeds (To grow your own veggies and fruits if you must.)
- Peanuts, Almonds, Granola Bars
- Crisco, Vegetable and Olive Oil, Coconut Oil, White and Apple Cider Vinegar
- Pastas, Oatmeal, Pancake Mix, Dried Beans, Popcorn
- Grains: Quinoa, Wheat, Barley, Bulgur, Rye, Spelt, Rice, Millet
- Baking Soda, Baking Powder, Corn Starch, Cornmeal, YEAST
- Sugar, Brown Sugar, Honey
- Coffee, Powdered Milk, Hot Chocolate and Powdered Juice Mixes
- Egg Substitute, Powdered Cheese Substitute
- Chili, Taco, Meatloaf and Beef Stew, Ranch Packets (or make your own),
- Brown, White and Chicken Gravy
- Chicken, Beef and Vegetable Bullion Cubes
- Spices: Garlic, Onion, Cayenne, Pepper, Salt, Lemon Pepper, Cajun Spice, Italian Seasonings, Chili Powder, Dill, Cilantro, Chives, Cinnamon, Curry, Turmeric, Ginger, Nutmeg.
- Peanut Butter and Home Canned Jellies

WHAT **NOT** TO STOCK UP ON:

- Dairy Products, Butter, Eggs *etc.* (They don't keep well at all. Get powdered varieties of milk or butter, or learn to make it fresh yourself, if you must have it. Butter can be frozen, and last for some

time out of the fridge, but eventually it will mold and go bad, just like everything else with dairy in it.)

- Frozen Meats (They will only last a day once they thaw, maybe two, if you're lucky. You can make beef jerky, or better yet, use canned meats like tuna, chicken and ham.)

- Ramen noodles (Great for a 72-hour pack, but surprisingly, doesn't hold flavor well after about three months. It also has NO real nutritional value, is loaded with sodium, and the makers *refuse* to say what chemicals they use to make the noodles shiny and not stick to each other. Not worth the risk for long-term food storage.)

- Canned Soups (Again, fine for a 72-hour pack, but they are heavy to carry, expensive to buy, and you can easily make a huge pot of soup for far cheaper than buying enough canned soup for every member of the house.)

- Boxed Instant Potatoes/Pastas/Bags of Flavored Rice (Don't last as long as you would think. They are okay for a 72-hour pack but they also require butter or milk to cook. If they get wet, the food is useless. They are processed foods full of chemicals with very little nutritional value.)

- Anything that requires refrigeration.

The more food you can successfully store before a crisis, the better. You may also need a method to move your food stores, if you can't stay where you are. That is why it is best to have lightweight, dehydrated foods. I suggest having two storage options for food preparation. Canned and store bought nonperishables can be stored in a closet for in home emergency use. You should also have a suitcase or two on wheels, full of food dehydrated and basic foodstuffs. This way, if you have to evacuate your home, you have a supply of food ready to take with you. There should also be a basic three-day supply in every 72-hour pack.

Chapter Five: Fire Building and Camp Living 101

Choosing a Campsite

If you are forced to camp out somewhere, there are a few things you will want to make sure your campsite has, including:

- A running water source, like a stream or river. Water with a current tends to be cleaner than standing water of a lake or pond.
- Flat ground area, preferably without rocks or major divets. Your camp should be on high ground, far enough away from the water source that you don't have to worry about flooding out your camp if it rains.
- Natural shelters are preferred, like caves, natural rock overhangs and abandoned cottages. Be sure they aren't inhabited.
- Your campground should be near enough trees to be able to have firewood readily available.
- If possible, look for naturally growing fruit bushes or trees. They may not be ripe now, but if you need to stay a while, you will have a natural food source.

- Overgrown tall grass can be cut and used as ground cover, and usually can be easily burned.

- Your campground should be easily defensible. Ideally, you want to limit the directions people can come in at, or at least make sure that you can clearly see anyone coming from any direction.

Types of Shelters

There are three major things you should be aware of when building a shelter.

1. How much time you have to build it. You don't want to get caught in the rain or snow. If you get too cold, you risk hypothermia. A quickly built shelter is better than none at all when bad weather strikes. You can always build a better shelter when the storm clears.

2. It should be built well enough to adequately protect you and your family from the elements (sun, rain, wind, snow)

3. It should be up big enough for the tallest person to stand up in and lay down comfortably, and wide enough for the tallest person to be able to spread their arms out and not touch the sides. *Note: Be sure not to make it too big.* A small shelter can be heated with your own body heat, and will help to prevent hypothermia during cold nights or in colder climates.

The following are different types of shelters, with some instructions on how to make each one, and tips for when they are best to use.

The Tarp Lean-To

It takes only a short time and minimal equipment to build this simple lean-to. You need a poncho, 2 to 3 meters of rope or parachute suspension line, three stakes about 30 centimeters long, and two trees or two poles 2 to 3 meters apart. Before selecting the trees you will use or the location of your poles, check the wind direction. Ensure that the back of your lean-to will be into the wind.

To make the lean-to:

- Tie off the hood of the poncho. Pull the drawstring tight, roll the hood the long ways, fold it into thirds, and tie it off with the drawstring.
- Cut the rope in half. On one long side of the poncho, tie half of the rope to the corner grommet. Tie the other half to the other corner grommet.
- Attach a drip stick (about a 10-centimeter stick) to each rope about 2.5 centimeters from the grommet. These drip sticks will keep rainwater from running down the ropes into the lean-to. Tying strings (about 10 centimeters long) to each grommet along the poncho's top edge will allow the water to run to and down the line without dripping into the shelter.
- Tie the ropes about waist high on the trees (uprights). Use a round turn and two half hitches with a quick-release knot.
- Spread the poncho and anchor it to the ground, putting sharpened sticks through the grommets and into the ground.

If you plan to use the lean-to for more than one night, or if you expect rain, make a center support for the lean-to. Make this support with a line. Attach one end of the line to the poncho hood and the other end to an overhanging branch. Make sure there is no slack in the line.

Another method is to place a stick upright under the center of the lean-to. This method, however, will restrict your space and movements in the shelter.

For additional protection from wind and rain, place some brush, your rucksack, or other equipment at the sides of the lean-to.

To reduce heat loss to the ground, place some type of insulating material, such as leaves or pine needles, inside your lean-to.

The Tarp Tent

This tent provides a low silhouette. It also protects you from the elements on two sides. It has, however, less usable space and observation area than a lean-to. To make this tent, you need a poncho, two 1.5-to 2.5-meter ropes, six sharpened sticks about 30 centimeters long, and two trees 2 to 3 meters apart.

To make the tent:

- Tie off the poncho hood in the same way as the poncho lean-to.
- Tie a 1.5-to 2.5-meter rope to the center grommet on each side of the poncho.
- Tie the other ends of these ropes at about knee height to two trees 2 to 3 meters apart and stretch the poncho tight.
- Draw one side of the poncho tight and secure it to the ground pushing sharpened sticks through the grommets.
- Follow the same procedure on the other side.

If you need a center support, use the same methods as for the poncho lean-to. Another center support is an A-frame set outside but over the center of the tent. Use two 90-to 120-centimeter-long sticks, one with a forked end, to form the A-frame. Tie the hood's drawstring to the A-frame to support the center of the tent.

Field-Expedient Lean-To

If you are in a wooded area and have enough natural materials, you can make a field-expedient lean-to without the aid of tools or with only a knife. It takes longer to make this type of shelter than it does to make other types, but it will protect you better from the elements.

You will need two trees (or upright poles) about 2 meters apart; one pole about 2 meters long and 2.5 centimeters in diameter; five to eight poles about 3 meters long and 2.5 centimeters in diameter for

beams; cord or vines for securing the horizontal support to the trees; and other poles, saplings, or vines to crisscross the beams.

To make this lean-to:

- Tie the 2-meter pole to the two trees at waist to chest height. This is the horizontal support. If a standing tree is not available, construct a biped using Y-shaped sticks or two tripods.
- Place one end of the beams (3-meter poles) on one side of the horizontal support. As with all lean-to type shelters, be sure to place the lean-to's backside into the wind.
- Crisscross saplings or vines on the beams.
- Cover the framework with brush, leaves, pine needles, or grass, starting at the bottom and working your way up like shingling.
- Place straw, leaves, pine needles, or grass inside the shelter for bedding.

In cold weather, add to your lean-to's comfort by building a fire reflector wall. Drive four 1.5-meter-long stakes into the ground to support the wall. Stack green logs on top of one another between the support stakes. Form two rows of stacked logs to create an inner space within the wall that you can fill with dirt. This action not only strengthens the wall but makes it more heat reflective. Bind the top of the support stakes so that the green logs and dirt will stay in place.

With just a little more effort you can have a drying rack. Cut a few 2-centimeter-diameter poles (length depends on the distance between the lean-to's horizontal support and the top of the fire reflector wall). Lay one end of the poles on the lean-to support and the other end on top of the reflector wall. Place and tie into place smaller sticks across these poles. You now have a place to dry clothes, meat, or fish.

Swamp Bed

In a marsh or swamp, or any area with standing water or continually wet ground, this swamp bed keeps you out of the water. When selecting such a site, consider the weather, wind, tides, and available materials.

To make a swamp bed:

- Look for four trees clustered in a rectangle, or cut four poles (bamboo is ideal) and drive them firmly into the ground so they form a rectangle. They should be far enough apart and strong enough to support your height and weight, to include equipment.
- Cut two poles that span the width of the rectangle. They, too, must be strong enough to support your weight.
- Secure these two poles to the trees (or poles). Be sure they are high enough above the ground or water to allow for tides and high water.
- Cut additional poles that span the rectangle's length. Lay them across the two side poles, and secure them.
- Cover the top of the bed frame with broad leaves or grass to form a soft sleeping surface.
- Build a fire pad by laying clay, silt, or mud on one corner of the swamp bed and allow it to dry.

Another shelter designed to get you above and out of the water or wet ground uses the same rectangular configuration as the swamp bed. You very simply lay sticks and branches lengthwise on the inside of the trees (or poles) until there is enough material to raise the sleeping surface above the water level.

Debris Hut

For warmth and ease of construction, this shelter is one of the best. When shelter is essential to survival, build this shelter.

To make a debris hut:

- Build it by making a tripod with two short stakes and a long ridgepole or by placing one end of a long ridgepole on top of a sturdy base.
- Secure the ridgepole (pole running the length of the shelter) using the tripod method or by anchoring it to a tree at about waist height.
- Prop large sticks along both sides of the ridgepole to create a wedge-shaped ribbing effect. Ensure the ribbing is wide enough to accommodate your body and steep enough to shed moisture.
- Place finer sticks and brush crosswise on the ribbing. These form a latticework that will keep the insulating material (grass, pine needles, leaves) from falling through the ribbing into the sleeping area.
- Add light, dry, if possible, soft debris over the ribbing until the insulating material is at least 1 meter thick--the thicker the better.
- Place a 30-centimeter layer of insulating material inside the shelter.

- At the entrance, pile insulating material that you can drag to you once inside the shelter to close the entrance or build a door.
- As a final step in constructing this shelter, add shingling material or branches on top of the debris layer to prevent the insulating material from blowing away in a storm.

Tree-Pit Snow Shelter

If you are in a cold, snow-covered area where evergreen trees grow and you have a digging tool, you can make a tree-pit shelter.

To make this shelter:

- Find a tree with bushy branches that provides overhead cover.
- Dig out the snow around the tree trunk until you reach the depth and diameter you desire, or until you reach the ground.
- Pack the snow around the top and the inside of the hole to provide support.
- Find and cut other evergreen boughs. Place them over the top of the pit to give you additional overhead cover. Place evergreen boughs in the bottom of the pit for insulation.

Fire Building

This is another essential skill that you and your family will need to know in order to survive for any length of time.

Choosing a Spot: If you are in a wooded or brush-covered area, clear the brush and scrape the surface soil from the spot you have

selected. Clear a circle at least 1 meter in diameter so there is little chance of the fire spreading.

If time allows, construct a fire-wall using logs or rocks. Be sure not to use wet rock because they can explode when heated. This wall will help to reflector direct the heat where you want it. It will also reduce flying sparks and cut down on the amount of wind blowing into the fire. However, you will need enough wind to keep the fire burning.

Sources of Tinder: You need a supply of small twigs, leaves or dry grasses to keep the initial spark burning. Before light the fire, have a supply of twigs, small kindling (on inch in diameter short sticks) and larger logs ready to burn. You don't want your little fire going out while you are running around collecting wood to keep it going.

- Birch bark
- Shredded paper or cardboard
- Steel wool
- Cattail fibers
- Gauze bandages
- Finely shredded plastic or rubber
- Punk wood
- Bird nests
- Tobacco (cigarettes or cigars—not chewing tobacco)
- Dandelion heads
- Sanitizing wipes
- Dry grass, pine needles, or leaves

- Lint
- Animal dung
- Seed down
- Sawdust
- Cotton balls, tampons, or maxi pads
- Plastic bags
- Cigarette filters
- Pine bark
- Hair or fur
- Bird down
- Diapers
- Rope, string or twine (natural or synthetic)
- Dead Spanish moss
- Nearly anything flammable, such as kindling sized sticks, once covered with petroleum jelly, shoe polish, Chap Stick, paraffin wax, lard, pinesap, or any accelerant like gasoline can be used as tinder as well.

Building the Fire

There are several methods for building a fire, each of which has advantages. The situation you find yourself in will determine which fire to use.

Tepee

To make this fire, arrange the tinder and a few sticks of kindling in the shape of a tepee or cone. Light the center. As the tepee burns,

the outside logs will fall inward, feeding the fire. This type of fire burns well even with wet wood.

Lean-To

To lay this fire, push a green stick into the ground at a 30-degree angle. Point the end of the stick in the direction of the wind. Place some tinder deep under this lean-to stick. Lean pieces of kindling against the lean-to stick. Light the tinder. As the kindling catches fire from the tinder, add more kindling.

Cross-Ditch

To use this method, scratch a cross about 30 centimeters in size in the ground. Dig the cross 7.5 centimeters deep. Put a large wad of tinder in the middle of the cross. Build a kindling pyramid above the tinder. The shallow ditch allows air to sweep under the tinder to provide a draft.

Pyramid

To lay this fire, place two small logs or branches parallel on the ground. Place a solid layer of small logs across the parallel logs. Add three or four more layers of logs or branches, each layer smaller than and at a right angle to the layer below it. Make a starter fire on top of the pyramid. As the starter fire burns, it will ignite the logs below it. This gives you a fire that burns downward, requiring no attention during the night.

How to Make a Stone Oven to Cook With

YOU WILL NEED:

A small shovel

Gloves

A strong back and arms

Plenty of stones

At least two large flat stones at least 3-4 inches thick

BASIC CONSTRUCTION:

Step 1: Choose a safe location for a fire, away from trees and plants. Brush away any leaves, pine needles, or any other loose forest debris that may catch fire.

Step 2: Dig a small hole approximately one foot in diameter and about six inches deep. Save this soil off to the side, not far from your fire, for extinguishing your fire when needed.

Step 3: Collect stones of all sizes and bring them to your stone oven location. Avoid gathering stones from a river or any source of water because they may crack or explode after they heat up.

Step 4: Begin laying medium to large size stones in a half circle shape. You'll need to wrap the stones around to make a shape of a semi-circle. Shape your stone oven to have an opening large enough for you to be able to reach into with your bread but not so large an opening that your oven does not stay consistently hot. I measure about two hand lengths for my stone oven opening.

Step 5: When you have stacked stones about two hand lengths high, place the flattest stone (large) on top. Your side walls need to be thick enough to support this large flat stone and another that will go on top. Make adjustments as you go.

Step 6: Continue stacking small to medium stones to build a higher stone oven wall. You are now building the height of the area you will

bake in.

Step 7: Place your second large flat stone on top. This is your final and highest layer. Check to see that your oven space is high enough inside. If it is not, remove the large flat stone and build up your oven walls some more and try again.

Step 8: Fill any large holes in your stone oven by filling with small stones.

Step 9: Dig a small (very small) trench in the back of the stone oven so that air and smoke circulates.

Step 10: Build a small fire where you dug out the hole (underneath the bottom large flat stone) and give the stones time to heat up. Place your biscuits or flat bread on the stone inside and bake.

Some Additional Tips for Harmonious Camp Living

The best way to keep camp life peaceful is to make sure everyone knows the rules. For example:

- No one sleeps in. The first person to wake, wakes everyone else up. No one gets to be lazy. If you don't work, you don't eat.
- Everyone has a job to do to keep the fire going, gather firewood, gather water, preparing food, washing dishes *etc.*
- Don't sneak food or waste water.
- Keep the camp clean.

Other things to keep in mind:

- You should always have a pot of water boiling, for drinking, cooking or washing.

- If you have enough people in your group, make sure to take turns staying up to keep the fire going.
- No one should go anywhere alone. There is safety in numbers.

Chapter Six: First Aid

The First Aid Kit

This is the basic supply you want to have. It is a good idea for every adult to have a first aid kit in his or her 72-hour pack. Also, you can put one in your gym bag, in your car and in your area at work. It should include:

- 2 absorbent compress dressings (5 x 9 inches)
- 25 adhesive bandages (assorted sizes)
- 1 adhesive cloth tape (10 yards x 1 inch)
- 5 antibiotic ointment packets (approximately 1 gram)
- 5 antiseptic wipe packets.
- Small bottle of iodine or rubbing alcohol.
- 2 packets of aspirin (81 mg each)
- 1 emergency blanket (Now you have two.)
- 1 breathing barrier (with one-way valve)
- 1 Finger splint
- 1 instant cold compress
- 2 pair of no latex gloves (size: large)
- 2 hydrocortisone ointment packets (approximately 1 gram each)
- 1 roller bandage (3 inches wide)
- 1 roller bandage (4 inches wide)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (3 x 3 inches)
- 5 sterile gauze pads (4 x 4 inches)
- Oral thermometer (non-mercury/no glass)
- 2 triangular bandages
- Sterile plastic tubing
- Sterile needles, strong thread

- Tweezers and surgical scissors.
- Snake bite and bee sting kits
- Any prescription medications
- Travel size: Benadryl, Bayer Aspirin, aloe vera, sunscreen, hand sanitizer.
- Small box of tampons, sanitary napkins
- First aid instruction booklet

The First Aid Basics

CPR

There is no substitute for proper training. However, emergencies wait for no one. Every member of your family should be properly trained in CPR. Even children can learn it.

Infants (Under 1 Year of Age)

1. Try to wake the baby. Really small babies respond well to having the soles of their feet rubbed or tapped. For infants more than 2 months old, tap their shoulder or chest. In either case, call out his name in a loud voice. Don't hurt the baby but be aggressive; you're trying to wake him up. If someone is with you, have them call 911, if possible.

2. Check to see if they are breathing. If they aren't (or you aren't sure) go to step three.

3. Begin chest compressions Put two fingers on the breastbone directly between the baby's nipples. Push straight down about an inch and a half -- or about a third of the thickness of the baby's chest -- and then let the chest all the way back up. Do that 30 times, about twice per second.

4. Give the baby two breaths After pushing on the chest 30 times, cover the baby's entire mouth and nose with your mouth and *gently* blow until you see his or her chest rise - (chest, *not* their stomach). Let the air escape -- the chest will go back down -- and give one more breath. If no air goes in when you try to blow, adjust the baby's head (tilt the head back, allowing the throat to be exposed) and try again. If that doesn't work, then skip it and go back to chest compressions (step 3), you can try rescue breaths again after 30 more compressions.

5. Keep doing CPR and call 911 after 2 minutes If you are by yourself, keep doing CPR for 2 minutes (about 5 groups of compressions) before calling 911. If someone else is there or comes along as you are doing CPR, have that person call 911. Even if the baby wakes up, you need to call 911 any time you had to do CPR. Once 911 has been called or you have someone else calling, keep doing CPR. Don't stop until help arrives or the baby wakes up.

Children (1-8 Years Old)

1. Attempt to wake the child.

2. Lock your fingers together and place hands directly between the child's nipples to begin compressions. Compressions should be two inches deep.

3. When giving the breaths, tilt the head back-lifting the chin, cover the child's mouth and pinch the nose closed. Give two gentle breaths. Watch to see if the chest rises and falls, then give another breath.

4. If they do not start breathing, repeat compressions and breathing until they do. If the victim is breathing, briskly rub your

knuckles against the victim's sternum until they regain consciousness.

CPR for Adults (8 Years and Older)

1. Attempt to wake victim. If the victim is not breathing call 911 immediately and go to step 2. If someone else is there to help, one of you call 911 while the other moves on to step 2.

2. Begin chest compressions. If the victim is not breathing, place the heel of your hand in the middle of his chest. Put your other hand on top of the first with your fingers interlaced. Compress the chest at least 2 inches (4-5 cm). Allow the chest to completely recoil before the next compression. Compress the chest at a rate of at least 100 pushes per minute. Perform 30 compressions at this rate (should take you about 18 seconds).

3. It's normal to feel pops and snaps when you first begin chest compressions - DON'T STOP! You're not going to make the victim worse. Getting them breathing is the most important thing.

4. Begin rescue breathing. After 30 compressions, open the victim's airway using the head-tilt, chin-lift method. Pinch the victim's nose and make a seal over the victim's mouth with yours. Use a CPR mask if available. Give the victim a breath big enough to make the chest rise. Let the chest fall, then repeat the rescue breath once more. If the chest doesn't rise on the first breath, reposition the head and try again.

5. After 2 minutes of chest compressions and rescue breaths, stop compressions and recheck victim for breathing. If the victim is still not breathing, continue CPR starting with chest compressions.

6. Repeat the process, checking for breathing every 2 minutes (5 cycles or so), until help arrives. If the victim wakes up, you can stop CPR.

Preventing and Treating Hypothermia

Hypothermia ranges from mild chills and shivering to coma and death. Hypothermia is defined as a core body temperature of less than 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Hypothermia signs and symptoms include:

- shivering
- exhaustion
- confusion
- slurred speech
- memory loss
- fatigue
- loss of motor control (fumbling hands)

Some cold exposures are worse than others. Wet victims lose body heat much faster than dry victims. Windy conditions cause victims to lose heat very quickly as well. Know your environment and you'll be better able to treat hypothermia.

Steps to treat hypothermia:

1. Make sure the victim has an airway and is breathing.
2. *Stop the exposure.* Move the victim to warm, dry shelter.
3. Remove wet clothing - leave dry clothing on victim.

4. Wrap the victim with blankets. Warming blankets (like electric blankets) work the best.
5. Chemical heat packs can be used on the victim's groin, neck, and armpits.
6. Victims that are able to follow commands and sit upright may drink warm, non-alcoholic beverages.

You should know:

As hypothermia progresses, shivering stops in order for the body to conserve energy. A victim of hypothermia that has stopped shivering may be getting worse rather than better. Victims of cold exposure may also be suffering from frostbite.

Alcohol may feel like it warms the body, but that's because it flushes the skin with warm blood. Once the blood is at the surface of the skin, it is easily cooled. Alcohol speeds hypothermia. It can also cause dehydration.

As severely hypothermic victims begin to recover, cold blood from the extremities is pulled back to the core of the body. This can lead to a decrease in core body temperature and worsens the hypothermia. Watch hypothermia victims closely. They may suffer sudden cardiac arrest and require CPR.

Stopping Bleeding

Regardless how severe it may be, all bleeding can be controlled. If left uncontrolled, bleeding may lead to [shock](#) or even death. Most

bleeding can be stopped before the ambulance arrives at the scene. While you're performing the steps for controlling bleeding, you should also be calling for an ambulance to respond. Bleeding control is only part of the equation.

The first step in controlling a bleeding wound is to plug the hole. Blood needs to clot in order to start the healing process and stop the bleeding. Just like ice won't form on the rapids of a river, blood will not coagulate when it's flowing.

The best way to stop it is to...stop it. Put pressure directly on the wound. If you have some type of gauze, use it. Gauze pads hold the blood on the wound and help the components of the blood to stick together, promoting clotting. If you don't have gauze, terrycloth towels work almost as well.

If the gauze or towel soaks through with blood, add another layer. *Never* take off the gauze. Peeling blood soaked gauze off a wound removes vital clotting agents and encourages bleeding to resume.

If the bleeding is more severe, spurting or doesn't stop after a few minutes, consult the Emergency War Surgery Guide in the Survivor Family Library for continued steps to stop bleeding.

Treating Shock

Shock is essentially a decrease in blood flow to the brain and other important organs.

1. Make sure the victim is breathing. If not, begin CPR
2. Before any other treatments for shock are done, bleeding must be stopped.
3. If you do not suspect a neck injury, lay the victim on his or her back (supine) and elevate the legs. As a general rule, if the victim is pale faced, raise the legs above heart level. If the victim is red, raise the head.

If you suspect a neck injury, do not move the victim. Car and other vehicle accidents often lead to neck injuries. Neck injuries are also common in falls, especially falls from a height taller than the victim.

1. Keep the victim warm. Cover them with blankets and talk reassuringly to them. If they are conscious, try to keep them conscious. Try to get them to respond to you. If they do not, note how long it takes them to respond, or how long it has been since they have been unresponsive.
2. Continue to check on the victim. If the victim stops breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the victim vomits, roll the victim to one side and sweep the vomit from his or her mouth with your fingers.

Treating Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when heat exhaustion is left untreated and the victim's core body temperature continues to rise. Heat stroke is a severe emergency that can lead to coma, irreversible brain damage

and death. Learn to recognize heat stroke and treat the victim aggressively to prevent further injury.

- Signs and symptoms of heat stroke:

- Coma or confusion.

- Hot, flushed, dry skin

- Red, Swollen fingers, throbbing of heartbeat in fingers.

- Deep, rapid breathing sometimes sounds wheezy.

- Possibly Seizures.

Steps to treat Heat Stroke:

1. Assure that the victim has an airway and is breathing.

2. Move the victim to a cooler environment immediately. Shade is better than sun; air conditioning is better than outside, *etc.* The cooler, the better.

3. Remove the victim's clothing to encourage heat loss.

4. Put ice on the armpits, groin, and neck area. Cool the victim as aggressively as possible.

5. Strip the victim completely to facilitate cooling.

6. Cover the victim with a sheet soaked with water to cool the victim's body.

7. Use ice at the victim's armpits, neck, and groin.

8. DO NOT give the victim of heatstroke anything to drink.

Index

The Surviving Family Library: 10 Essential Books

1. Hawke's Green Beret Survival Manual
2. Emergency War Surgery: The Survivalist's Medical Desk Reference
3. Dressing & Cooking Wild Game: From Field to Table: Big Game, Small Game, Upland Birds & Waterfowl (The Complete Hunter)
4. Country Wisdom & Know-How: A Practical Guide to Living off the Land
5. The Dehydrator Bible: Includes over 400 Recipes
6. Homegrown Herbs: A Complete Guide to Growing, Using, and Enjoying More than 100 Herbs
7. Economic Food Storage Strategies for Disaster Survival: Start Today and Have Enough Food Your Family Will Eat to Survive Any Disaster without Going Broke
8. Field Guide to North American Edible Wild Plants
9. Prepper's Long-Term Survival Guide: Food, Shelter, Security, Off-the-Grid Power and More LifeSaving Strategies for Self-Sufficient Living
10. Cook Wild: Year-Round Cooking on an Open Fire

BASIC COMMUNICATION

MORSE CODE

Morse code is an alphabetic code of long and short sounds. Each letter in the alphabet has a corresponding sound or series of sounds unique to it. The long sounds are referred to as *dashes*, while the short sounds are *dots*. Varying lengths of silence denote spaces between letters or words.

American Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791-1872) invented the telegraph and this code in 1836. It was successfully tested on 24 May 1844, when Morse himself sent the first message between Washington DC and Baltimore.

The most well known Morse code phrase is **SOS** (save our souls). SOS was chosen because the code for it — three dots followed by three dashes followed by three dots — is unmistakable as anything else and recognizable even to those who do not know the code, and is important for everyone to know, in case of emergency.

A .-	N -.	0 -----
B -...	O ---	1 .----
C -.-.	P .-.-.	2 ..---
D -..	Q --.-	3 ...--

E .	R ..	4-
F ...	S ...	5
G --.	T -	6 -....
H	U ..-	7 --...
I ..	V-	8 ---..
J .---	W .--	9 ----.
K -.-	X -..-	Full stop
L ...	Y -.-
M --	Z --..	Comma

THE MILITARY ALPHABET

ALPHA

BETA

CHARLIE

DELTA

ECHO

FOXTROT

GOLF

HOTEL

INDIA

JULIET

KILO

LIMA

MIKE

NOVEMBER

OCTOBER

PAPA

QUEBEC

ROMEO

SIERRA

TANGO

UNIFORM

VICTOR

WHISKEY

X-RAY

YANKEE
ZULU

Prepper's Pantry: A Food Survival Guide

Introduction

Preparing for a sudden economic downturn is something that has gotten a lot of mainstream media attention in the last few years. With the popularity of the television show “Doomsday Preppers,” people who were not at all involved in the “prepper” lifestyle are suddenly interested in developing a stockpile of necessities for that “just in case” day that preppers talk about.

What is a “prepper”? Simply put, it's one who prepares for the possibility that the world may catastrophically change at some point in our future, leaving food supplies, fuel supplies, and our current lifestyles drastically changed. Those reasons for change could be local, regional, or even on a worldwide scale.

Before the availability of long distance trucking, and even international shipping, of fresh meats and produce, most people “prepped,” to some degree. Most likely, your grandparents had a garden, and canned or otherwise preserved the food they grew and harvested throughout the summer, so that they would have food for the coming winter. They may have even had a cow and a pig or two, and butchered regularly, either freezing or canning the meat to add to their winter stores. If you read the “Little House On The Prairie” books when you were younger, you were introduced to the prepper

lifestyle; in those days, preparing for the winter was a matter of necessity. Without the proper supplies in place, families would die of starvation.

Modern supermarkets have made the need to do this kind of yearly prepping all but disappear. Almost any type of fruit or vegetable is available year round, if you're willing to either pay a high enough price for it, or buy it already canned or frozen. Modern meat packing plants butcher cows and pigs daily, with the animals being brought to feedlots a few weeks before slaughter, to pack on pounds and insure that you can buy bacon whenever you're in the mood for it. Modern food preservation methods mean that food can sit on store and home shelves for months, even years, without going bad. Truthfully, it's easier, and often cheaper, to buy your produce already canned, than it is to grow a garden and preserve it yourself. So much easier, in fact, that home food preservation is rapidly becoming a lost art.

Many people with the prepper mindset have developed a balance between preserving fresh food at home, and the use of supermarkets or wholesale clubs to enhance their personal stores. The methods of preparing that work best for you will depend on many factors such as your budget, the availability of certain tools and kitchen appliances, space, and your personal reasons for prepping.

Preppers stockpile food for a variety of reasons. Some people, much like our grandparents, stockpile food because their work is seasonal. Maybe the primary wage earner is a construction worker, who doesn't work much in the winter. Some people prepare because they are contract employees, and they know that they may not have a contract at any given point. Having three or six months' worth of food on hand is one less expense they will have to worry about while job hunting. They may be preparing for an economic downturn, or simply taking advantage of sale prices. Finally, they may be preparing for TEOTWAWKI, or The End Of The World As We Know It.

The TEOTWAWKI scenario is one that has been gaining ground in recent years. There are many reasons people think that humanity will undergo a catastrophic change in the coming years. Peak oil, the theory that we have drilled the most oil we will ever get, and that available supplies will slowly dwindle to extinction, is an often-cited fear. Climate change or catastrophic weather event are also near the top of the list of reasons why people prep. There are people afraid of a shadow government or New World Order, and there are some people concerned about a biblical Armageddon.

The reasons why you prep really don't matter. What matters is how long you're prepping for, and the means you go about doing it. This guide will show you how to determine your food needs, no matter how long you will be prepping for, and will discuss various methods of obtaining and storing food stockpiles.

Chapter One: Determining Your Food Preparation Needs

Determining your food preparation needs can be dependent upon many factors. The two most important factors are length of time you're preparing for, and how many people you will need to feed with the food that you stockpile. People prepping for seasonal job loss may be prepping for three or six months. A "Doomsday Prepper" may be prepping for years.

Another major determining factor in building your food stockpile is space. You need to determine if you've got enough protected storage space for the food that you want and need to store. This storage space can be inside your house, in your garage, or in secure outbuildings. Make sure you can protect your food storage from animals of all types, and from wet, freezing, or humid conditions. Below are different suggestions for storage

Glass – Ideal for most foods, glass can take the form of jars of water bath or pressure canned foods, vacuum-sealed storage containers, or containers with screwed on lids. Glass also works very well for freezing soups, broths, and foods not appropriate for canning, if you have the space in your freezer. Cost can be considerable. A water bath canner can run you \$40-\$60, and canning jars can cost up to \$10/dozen if bought new. The explosion in popularity of Mason jar crafts has made it difficult to find used canning jars for a reasonable price. However, if you take careful care of your jars, you won't need to buy many more with subsequent canning seasons. Expect to pay

between \$100 and \$200 for a good quality pressure canner. Glass does a good job of keeping out smaller pests like bugs and mice, but the breakable jars can result in food loss if they are knocked over.

Plastic jars – The great thing about plastic jars is that they can usually be found or scrounged for free. The peanut butter and mayonnaise that you're probably already buying comes in them, and your friends, family and neighbors may be willing to save their own for you. Craigslist or freecycle are also great sources. Plastic jars can hold dehydrated foods as long as you're storing them in dark pantries or cabinets. They're also good for longer-term storage of dried herbs and spices. Generally, you can also use them for freezing, too. Try to find BPA free plastic. The cost here is minimal, since you're mainly going to be using jars you already own. Plastic storage systems can be purchased, but avoid those with square tops, and those that can be purchased at dollar stores, if you want to use them for freezing. Plastic jars will keep out bugs, but not mice. If you only use these jars for freezing, then you will have less overall food loss.

Plastic bags – While these aren't great for long-term storage (unless you're also going to be putting the filled plastic bags into larger hard plastic containers), they are just fine for short-term storage, and the freezer bags are fine for freezing smaller cuts of meat. Just don't thaw in the microwave or reheat inside the bags. Just a few dollars a week will keep you supplied with plastic bags. If you're storing in plastic bags, it's a good idea to rotate your food

stock into fresh bags every six months or so. Plastic breaks down over time, giving your food items less protection.

Vacuum bags – Vacuum systems are ideal for long-term storage of many items. They are great for long-term storage of dehydrated foods, and keep any frozen food fresher, for longer. Vacuum storage also works well for matches, first aid kits, and paper goods for your bug out bags, as the vacuum bags will keep them dry while they sit in storage waiting to be used, or if you need to bug out in the rain. A vacuum system can cost up to \$200, and the bags aren't very cheap either, but used efficiently, they are definitely worth the financial investment.

Most households will find themselves using a combination of these methods, depending on the types and sources of foods they are stockpiling. In addition to the costs above, if you're thinking of purchasing a dehydrator, you can get a basic one for around \$50, at your local discount store or online, while the top of the line Excalibur dehydrator is about \$300. If you're going to have a garden and dry your own produce from there, the Excalibur is definitely a better choice. If you are looking to make the best use of sale prices or warehouse club stock-ups, then you can go with a smaller model. Dehydrating and canning are both time consuming, and can be fairly labor intensive, but in terms of ability to preserve the most food, and keeping your own personal costs down while retaining the best quality possible, these are definitely the methods to go for.

Both dehydrating and canning also offer the added bonus of being able to put together “convenience foods.” These meals are often cooked in one pot, and cook up fairly quickly, so you don’t have to be busy in the kitchen for hours. This is an important consideration if both parents work, or if, during a TEOTWAWKI situation, both adults would need to be engaged in manual labor that would take them out of the kitchen. By the time you come in from what you’re doing, you’re tired and hungry, and the less you have to wait for food to cook, the better. Dehydrated meals often take less time to reheat, but they are better than nothing.

Now that you’ve been introduced to basic methods of food preservation, it’s time to figure out how to determine your household’s needs for a specific time frame. Keeping these methods in mind, you’ll need to determine how much storage space that you have. For a family of two, a set of shelves stashed in a corner and a bit of freezer space could easily store three months worth of food. A family of six that wants to stockpile a years’ worth of food is going to need much more room.

There is no hard and fast formula for determining how much space your stockpile will take up. That’s dependent upon many factors. For example, dehydrated carrots take up much less space than canned carrots. However, if you’re storing primarily dehydrated food, you’ll need to store more water than the basic recommendations of one gallon per person, per day, or have access to a clean, steady water supply. If you’re storing canned carrots, you can use the packaging

fluid, which is mostly water, as a base for cooking rice, potatoes, or rehydrating some other type of dried food.

You also want to make sure that your stockpile contains food that can actually be made into meals. It's great to have several flats of vegetables, cases of pasta and 18 gallons of water. But without some type of sauce or seasoning, you may not be very happy with your food choices. Children certainly wouldn't want to eat the meal you could come up with, with those ingredients.

So as you're building your stockpile, you'll need to actually plan what meals you can make with those ingredients, and how you can best preserve or obtain the foods needed to fill in the holes on your meal plan. If you're doing any of your prepping by buying items on sale at your grocery store, it can be particularly easy to fall into this trap. But if you think creatively and out of the box, you can make more healthy, structured meals that will feed your family.

If you're looking at this week's store sale ad and you notice that green chiles are on sale, then you can buy a bushel of roasted green chiles, and make green chili to be canned. For that you'll need pork, some chicken broth, and perhaps some tomatoes. Well, last week, chicken was on sale, so if you stocked up on that, you have plenty available to put into a pot and make broth with, also yielding you several pounds of cooked chicken for additional meals. Also in this week's sale ad are pork ribs. While ribs aren't the traditional cut that

green chili is made with, there's no rule that says you can't use them. That green chili will make an excellent topping for burritos or is great in a bowl by itself.

So here's what you have determined from looking at this week's sale ad:

- Green chiles are on sale, so green chili can be made and canned
- Pork Ribs are on sale, so they can be the meat in the green chili
- Pork Ribs are on sale, so canning some meat from them will yield some very tender pork that could be added to BBQ sauce and served on sandwiches or over mashed potatoes

- Chickens were on sale last week, so chicken broth can be made. The resulting chicken meat can be frozen and used for casseroles or as filling for the burritos that the green chili will smother.

For the burritos, you'll also need to buy beans, and the ingredients to make tortillas (flour, baking soda, lard, salt), and, if you're sure you'll have power to keep your freezer running during whatever event you're stockpiling for, some cheese to go on the burritos. Add some rice and vegetables to the smothered burritos and you've got a great meal.

So with the purchase of a bushel of green chiles and several pounds of pork ribs and chicken, you've already got some key ingredients for several meals. Now that you've made some initial plans, you can sit down and do some planning.

As you're planning your stockpile, the most important factor to keep in mind is food fatigue. Using the scenario above, you could make enough green chili to feed your family for several days. But if you've ever given the side eye to the turkey that's been the mainstay of every meal for the last four days after Thanksgiving, you can understand the issue of food fatigue. This becomes even more critical in TEOTWAWKI situations because people are often performing tasks they are unfamiliar with, and doing more manual labor than they were used to, and every single calorie that is consumed is important, because each calorie is being used, rather than sitting there doing nothing but becoming fat. If you are sick of the food that's being served to you, you won't eat it. Your body won't let you. It's not a matter of convincing yourself that you need to eat. Your body will trigger responses such as nausea that will prevent you from being able to eat the food, and you will go without those much-needed calories. It's extremely important that you plan to have as wide a variety as possible of food available for your family in these extreme situations.

It's a good idea to build your stockpile a week at a time. This way, crucial ingredients aren't lost in the shuffle. You keep your mind on your purpose and can make sure that things are done efficiently. It may take you three or four weeks' worth of shopping to build a week's worth of stockpile, if you are doing most of your stockpiling from the grocery or warehouse store. If you are doing part of your stockpile from a garden or from butchering your own meat, planning

this way still gives you a good idea of what you do need to buy at the store, so that you can fill in any holes as certain foods go on sale.

As you can see, just from this week's sale ad, you've got two meals planned, with notes about what you still need to obtain. Because you're familiar with different types of food preservation methods, you can note what methods you want to use for different items. How much of these items to buy and keep stocked, or preserved, will be determined from this list.

It's important to note that by using a list like this, you're giving yourself ideas. Things may happen that prevent you from using the list in its entirety. But a list like this is a starting point-somewhere for you to start making your plans. You can make other tables like the one above for different weeks. Look at how many quarts or pints of green chili you got canned, determine how many you want to keep for non stockpile use, and then go through your stockpile meal plans and add in either smothered burritos or a bowl of green chili every few weeks until you would have gone through the stock that you made.

To fill in the rest of the meal plan, you'll want to determine your garden plans, if you have space and time to garden, and look at the sale ads and determine what would be cheaper to buy at the

warehouse store, if you have space. So maybe next week you add a spaghetti dinner, because pasta and sauce are on sale. If you can afford to, buy enough pasta and sauce for several weeks, and fill in those weeks as you need them. Remember that when you bought beans for the burritos, you bought a large bag. You can plan a meal with beans and canned ham, or use beans as a side to a chicken casserole. Try to find and print new recipes to add to the versatility of the foods that you are stockpiling.

Above all, and especially if you have children, buy food that you are familiar with. If your goal is to supplement your food stores with items like rice and beans, that store well for years, make sure that you introduce these foods to your family before they become a necessity. It's great to have 12 quarts of green chili ready to go in an emergency, but if your kids have never eaten it, you may find mealtime to be a battle, and that's one thing you won't have time for if you're in a TEOTWAWKI situation! If you're relying on either home-canned or store bought canned meats to be an important part of your stockpile, make a meal with these once a month or more, so that your family can get used to the texture and flavor of these foods. The same goes with any foods that you are planning on using in a different form than you usually do. Canned spinach tastes vastly different than fresh, which tastes vastly different than frozen.

As you're making your plans, take special note of quantities. If there's only one or two in your household, then you don't need to plan meals that will feed six, unless you're planning on inviting people with marketable skills to join you and create a compound of sorts for a TEOTWAWKI situation. But also remember that you may need more calories in that type of situation. Further, we tend to want to consume more calories in winter than summer, and if you will no longer have access to a gym or somewhere out of the elements to work out, that could be an issue, if you're not the one doing manual labor. Also remember that a pound of dehydrated food does not equal a pound of fresh, and that a pint of soup is pretty close to the condensed soups that you see in the store, but that you won't need to add water.

You should also remember that if you are in a TEOTWAWKI situation, your very survival depends on the quality of the food you are consuming. This is where you need to balance the so very important need to buy food that you are familiar with, and the need to make sure that each calorie you consume is one that your body can use as fuel. In other words, don't plan boxed macaroni and cheese too often, even though your kids love it and it's something you're certain they will eat. Make sure that they are getting plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains now so they are used to it when they are essential. If you're going to be hunting for your meat, make sure everyone in your family knows what venison and wild game tastes like so they aren't surprised when that may be the only protein you have access to. Make whole grain breads part of your meal plans

now, so that when you're relying on them to fill hungry bellies, the kids will enjoy their flavor and texture rather than find them new and intimidating.

This is why, what you're preparing for is of huge importance for what you prep. While it should always be a goal to serve the healthiest meals possible, boxed macaroni and cheese is quick and easy for many families and its okay to indulge once in awhile. If you're not preparing for a TEOTWAWKI situation, it may be something that you want to add to your food stockpile when it's on sale. If you're planning for a time when the primary income earner will be seasonally laid off, you need to remember to include that person for lunch, especially if that's something you don't normally do because they are at work.

You also have to decide, especially if you're planning for a large group, just how strict you should be with serving sizes. Nutritional guidelines state that a moderately active 28-year-old woman should have 2,000 calories per day, and a moderately active 28-year-old man should have 2600 calories per day. Your goal should be to make sure as many of those calories as possible come from vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, but you must also make the decision as to whether or not you are going to allow extra servings. Is the 28-year-old man extra hungry today because he did more physical labor? Will an extra slice of bread take him over the

2600 calories you planned for him to consume today, and is that going to leave you short of the allotted food for the week or the month? Will you take the time to measure out each serving of food to make sure that each person only gets an exact amount of food? If you're able to, you should try to plan at least 10% more calories, per day, than those guidelines suggest. If you have extras, they can either be consumed as leftovers, fed to farm animals, or used as bait when hunting. Again, there's a fine line between extras and waste, and if you're in a position where you need to stockpile food for any reason, you should plan to avoid waste as often as possible.

If you're stockpiling for a poverty situation, you will probably be able to save leftovers, and should plan to use them for later lunches or as parts of different meals. A beef roast makes great soup or beef stroganoff later in the week. But if you're prepping for a TEOTWAWKI situation, you won't be able to refrigerate those leftovers, and storing them in a root cellar could lead to pest infestation. In that case, you could can the leftovers, over an open fire, or on a woodstove, you could feed a neighbor, or you could use the leftovers for animal feed or bait. When prepping for a TEOTWAWKI situation, you may find it useful to cut meats into smaller portions or can most of it ahead of time to reduce your waste later on.

Chapter Two: How to obtain the food you'll need

Determining what is best to buy, where, is one of the most complex issues when you're prepping for long-term food storage.

Supermarket, warehouse clubs, and farmer's markets are great choice for food you can't grow yourself-or grow enough of for long-term preps. Growing your own offers other advantages as well.

Supermarkets offer a few distinct advantages over warehouse stores when it comes to long term food stockpiling: size of the units, store brands, and coupons. When you're looking at canned condensed soup, it's easier to store smaller cans than the larger ones available at the warehouse stores. Something like condensed soup can't be easily repackaged if you can't use the entire container quickly, and it can be difficult to carry a large number ten can through your house if you're weaving around small children and newborn puppies. Store brands often carry a substantial savings per unit, even when compared to warehouse club prices. And coupons are an amazing tool, giving you the ability to stock up on name brand products at rock bottom prices.

Shopping at a supermarket also brings with it a definite set of challenges. First off, you may be limited in what quantities you can buy. Many stores limit quantities to make sure they don't run out of a specific item. On the other side of that coin, a store may be out of an item you want to buy.

Despite the bad side of supermarket shopping, the unit sizes are definitely a plus when it comes to many items, especially if you won't be feeding an army. The supermarket gives you the opportunity to buy in the sizes you need rather than the food service sizes that are often what's available at warehouse clubs. If canned soups, fruits, and vegetables are part of your preparations, it's a good idea to buy them at your supermarket. You can even buy single servings of many of these items, which are ideal if there are just a couple of people in your household, although they are more expensive in the long run.

If your budget is tight, supermarket store brands often offer the best deal in the smaller sizes, on a regular basis. In other words, supermarket store brands don't often go on sale, but when you need something to fill out your stockpile, and you can't wait for it to be on sale, buying the store brand is usually the way to go, especially with the basics like canned soups, tomato products, and fruits. There is usually very little difference in the quality of these canned items when compared to the name brands. Supermarket store brands are also the best way to stock up on baking staples like sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt. While the name brands of these items go on sale, they don't do so very often, and without careful watching and coupon gathering, the store brands are still a better deal.

Of course, coupon shopping is often the best way to get the most bang for your buck. Paired with in store sales, manufacturer's coupons can be a great way to bring down prices on your favorite name brand items, and using them can quickly grow your stockpile. However, coupons take time to clip and organize, and coupon shopping can be frustrating if your item is out of stock or difficult to locate. If you have time, though, by matching coupons with store sales you can see prices that are up to 75% off of the regular price. That's a pretty significant savings, and a great way to build your stockpile.

Fresh produce can also be a good purchase at your supermarket, if several factors fall into place:

- You can't grow the produce yourself
- You can't get the produce locally at a Farmer's Market
- The produce is on sale for cheaper than you could get it at the warehouse club, if you have a membership
- You have the means to preserve the produce

Many fruits and vegetables may meet all of these criteria, depending on where you live. If you can afford to buy organic fruits and vegetables, chances are, you're going to find them for a more reasonable price at the supermarket than at the Farmer's Market, although if you are buying in bulk, you may be able to negotiate for a better price at the Farmer's Market. Organic produce doesn't go on

sale as often as non-organic, so if you have the time to process fifty pounds of potatoes or tomatoes, try the Farmer's Market instead of the supermarket. If you're buying at the Farmer's Market, chances are the produce was still on the plant or in the ground twelve hours before you bought it. The same cannot be said of most supermarket produce, even when it's organic and local.

Of course, not everyone can afford to buy organic. It's okay if your food choices can't go that route. By stockpiling, you may find that you're able to switch to buying organic over time. When you're not buying organic, you may find that the supermarket is a great resource for adding fresh produce, that you process at home, to your stockpile.

Walking into a warehouse club for the first time can be an overwhelming experience. Some clubs are larger than entire malls, and within their walls are literally almost everything you'll ever need, from birth to death. From diapers to caskets, you can find, or order, almost anything at a warehouse club.

There are a lot of good buys here, especially if you're shopping for a family or large group. However, when shopping at a warehouse club, you need two things: space to store your stockpile, and the time to repackage a good deal of what you buy.

Produce can be a great deal at warehouse clubs, if you have the ability to preserve what you buy, or you will use it before it goes bad. Prices are often very reasonable, but the produce is rarely local. However, you can get out-of-season produce for a much better price than you can at the supermarket, as long as you are prepared to buy in larger quantities.

Warehouse clubs are also the best place to buy important pantry items like rice, beans, most cooking oils, and coffee. This is also where you want to purchase your stocks of prepackaged items like granola bars, and breakfast cereals. And because warehouse clubs market to restaurants, this is a great place to stock up on single serving packets of items that would require refrigeration after opening, like mayonnaise. Paper goods, including storage bags, are also often a good deal at warehouse clubs.

In most regions, with good soil and inexpensive water, growing your own fruits and vegetables is by far the least expensive way to stockpile food for the long term. Even if you have limited space, you can use alternate growing methods to improve the quality of food you're able to provide for your family and yourself.

Growing your own food doesn't have to mean selling your home and moving out to the country. Even suburban and urban homes can grow at least some of their food. Container gardening, vertical

gardening, and putting chickens in your back yard or apartment rooftop can be viable ways to grow at least some of your own food without having much land to call your own.

Chapter Three: The List - The best methods for obtaining the foods you need to build your stockpile

This list will primarily focus on whole, basic foods. Obviously, if you're including prepared food in your preps, you're buying those at the best price you can find, straight off of store shelves. Determining the best methods for stocking up on whole foods can be a bit more difficult. This list is a guide to help you determine which methods are right for you.

When you're doing your shopping, you need to choose simple, utility type foods. You may have a favorite source for your cinnamon or a favorite variety of heirloom tomato. While these are tasty, in a poverty or TEOTWAWKI situation, you want simple and hardy-and your budget may dictate what you can buy. When choosing your foods and/or seeds, choose varieties that will store well, and that don't need special growing environments or extra attention. You may be doing extra work, and while gardening will have an entirely new meaning when it needs to yield enough food for your family for a year, your time there may still be limited.

The produce aisle – Clearly, growing your own is the best way to go here. However, not everyone has the space, or the time to process the food for long-term storage.

Potatoes - These dehydrate well, and store well through the winter, without processing, in the right conditions. Buy instant potato flakes for mashed potatoes or to bulk up bread recipes, and boxed potatoes for different flavors. Dehydrated potatoes go well in soups and stews.

Onions - These dehydrate well and store well through the winter. They can also be diced and then frozen, but are stringy and limp when thawed so make sure your dices are fairly small. Do not buy pre-frozen.

Lettuces - Most lettuces do not store well. Spinach, diced and frozen, makes a good addition to soups and sauces, but won't be good plain.

Celery - Celery both dehydrates and freezes well.

Carrots - Dehydrate, can or freeze. If you can't grow your own, you'll get the most bang for your buck by buying canned.

Green Beans - Freeze or can. If you can't grow your own, buy canned.

Yams or sweet potatoes - DO NOT CAN. Your best bet here is to buy canned.

Corn - Freeze, can, or dehydrate. If you have a wheat grinder, dehydrate plenty of corn for corn meal.

Melons - Pickle or dehydrate for a sweet treat.

Peppers - Dice and Freeze or dehydrate. The flavor and heat intensity will increase with freezing.

Cucumbers - Pickle

Cabbage - Ferment

Berries - Freeze, dehydrate, or can. These can best as jams, jellies or syrups.

Bananas - Dehydrate, or freeze in pre-measured amounts for recipes such as banana bread.

Squash - Many squashes cannot be canned due to their density. Freezing is best for most squash, and pumpkin is much easier to buy in a can at the supermarket.

Peaches - Can or Freeze

Apricots - Can or Freeze

Cherries - Can or freeze

Tomatoes - Can, freeze or dehydrate. Again, with tomatoes, you'll save time and frustration by buying already canned products at the supermarket. Skinning alone takes hours of time for large batches of tomatoes.

Apples - Can, freeze or dehydrate; can also be fermented for cider, although this takes up a lot of space.

Pears - Can, freeze or dehydrate.

Citrus - Can juice in ½ pint containers, and dehydrate zest.

Broccoli - Freeze or dehydrate.

Cauliflower - Freeze.

Beans (other than green beans) - Don't produce much when grown for the space they require, buy dry and prepare from that state, or can. Do not can refried beans.

Peas - Shell, then dehydrate or can.

Grapes - Freeze, dehydrate, or can as juice, jam or jelly. Can also be used for wine, which would be great for barter in a TEOTWAWKI situation.

Garlic - Dehydrate. Do not can or infuse in oil, as garlic is very susceptible to botulism.

The Baking Aisle – Most of the products we bake with are not far removed from their whole sources. Using whole-wheat flour takes practice and finesse. Begin experimenting with whole grains as you're building your stockpile, as whole-wheat flour tastes different, and bakes different, than store bought enriched white flour. An essential purchase for a TEOTWAWKI situation is a hand crank grain mill. This will allow you to grow or store whole grains and grind them into flour when you need them. Flours go rancid quicker than their whole grain counterparts, so it's better to store the whole grains than flour, especially if you're planning for a scenario where there is no power, or limited power, to keep things cool. Keeping things dry is also very important. You don't want those whole grains getting moldy. It can often be difficult to spot on whole grains, and ergot poisoning can have long-term catastrophic effects. Ergotism is believed to be the cause of the mass hysteria and physical symptoms that led to the Salem witch trials.

Sugar - Buy 25-pound bags, and repackage into gallon or quart zip type bags, double bagging for security. Pack those into a 5-gallon bucket with Diatomaceous Earth.

Flours - Buy 25-pound bags, and repackage into gallon or quart zip type bags, double bagging for security. Pack those into a 5-gallon bucket with Diatomaceous Earth. It's better, however, to buy and store whole grains, grinding either as you need them or for a week at a time.

Whole Grains - Buy 25 or 50 pound bags, and repackage into gallon or quart zip type bags, double bagging for security. Pack those into a 5-gallon bucket with Diatomaceous Earth.

Oils, lard, shortening - Buy shelf stable oils and solid fats that are long lasting and better for you. Stick with corn, olive, lard and coconut. Oils will go rancid, so store them in an environment that is as cool as possible, such as a root cellar or basement. Once the containers are opened, move them into a dryer area, and keep them as cool as possible.

Spices - Buy only what you can use in a year, as most herbs and spices will lose their flavor in that time, although they can safely sit on a shelf for five years. Even if on a small scale, plan for an herb garden and to grow basics like onions and garlic. It's amazing what some flavor will do for an appetite in a TEOTWAWKI situation.

Salt - Buy plenty, and keep it dry.

Baking powder - Buy plenty, and keep it dry. You'll be using this for bread rising once your yeast dies.

Yeast - Freeze for longer life.

Baking soda - Buy plenty, then buy some more. Baking soda has a myriad of uses besides baking, and you'll want plenty on hand. To keep dry, store in original packaging, then zip type bags, in 5 gallon buckets with diatomaceous earth.

Cornstarch - Like baking soda, buy plenty, then buy some more. Cornstarch is an excellent skin remedy for chafing and heat rash, and since you'll be doing more manual labor, it's excellent to keep on hand for those ailments.

Baking mixes - Baking mixes have some of the highest mark ups in the grocery business. Learning how to make your own saves you money, but is often time consuming. Also, the raw ingredients may not last as long as the baking mix when they are sitting on your shelf because your raw ingredients have no preservatives. While products with no preservatives are better for you in the long run, it shortens the amount of time you can safely store these products. If you're storing for a situation where your income would be reduced, find recipes online for your favorite baking mixes and use the money you'll save on other items. If you're stockpiling for a TEOTWAWKI situation, you'll want to make baking mixes a part of your preps.

Chocolate Chips and other silly baking additions - These are very necessary stock ups. Food fatigue is a very real issue in survival type situations, and our bodies may actually give us

negative reactions such as nausea to a food we've been eating a lot of, which can be deadly in a survival type situation. Being able to add chocolate chips to pancakes or butterscotch chips to farina cereal can change the flavor of the food so that the body is less likely to reject it. So while these may be silly or non-essential items, you should have some on hand. They are also great for barter. Store them in the freezer while you can, and then the coolest environment you can find, double bagged, in 5 gallon buckets with diatomaceous earth.

The Dairy Aisle - Buying a cow is a great idea-in theory. In reality, a single cow takes at least eleven acres of quality grass to feed. If you don't have eleven acres, you're buying expensive hay, in addition to water, medications, and vet care for the cow. While it is a worthy investment if you have the space, make sure you do research on different breeds to determine which types are beneficial to your needs, and that you will have access to a bull during breeding season.

Milk - Buy powdered, and vanilla extract. It will never taste the same, but it will at least be drinkable with the addition of the vanilla. Powdered milk also works fine for baking and cooking, except for making pudding and gravy. Milk does freeze very well if you pour a cup or so out of the container prior to freezing, but it's impossible to store in large quantities.

Butter - Freeze, then keep as cool as possible. You may see information online regarding canning butter or ghee, but this cannot be safely done at home. You can buy commercially canned butter.

Margarine - Skip it if you can. Sticks freeze well, but you're better off buying butter, which will give better results when thawed. At half the price of butter it is a tempting addition to your stockpile, but it has no nutritional or long-term storage merit.

Eggs - Scramble, mix with a pinch of salt per egg, and freeze. Use ice cube trays for single eggs, small plastic containers for batches of three eggs for baking, and plastic zip type bags for large batches for cooking breakfast. Once the smaller measures are frozen solid, remove from containers and bag. While you may see information online regarding dehydrating eggs, it's not something that can be safely done at home. You can buy freeze-dried eggs online, which are much better for longer shelf life, but are rather expensive. Buying chickens is a viable option for many; an increasing number of municipalities are legalizing back yard chickens, making it possible for almost anyone to have fresh eggs. However, if you're planning on having chickens for the long term, you will need a rooster, and plenty of room for them to graze, unless you're also going to stockpile chicken feed. You'll also need space to allow them to brood, as established flocks will often peck chicks to death. Consider building chicken tractors to keep them somewhat free ranging but still protecting them from predators.

Sour cream - Does not store well, long term, in any form. You can buy powdered sour cream.

Buttermilk - The fats separate when frozen. You can buy frozen buttermilk, which works well for baking.

Cream cheese - It can be frozen, but loses the consistency for using raw. Works well in recipes that call for it to be fully cooked.

Cottage cheese - Does not store well, long term, in any form.

Hard cheeses - Hard cheeses freeze well, although frozen cheese is best cooked or melted rather than served raw. Grate, then freeze, as the cheese gets crumbly when frozen so it will not handle well if frozen in a block or in slices. American cheese does not freeze well. Velveeta, cheese whiz, and other types of processed cheeses are shelf stable for years.

Meats - Raising your own meat is a great goal, but something that requires good breeding stock, and a lot of land. In the long run, it may be cheaper to can or otherwise preserve your meat rather than trying to grow it, especially if you're living on a small homestead.

Chicken - Roast, strip the meat, then boil the carcass to make a broth. Can with the meat for bases for soups and stews; can without the meat for chicken broth to add to other recipes. You can buy canned chicken for use in recipes such as casseroles where you don't necessarily need the broth.

Beef Steak - Stick to cheaper cuts of steak like sirloin or round, and use for jerky. These steaks freeze well and often go on sale for reasonable prices.

Beef Stew Meat - With oxtail or other bones, make broth without any thickeners, and can for base for soups and stews. Only buy on sale, as meat sold as stew meat is often highly marked up.

Ground Beef - Cook as usual, with no seasoning, drain off all fat and rinse, then can. Buy the leanest ground beef you can find for long-term storage, because you need to have as little fat as possible in the product that you can. The more fat that is in a product, the quicker it will go rancid, even when properly canned. It is important

that any meats you process in this manner are skimmed of as much fat as possible.

Beef Brisket or Roast - Cook in crockpot, can with resulting broth for base for meat and gravy meals, stroganoff, or soups. Brisket is normally priced at half the price of roast, and often goes on sale around Memorial Day. While not as tender as roast, it is a suitable substitute for many meals when slow cooked. This is not corned beef brisket, which can also be slow cooked and canned.

Pork Roast - Cook in crockpot, can with resulting broth for base for meat and gravy meals, or soups. Pork roast often goes on sale in early May and makes a rich, flavorful broth.

Pork Ribs - Cook in crockpot, can with resulting broth for base for meat and gravy meals, or soups like green chili. Ribs are higher in fat than many pork cuts and while they are often inexpensive cuts, they should not be your first choice for canning unless absolutely necessary.

Ham - Buy canned. Whole hams freeze well but modern smoking methods do not allow for preservation outside of freezing. Smoking is one of the least reliable ways of meat preservation.

Bacon - Freeze. Due to the high fat content, bacon is not suitable for canning.

Fish - Buy canned tuna, albacore and salmon. Salmon cans well but many other fish varieties end up very mushy when home canned. Freezes well.

Lamb - Freeze, or can.

Venison - Freeze, or can like beef. If you live rurally or even in the suburbs, hunting will be a great way to increase your protein consumption in a TEOTWAWKI scenario. It's a good idea to build a hoist mechanism that will hold enough weight for you to skin out an elk, if they are anywhere near your area. While you can have several days of fresh meat from a kill, you can, can the remainder over an open fire if need be, for long-term food preservation even while in the TEOTWAWKI scenario. This way none of your catch is going to waste.

Pork-based sausages - Freeze. Due to their high fat content, pork-based sausages are not suitable for canning. For long-term storage, grind your meat as for sausage, but without adding the fat. Can as you would ground beef. When serving, season with appropriate spices and serve as sausage gravy, crumbles in a casserole, or as Italian sausage in pasta sauce.

Staples

Rice - Buy in 25 or 50-pound bags, double bag in zip type bags, and store in 5 gallon buckets with diatomaceous earth. Also consider buying flavored rices to break up the monotony of your diet.

Coffee - Absolutely essential, both as a prep and as a barter item. Calculate how much you drink in a year, then purchase triple that. You'll have two years' worth of coffee and another year's worth to barter with.

Peanut Butter - Buy plenty, in 16 ounce jars.

Jelly - Buy or make plenty, in 16 ounce jars.

Honey - You cannot stockpile too much honey. It's a versatile sweetener, and works well to dress wounds.

Miscellaneous

Juices - These take up a lot of space in your stores, but can be a valuable source of needed liquids. If you have the room, stock enough for a gallon per week per four people.

Alcohol - In stressful situations, some people drink to help relieve stress. Alcohol can also be used to calm down someone who is

upset, as a sedative, or to clean out a wound. You certainly don't want someone who is used to having a few drinks after work coming off alcohol cold turkey, either. Alcohol's most useful property, however, is as a barter tool. People will perceive it as a need. If you have it, you can use it to obtain something you need.

Soda - Absolutely skip stockpiling soda. It has no nutritional value. If someone in your family has a caffeine addiction, stockpile tea bags and work on switching them from soda to tea. Not only does it have less caffeine, making it a good way to taper down, it takes up far less room to stockpile.

Water - You will not stockpile enough water. If you live near a water source, buy a good filter and some good 50-gallon storage barrels. If you don't live near a water source, buy a good filter, more 50-gallon storage barrels to store rain and snow, and enough water in one-gallon containers for three months. The minimum standards for water storage are one gallon, per person, per day. If you have small children, or someone elderly, store three gallons for each of them, per day. You'll also need water for pets and livestock. Refill two and three liter soda bottles, but don't refill milk containers because it's nearly impossible to get all of the milk residue off the plastic, and that can contaminate your water supply. Save the milk containers for portable hot houses for your garden.

Paper goods - Don't neglect purchasing necessary paper goods for cooking. You'll need aluminum foil, plastic wrap, muffin tin liners, paper plates, bowls, cups, and plastic silverware. The less dishes you have to wash, the less water you will use.

Vitamins - Since you will be eating a calorie restricted diet, you will need to have a good stock of vitamins on hand to make sure you're getting your necessary nutrients.

Condiments - These are extras, but will help fight off food fatigue. Having mayo and pickles on the shelves is going to make those Vienna sausages much more palatable, because now they can be made into a sandwich instead of eaten straight out of the can.

Infant Formula - While "breast is best" takes on a whole new meaning in a TEOTWAWKI situation, as well as in a poverty type situation, sometimes things happen that require a change in plans. If someone who is of childbearing age is going to be with you for the long haul, it is a good idea to stock up on infant formula. If you end up not using the formula, it could become a valuable barter item. If you stockpile infant formula, make sure to donate it to a homeless shelter or food pantry at least two months before its expiration date, and get a receipt for the donation. The tax write off for the charitable contribution will help fund your restocking of this expensive prep item.

On buying processed foods - You're going to buy processed foods. Your preps are your business and no one is going to judge you because you have a case of canned ravioli or blue box macaroni and cheese in your pantry. If these are items you feel your family needs, then stockpile them. While ideally your preps are as natural and nutritious as possible, stockpiling familiar foods helps ward off food fatigue and makes it easier to take care of your family. It may also be essential to have quick meals available in the event that the head chef is busy tending livestock, in the garden, or dealing with an emergency. Just try to make sure that the bulk of your food preps, over time, are foods that are not heavily processed. There is a comfort in these foods for many people, but often the nutrition leaves much to be desired, and that's not something you want to skimp on, in a TEOTWAWKI scenario.

While food preservation is a great skill to learn, it takes practice to get it right, and time to build up a stock of home canned "convenience" food, or any type of food, to be truthful. Sometimes, canned processed food is a way to fill that gap to give your family a more balanced selection of food choices. Frankly, if TEOTWAWKI happened tomorrow, you would rather have a case of ravioli on hand than nothing. You should not feel bad because you have store brand canned tomato soup that you bought on sale rather than home canned tomato soup in pretty mason jars. You should feel a sense of accomplishment that you have provided a good meal starter for your family, no matter what the source. But as your stockpile grows, try to add foods with a higher nutritional value.

Conclusion

No matter what type of event you are prepping for, it's important to go about it in an organized way. Otherwise, you'll end up with a lot of bits and pieces of many meals, with nothing to really put together into something nutritious and edible-both very important facets of any meal, especially in either a poverty or TEOTWAWKI situation.

While there is something to be said for "hunger adds flavor," putting together a nutritious, yet edible meal insures that the people you're prepping for are both sated and fueled for what could be very hard manual labor. It's important that you find a good balance as you stockpile food.

Methods of food preservation are as unique as those that practice them. Not all of them will work for you and your family. It's perfectly all right if most of your stockpile is built from items you bought, on sale and with a coupon, at the supermarket, just as it's also perfectly okay if you love getting up before the sun to go milk your cow every day. You have to find what works best for your situation.

Canning is a valuable food preservation skill, and its importance not only for starting but for maintaining your food stockpile cannot be overlooked. If you learn how to can over an open fire or a wood stove, you can further preserve hunting bounty or shared food so that you will be able to get even more meals over time. Hunting isn't predictable, and in a TEOTWAWKI situation, close local game will exhaust itself in a suburban area. In a poverty situation, hunting is a

great way to help fill the freezer as winter sets in, but the lack of predictability means that you could invest in a gun and a hunting license only to come home with no meat. But if you have the ability to can any hunting catch that is made, your food security lengthens over time and will continue to grow even if the likelihood of grocery stores reopening for business is minimal. Canning is such a valuable skill, in fact, that any preparation for TEOTWAWKI is not complete without its' mastery, because with no power, there will be no other way to insure a protein source over long cold winters without becoming migratory, like the animals you will be hunting.

Finally, even with the help of this guide, prepping or stockpiling food may seem a bit overwhelming to you especially at first. It's important to remember that everyone once started somewhere. Remember the tips that were mentioned in this guide.

- Set reasonable goals. It's great that you want to have one year's worth of food on hand. But it's better to plan for three days, then seven, then fourteen, and continue growing both your stockpile and your goal, than to try to coordinate the logistics of buying a year's worth of anything all at once.

- Start small. It's okay if, after your first week of shopping, you've only purchased enough supplies for one meal. You're working with what you can obtain. If it's October as you read this and you didn't have a garden this year, you're certainly going to have to have a major part of your stockpile come from the grocery store, for the first

few months of your stockpiling adventure. Even with coupons and store sales, that can add up.

- Learn a new skill. If you can learn to can or dehydrate, you've just exponentially increased the amount of food you are able to stockpile for your family.

- Make your budget work for you. If you normally budget \$30 a month for eating out, make homemade pizza or grab something from the dollar menu, and use the remainder of the money for prep items.

- If you get an income tax refund, use it to buy prep items like a good dehydrator, canning equipment, storage bags and buckets, *etc.* If you don't get an income tax refund, set aside \$10 or \$20 per week to buy these items.

- Make a plan, and stick to it. Your plan should reflect your goals, how you will obtain your food, your available skill set, your available tools, how you will preserve your food, and your budget.

Preparing for the future, no matter what your reason or what you're preparing for, does take hard work and diligence, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming or confusing! In time, the baby steps that you're taking now will turn into larger steps and you will begin to see real

achievement. It brings a sense of accomplishment when you walk into your food storage area and realize that you have a month, or three months', worth of food on hand. As your preps continue to grow, you will find it easier to use what you have and fill in the gaps as things go on sale. Where before you could only buy one or two of a particular item that was on sale, at some point you'll be able to buy ten or twelve, because you will be paying full price less often.

While canning is the game changer in terms of long-term preps, growing your own food also greatly increases your chances for long-term food security. Whether you are prepping to avoid poverty cycles, or for an end of the world scenario, the skills, ability, space, and tools to grow your own food will substantially benefit your efforts. While it may be impossible to grow all of your own food in the city, there are many examples of people who have used the space they have in a creative manner, allowing them to grow more food than most people think is possible on city lots.

With the right mindset, prepping can be something that becomes a habit, rather than a hobby. If you are always in "prep mode," you will always be looking for ways to build your food stockpile in the most inexpensive ways possible. Once you've developed this mindset, it is much easier to plan for extremely long-term preps. Again, this is a mindset that will take months, if not years, to develop.

You should build your stockpile at your own pace, using your goals and your budget as a guide. Make the attempt to work towards zero waste and purchasing the healthiest foods that you can afford, for your family. Baby steps will guide your way in the beginning, but in time, you will find yourself making great strides to lead the lifestyle of your goals!

The Nomad Prepper: A Guide to Mobile Survival

Introduction

Survival is a tricky thing – everybody has a different take on how to do it, but in reality, it can be a whole lot simpler than most “Doomsday Prepper” folks seem to think it is. We may be thrust into a survival situation by any of a number of different situations: economic collapse, both globally and locally, a natural disaster of epic proportions, terrorism and increased warfare, and on and on. We can't know exactly when or how a survival situation will occur, but history tells us that it's only a matter of time before we, and our loved ones, will be in need of survival skills.

A survival situation occurs when you cannot rely upon human civilization, either because it is nowhere to be found or because it simply can't help you. Either way, the safety net of civilization is unavailable to you. In this type of situation, it is best to keep your wits about you, use what you can and know how to defend yourself. If you are trying to survive, strangers can be your worst enemy or your best friend, so be wary, but don't be stupid. The first thing to keep in mind in a survival situation is that the world is not black and white – if you come across other people, be aware that they are also just trying to survive.

You don't need to be predatory to stay alive; you just need to be resourceful. Work with what is available to you and keep a clear head – panic is your worst enemy and will get you killed. If you are

surviving just with what you have and you are out in the wild, know that anything can happen; you need to be prepared for any and everything, and that is what this whole guide is about.

You often hear all of these grand ideas about prepping: how you should be stocking up on nonperishable food items, building a secure panic room or a fallout shelter in your home or on your property, and planning to stay in one spot so that you and your family will be safe and sound while whatever danger there is can pass right by. This might work for a while, in certain situations, but some may not call it survival, so much as hiding. It will work in some situations, for some people, but there is another way of survival that is often overlooked: Mobile Survival.

The fact is, human beings are nomads; it is how we have evolved, why we are built the way we are and perhaps it is even the reason we go a little stir-crazy if we stay in the same place too long. Movement is now, and always has been, the human survival strategy that works the best – not to say it isn't dangerous, but so is staying put. However, the biggest downside to becoming nomadic after a societal collapse is this: constant movement is tiring. It will wear on you. But take heed: there are ways you can combat this downside, to ensure that the mobile lifestyle continues to work for you and your family. For example, there is nothing that says you can't stop for some respite for a little while, especially in regions with bad storms or freezing winters, in which case finding some long-term shelter and stocking up on food is a very good idea for waiting out the rougher

seasons. There are many tips and tricks like these below, which will help you decide if the nomad life and Mobile Survival are the right plans for you and your family.

So if you are into the nomad lifestyle, you will need to be prepared for what that means in terms of relinquishing any material possessions you cannot carry on your back, testing yourself mentally and physically outside of civilization, and facing dangerous (even potentially life-threatening) obstacles. As an avid Prepper, someone who is prepared for all situations, and a DIY enthusiast, I will be sharing some helpful tips on how to be a Nomad Prepper, and for keeping you and your family safe on the road, no matter the situation.

Keys to Being a Nomad Prepper

As with regular prepping, there are certain ideas and keys that are fundamental when one starts to think about mobile prepping. These are the very base techniques and ideas that will help you establish a foundation of knowledge and skills that will come in handy if and when the need arises. Below we'll take a look at these areas, and explore them a bit more in-depth.

Know your environment:

The most important thing for both stationary and mobile prepping is this: Know your environment. Your prepping plans will change dramatically depending on which part of the country you are in, whether you are rural or urban, and which season of the year it is. You cannot plan to survive for very long anywhere, if you don't know what is around you and how to interact with what you see. The biggest part of your preparation should be familiarizing yourself with the local wildlife, plants, animals, edible or medicinal herbs, and any dangers or advantages specific to your local area. Know what grows when, mating seasons of animals, harvest seasons, animal habitats, indigenous species, what you can use, and how you can use it. Watch the animals; see where they go, what they eat, where they drink. Know the seasons and weather patterns. Learn to look for changes in the sky, moon cycles and cloud formations – observe how these effect the environment around you. Take the time to study now, as this will pay off greatly in the future.

Another important aspect of knowing your environment is knowing the other people who share that space. Get to know the people around (if any) and what they are like. Naturally, people are going to vary widely and great distinctions can be made between urban and rural environments. In any case, it is always beneficial to make friends where you can in a survival situation. You don't have to like a person to benefit from the skills and experience they can bring to a

survival situation. Television has taught us that human beings are essentially selfish and opportunistic, that survival is a competitive sport wherein the best man wins; this is false.

Certainly there are opportunistic people out there who will take advantage of the situation and go out of their way to hurt others in order to help themselves. In a real survival situation, this behavior should be what gets those guys killed; however, they still exist and it is your job as a survivor to understand that survival is not just a reality TV thought experiment but something very real, which requires cooperation instead of competition. Human beings are social creatures, we have always relied upon one another and this should be no different in a survival scenario. Learn to pick up on antisocial behaviors and don't allow yourself to be taken advantage of. You don't need or want "that guy" with you and you don't need to be "that guy" to stay alive. Leverage the skills, knowledge, and resources of the good people around you, and you'll have a much greater chance of survival.

Have Hideouts and Squats:

Squats can be thought of as your home-away-from-home. Just because you are a nomad doesn't mean you don't need a home base. You can benefit greatly from a temporary shelter, where you can eat in peace, store your pack while you're out scavenging, or just to grab a quick rest. No matter where you are, this is entirely necessary. The easiest way to secure a home base is to form a squat (and don't give me that "legality" crap, you are trying to survive). An abandoned house is perfect – you don't have to build it and after you have been on the trail for so long, you know you will want a nice roof over your head. Of course, you don't have to form a squat on your own; you might find one already in existence, if you know what to look for.



Not too long ago, there used to be a simple system of symbols that travelers and transients used to communicate with one another, both out in the wild and in the midst

of civilization. What came to be known as “the hobo code” was created in the 1930's by vagabond workers who would hop trains back and forth between cities looking for work. While many of these signs have either changed a lot since their inception or have stopped being used altogether, there is one symbol that lives on today – the squat symbol (see right).

If you see that symbol etched into a door or spray-painted on the side of a building, you have found the right place. If there are people there, don't be a jerk, respect their space and maybe they will let you stay a few nights. The squat symbol is an easy and efficient way to communicate with other travelers and point them toward safe shelter. If you do form your own squat, make sure to open it to others, keeping general safety in mind, of course (in a truly desperate situation, there may be others who would open it to themselves anyway).

You can (and should) have multiple bases around the region you are traveling in for easy access. All of these should preferably be accessible to other weary travelers needing a place to stop and rest awhile. (Note: This isn't just a cop out place to run off and hole up, but it can be useful during cold winters or unbearable heat). This place can have a consistent stock of nonperishable food items or just a storage room that can be filled by travelers at their convenience when preparation for a retreat from the elements is necessary. Brutal cold or brutal heat will diminish the amount of food available and can

also be dangerous to any who are too heavily exposed; keep that in mind at all times.

The purpose of having squats is securing access to consistent and stable places to go in emergency situations. Besides abandoned houses, you can look for closed businesses, warehouses, garages, sheds, *etc.* On top of offering a roof over your head for a night or two, these are places to grow food and medicinal herbs. Horticulture is the food production strategy of nomads, as it is based upon plant growth in nature (what grows most commonly near what and how they appear to benefit each other). This is where sister planting comes from (the practice of planting certain foods together to create higher yields and healthier plants). I strongly suggest researching horticulture, as this is an incredibly efficient way to grow a lot of food in very little space. It is simple enough to find many in-depth sources at your local library, and the time spent there will be well worth it. Planting seeds along your trails may also be useful, as you can always come back to different locations at different points to get exactly what you need.

Prepare for Mobile Prepping:

Before you set out, you will need something to carry your stuff in. I've met all kinds of travelers, many of who needlessly overburden themselves with gigantic hiking packs larger than they are. Sure, one of those will carry all you need and more, and if you happen to be built like a linebacker, then this type of pack might just be the one for you. However, for those individuals who aren't especially large or muscular, a smaller pack will do just as well, and probably even better.

In general, the less weight you have to carry, the better, and if you are going to be carrying everything you have on your back everywhere you go, you want a pack that is suitable for your individual size and strength in order to avoid needless injury. Any sporting goods store with hiking supplies should carry a number of good packs in all sizes, and you can certainly find a huge selection online these days as well. Pick the one you think is best for you, make sure it has enough room for everything you will be carrying and check to see if there are extra pockets and compartments for smaller things that you will be needing to keep handy. Remember, the more compact, the better – a good hiking pack can run anywhere from \$200-\$500, but it is worth it. This will be your main equipment for survival - Don't skimp out on quality. Some hiking packs don't have a place to secure a sleeping bag or bedroll, so you will probably want to find one that does. Above all, check to make sure you adjust your pack to distribute weight evenly. Without proper weight distribution, you can seriously hurt yourself on the trail – this

is very important. Try it on, load it up with some good weight, and carry it around for an hour or two. You need to make sure that it holds up to the weight and that it is still comfortable after an extended period of use. Don't just buy one for the looks – functionality is the most important factor for choosing the right bag.

Now that you have a bag, you need stuff to put in it. Of course you will need clothes, but this is a survival situation and we're not going for fancy, but utilitarian – here's a basic checklist for the clothing you will need:

- Two outfits: the one you are wearing and one in your pack. One of these should be light – for spring and summer weather, and the other warm – for fall and winter weather (no worries, you will have opportunities to make new clothes or patch the old ones up). This is region dependent, so if you're going mobile in the south of Georgia, you can get away with one light and one semi-light outfit; if you're surviving in Montana, you're going to need some more heavy-duty winter clothes.

- Shoes: there is no reason to wear any shoes that aren't hiking boots, preferably waterproof and insulated (steel-toe might be good also, but not necessary). A good pair of hiking boots can run anywhere from \$50-\$200. Imagine how long you will be on your feet every day though, and you will quickly see that this is one area you

do not want to skimp on. Buy high-quality and built to last, and your feet will thank you.

- Long socks, at least three pair (though you can never have enough). These keep your feet safe from all of the walking you'll be doing, from bugs and critters, and provide necessary warmth at night and in colder climates.

- Extra shoe strings: Your hiking boots aren't going to do you any good if you can't even secure them properly. It's the little things like shoe strings that can quickly derail your survival strategy, so pack a few extra. They also have many other uses, so it won't be a waste of space to have a couple packs of them.

- Head covering: a hat or bandana are important, both in hot and cold locales. A hat with a brim will keep the sun out of your eyes and off of your head in the hotter months; a bandana or hat will keep your warmth in during the cold months. This is an often-overlooked clothing item that can make a big difference, so make sure and bring one.

Even for the most hardcore-travelers, hygiene is important – keeping yourself clean will help to keep you healthy. You won't have the same opportunities to shower and brush your teeth and all that good stuff out in the wilderness, but you will want to bathe where you can, so make sure to bring some basic stuff with you for that, including:

- Washrag and/or small towel

- Bar soap (a few). You will run out of this stuff, but it'll last longer than liquid soap and after that, you might find some good plant oils to use (lavender oil is antibacterial, for example).

- A toothbrush or floss. Floss is actually more important than a toothbrush because it is more effective in preventing tooth decay so if you don't floss, start: it breaks up the bacteria cultures between your teeth that feed on sugar and foodstuff and rot your teeth out. (Note: your survival diet will automatically make you cut down on your sugar intake, so your teeth will actually be healthier anyway).

- Toothpaste (optional): you could bring some toothpaste, but you will run out; however, you can make your own toothpaste using crushed up mint leaves and some salt water (more salt, less water).

- Toilet Paper (optional): If you want, take some, but you will run out and have to wipe your ass with leaves or wash off in a nearby body of water. If you are not down with all that, maybe bring an extra washcloth just for this purpose (mark it with sharpie or something); that sounds weird, but just wipe it down on a tough rock after each use and boil it in some water for a few minutes.

You will also want to bring a First Aid kit with you, or compile one yourself. You can buy mini-kits at most camping or outdoor stores, and they should do great for your purposes. If you want to compile one for yourself, that is also quite simple too. This should have gauze, bandages, Band-Aids, Neosporin, *etc.* You will run out of this stuff, but once you get going, you should be able to make more with whatever materials you collect in your travels.

In a survival situation, everybody cooks. If you don't cook, you will starve, and nobody wants that. Sure, you can eat raw foods and survive for quite some time, forever, if really necessary. But you will miss out on a lot of nutrients and have a much smaller pool of potential foods if you limit yourself to eating raw food only. For cooking on the road, you will need some basic stuff – you don't need all the fancy camping cookware you see at the stores, just the basics (though the more people you have with you, the more you can carry). Here's what you will need for a small set-up:

- Cooking pot, ladle/wooden cooking spoon, mesh wire, eating utensils. Lots of sporting equipment stores and camping supply aisles have camping cookware available for decent prices. Look for a single collapsible pot or deep pan – these can also be found online. Material matters; try to avoid harmful materials like aluminum or Teflon.
- Some dishes (a plate or bowl for each person in your party)

- For forks, spoons and an extra knife, you can find utility knife utensils in the camping aisle of most stores. The novelty of a combination fork/knife/spoon is second only to its practicality.

- Mesh wire, or any type of fabric (i.e., a square cut from an old shirt or pair of pantyhose) that can be secured around the top of your pot for straining. Use this to collect water, and only water, from rivers, lakes, or streams to be boiled and used. (Note: this can also be used as a small fishing net or to protect your face from stinging insects)

- Mortar and pestle: You won't have electricity, so your food processor will be useless. Use a mortar and pestle for crushing up or making a paste out of nuts, berries, herbs, *etc.* This will make some pretty tough ingredients a lot more useable and widen the net of potential things that you can eat.

- And of course, food: Rice, dried beans, maybe some canned veggies, trail mix, jerky, *etc.* The key here is to bring things that are small, but filling. You won't be lugging around too much food on a daily basis. Sure, you can keep some larger cans and such at your squat or other hideout locations, but for the daily life, you'll want plenty of trail mix, jerky, protein bars, or any other item that is small, easy to carry, and packed full of vital nutrients to give you energy on your daily journey.

You will also need some foraging and fishing supplies because you will be doing a lot of that, particularly after you have run out of what little food reserves you have brought with you.

- Before you even think about harvesting wild plants of any kind, make sure you either know everything about the plant life in your region or else get yourself some field guides. If you don't know what you are looking for, foraging can become a dangerous way to get food. Eat the wrong plant or explore the wrong area and you can find yourself eating something that makes you very sick, or worse. There are a lot of great resources out there for learning more about which plants are safe to eat, where they are located, and when is the best time of year to find them. Start your research on your specific locale now, and you will make things much easier for yourself later.

- Fishing pole or net. (Note: a fishing net can be made with the mesh fabric I've suggested for straining water. It's important to find items with multiple uses, such as the mesh. The more you can do with the less you have to carry is always the goal.)

- Salt, as much as you can carry: Salt is good for preserving and curing foods and it is an antiseptic and astringent – make yourself some salt water (salty as your tears or as the sea, however you prefer) and you have a great mouthwash or something to clean out open wounds (the latter hurts, but it will slow the bleeding and clean

the wound). Salt is another multi-use item and is relatively easy to carry, so plan to pack a fair amount of it.

- Clean water: You and everyone in your party should have at least one water bottle each, preferably a large one, and maybe a jug or something similar on top of that for the group to split. I've met several travelers who carry entire gallons of water on them, but you don't need to do that. It is heavier than you think and will wear you out quickly and slow you down. Two quart-sized bottles are small enough to carry in a pack, won't weigh you down as much and can contain a decent amount to have on reserve (especially if you have about a quart per person). Eventually, you will run out of the clean water you packed, but keep the bottles – you can refill them with water you have collected, just make sure you boil it first so it is clean.

If you choose to bring some camping supplies, such as a tent, you may. These are optional because they are a bit cumbersome and you will be able to make your own in due time, but if this option is available and preferable to you, then get a small tent for 2-4 people that can fit either in or securely on the outside of your pack. The smaller and simpler it is, the easier it will be to carry and set up. (Note: you want to be able to get the smallest tent that you can pack multiple people in). Other than that, you might want some form of bed.

Some people like sleeping bags, but in my experience, I've found sleeping bags to be a giant pain – the material they are most often made out of, while well-insulated, is slippery and annoying. No matter how tightly rolled up your sleeping bag is, it will want to unroll itself as you move, throwing off the weight of your pack and generally inconveniencing you. Beyond that, they only accommodate one person at a time for the most part, which might be fine if you were camping for fun, but this is survival and there is no such thing as privacy anymore. The alternative to a sleeping bag is simple: you can make a good bedroll from at least two insulated blankets (not quilts, they don't need to be thick, just insulated). Fold and roll them up just like a sleeping bag and if you do it right, they will make a smaller, easier to handle package. You can use those extra shoelaces or some good rope to tie up your blankets and you can secure them to the top or bottom of your pack. A bedroll made with blankets can easily accommodate 2-4 people if the blankets are big enough and your traveling party is close-knit enough (and if you aren't at the beginning, you will be eventually). This is important for when it gets cold, which is another reason why I only suggest a small tent or maybe two, depending on the size of your party.

Perhaps the most important thing you can have with you in this type of survival situation is a collection of tools. The more things one tool can be used for, the better. If you are resourceful and know how to use what you have, your tools should be able to get you out of any tight spot, so don't overlook these. Here are some important tools to consider:

- Knives: A good knife should be at the top of your list. These are light, easy to conceal and infinitely useful. At least three would be good, but you'll want at least one at a bare minimum. Specifically, you will want a hunting knife, utility knife, and a skinning knife. That said, don't go crazy; the more knives you have, the more difficult they will be to conceal and while looking cool is nice, utility is more important. You'll want one you can use for hunting, for cutting branches and timber for fires, for cutting clothes and fabrics, and any number of other uses. The bigger and fancier your knives are, the more likely you are to be targeted for weapon theft by opportunistic strangers.

- Whetstone: If you are carrying knives, better keep 'em sharp. No use having a great knife if its blade is so dull that you can't even use it properly.

- Compass: This, in combination with your own variant of the hobo code to mark where you are going and where you have been can ensure that you are never lost. Don't underestimate the importance of keeping tabs on which direction you are heading, and where you've already been. You'll save yourself a lot of time and headaches by knowing your directions.

- Fire-starter: You can start out with a lighter or matches if you want, but both are finite – you will run out sooner or later. You can find flint

and magnesium fire-starters in some hardware and outdoor supply stores for less than \$5. I'd suggest getting one of those. These last much longer than regular lighters or matches, and are infinitely better at starting fires when and where you need to.

- Hatchet and/or machete: Both have advantages, and if you want to be a badass then you can have both, but it is best just to pick one (one less thing to rust or have to carry). Machetes are made for bushwhacking if you want to make a trail, but a hatchet can be used to collect firewood. Either or both can hang from a hip and neither is particularly heavy, making them both convenient and accessible.

- Rope: This is easily one of the most useful things you can carry. You might want a variety, different thicknesses for different things, but even one good long length of hempen rope, about medium thickness, would be good (doesn't have to be hemp, but it is incredibly durable and will last forever). This will be helpful in constructing all types of shelters, carrying game that you've hunted, repairing things here and there, helping you navigate treacherous heights or lows, and many other things.

- Leather strips: For when you need something more flexible, but just as durable as rope.

Setting Up Camp:

You are packed and prepped, you have gone out into no-man's land and done a little exploring, but now the day is coming to an end and it is time to set up camp. The first thing you need to do is find some shelter (unless you have portable shelter, in which case you just need to find a place to put it). If you have a tent, you will want to find a good clear area. Find the flattest patch of ground you can and throw your tent down. Keep in mind when you are placing your tent, most tents are made of tarp or a similar material and are incredibly flammable so make sure it is not going to be too near your fire.

If you don't have a tent, there are a couple of options – you can build a lean-to, which requires gathering materials (driftwood is a good option if it is available); or in the right terrain, you can find shelter in a nearby cave. Building a lean-to is fairly straightforward: assess your situation and your surroundings, try to find a large, healthy tree to use as your base and go gather some materials. You will want branches to reinforce your temporary structure from the inside and large flat pieces of driftwood, scrap metal or bark to serve as the outside walls. If you are afraid of the whole thing coming down on you, you can secure the materials together at the top with rope. If you are in an area where you can find a cave (this is more likely in mountainous regions, but caves can be found almost anywhere), just make sure it isn't occupied – the last thing you want is to intrude on the home of a bear or big cat.

If you have been hunting and have some hides that need to be put to use, you can always make a tent. Just gather some good, large branches, strip them down (remove bark and offshoots) and build your frame. Realistically, you can build it however you want if you are feeling creative, but the simplest way to do it is with the conical teepee structure. Make sure your frame is posted firmly in the ground and secure it at the top with leather strips or rope. You will need to sew your hides together so that they fit over the whole frame – make sure there is enough space allotted for an opening so folks can get in and out. If you removed the fur from your hides for tanning, they will not be waterproof and will be less insulated. In that case I suggest insulating your shelter with a fur lining around the top and bottom of the structure; this will add a layer of protection from rain and snow as well as keeping the temperature inside fairly constant. Keep in mind, the larger you can make your shelter, the more people it will fit comfortably inside. If it is large enough with a decent sized opening at the top, you can even build a fire inside – just be careful. (Note: Depending on the area, you might find some clumping bamboo or similar plant such as cane; you can replace larger sticks and branches with these.)

Once you have your camp set up, you can get to building a fire. If there is someone in your party who is practiced in this particular art, give them this job and you will save yourself a whole lot of frustration. If you're by yourself, you really should start practicing fire building now. It's a necessary survival skill, and one that *can* be

easily learned, but it takes dedication and a lot of practice to perfect it. Start learning now and you will be in a much better position later.

Just as you had to find an ideal spot for your shelter, you need to find a safe place to build your fire. Look for a spot in or near the center of camp (preferably as far away from any trees, bushes or low-hanging branches as you can get it) where the earth is flat and firm. Clear this area of any leaves or plant life and, if available, make a barrier around the area using rocks. Once you have a safe place cleared out, you are ready to build your fire.

Building a fire is not as easy as it sounds. If you have a lighter or matches, you can figure out relatively quickly how to do this, but if you don't then the task will be quite a bit more difficult. No matter how you plan to build your fire, the first task is always the same: gather some small dry twigs (preferably fallen from dead trees), and some dead grass – this is your tinder, the driest, smallest and most flammable stuff – make a little nest out of it and set it aside to go look for some bigger sticks for kindling. You will want to separate your kindling from the smallest and driest to largest and least dry, as this will be the order in which you will introduce new kindling to the fire.

If you are using a flint and magnesium fire-starter, put your tinder nest into the center of the fire pit and, using one of your knives, scrape some magnesium onto the tinder. (Note: magnesium burns

very, very fast, you will need a lot in order to catch a spark and make it spread – you might just make a little pile of magnesium shards on top of the little nest.) Once you have created a primary explosive out of your tinder (don't worry, it won't kill you), grab some smaller sticks and build a little teepee above that, making sure there is a small opening so you can get close enough to aim your sparks at the magnesium in the center. Get in close and strike the flint strip quickly with the edge of your knife (similar to how you would strike a match) so that the sparks fly at the magnesium.

If you don't have a fire-starter, you will need to get old-school – leave your tinder nest close at hand, but off to the side for now and go find a couple of dead, dry sticks and strip the bark off them. Make sure one is about the length of your arm and decently thick (about the thickness of one of your fingers). Choose the stick you want to use as your base (you will want something sturdy and thick) and cut a hole into it about the same thickness as the long stick you will be using for friction. On the side of the hole you just made, cut a notch big enough to tightly fit a small piece of dry wood or bark (this will serve as charcoal). Place a flat piece of wood (you can cut it out from something) underneath the hole in your base to close off the bottom and make sure you don't just shove the fire-starter stick into the ground. Take your long stick, the one about the length of your arm, and stand that up in the hole you have cut into the base; you want to pin the base down using your knee or something – don't let it move. Make sure the notch is plugged tight and begin rubbing the stick between your palms – only use your palms, don't go out to the

fingers because you can't put as much pressure on the stick with your fingers.

As you are rubbing back and forth, push down hard on the base, your hands will go down as you push, just bring them back up and continue. Try to increase speed and pressure as you go and when you start seeing smoke, keep going for a couple more seconds until the smoke increases a bit. Once you are really smoking, very carefully use a small stick to dislodge the charcoal piece and fold it gently, still smoking, into your little nest of tinder. Be very careful at this point not to get too ahead of yourself and rush things or else you will mess up and have to restart. Once you have the charcoal wrapped lightly in the tinder, hold it up to the air, gently blow into it. If you see more smoke and hear crackling, you are doing it right. Just keep blowing gently until you actually see a bit of flame start up. Once you have a flame in the tinder, you can set it down in the center of the fire pit and start throwing on your dry twigs. Add kindling in order of size and dryness – the drier and smaller things go first. Let them start to catch before putting larger, wetter things in.

There is a very good reason that many cultures in history had a place where the fire was never allowed to go out. Fire is hard to make, especially with limited resources, so don't get cocky, and be very careful when trying to do this. Unless you have built fires in this manner before, you will probably have a whole lot of trouble making this work and most likely you will not be successful right away. That said, if you do fail and end up with blisters and splinters all over your

hands from unsuccessful attempts, try to refrain from getting too agitated. If you fail the first couple of attempts, hand the task over to someone else before trying again, otherwise, you will get frustrated and try to force the fire or rush the process which will only yield worse results. Once you do get your fire going, try to keep it that way – take turns with people keeping the fire alive day and night so you always have a cook fire and a source of heat when you need it.

Travel in Groups:

If you are thinking about going it alone, rethink your strategy. The more people you have, the more you can carry; sharing the burden is good because with three or more people, there is room for an extra bag or backpack to hold things like extra food or supplies. This is also good for carrying trade items if you happen to come across other travelers. Further to this point, there is safety in numbers. In a survival situation, you want to stay on your toes – rotate watches at night after setting up camp, you are less likely to be robbed or attacked with a few other people at your back. If you are hitching or train-hopping (both of these are dangerous and illegal in the U.S.), groups of no more than three are ideal; consider car space and the size of hiding places on trains. However, if you are traveling exclusively on foot, you could practically take a whole village with you, though I'd suggest maxing out at five. Remember, more people means more hunters and gatherers, a higher chance that somebody has skills you don't which you or your fellow travelers might need and more people to respond and help in the event of an emergency.

You might also consider traveling with an animal companion – maybe you have a pet you don't want to leave behind, or otherwise, you choose to take an animal along for purposes of practicality. Either way, it is well known that nomads love their animals. That said, you have a few choices when it comes to taking an animal with you. I've met all kinds of travelers but only two kinds of traveling

animals – dogs and cats; however, there are definitely more options than that for the practical and creative animal lover.

Ideally, if you have access to pack animals, such as horses, mules or goats, this is one of the better options. Mules and horses are excellent as they can carry a lot of extra weight and, if somebody gets sick or injured and can't walk, they can be thrown over the back of your horse until you can get to a safe place to take care of them. Another advantage to these two animals is they can navigate easily on rough terrain. However, mules and horses are pretty high-maintenance animals, don't overwork or overburden your animals and make damn sure that they are fed and watered (that should go without saying, really). And keep those hooves clean.

Personally, I think a good female pack goat might be better than both of these others as they can carry a fair amount of weight (albeit not quite as much as horses or mules) and a recently pregnant goat can provide milk. Goat milk is better for humans than cow milk and is also a good breast milk substitute for babies if for some reason you have an infant with you. Aside from that, goats are pretty easy-going and fairly low maintenance, as long as they have grazing room and fresh water. They can also more easily navigate through a rough terrain than the larger pack animals (though, as stated, they all have this advantage to an extent).

As useful as pack animals are, dogs are the traveling favorite (and easier to come by than pack animals). If you have a big enough, well-trained and well-behaved dog, you can strap a small saddlebag to it and have it carry some of your lighter-weight stuff, plus its own food. A saddlebag made for a dog will also fit a goat. Be aware, however, that dogs are not pack animals and do not have the same kind of strength or endurance that people do – if you give your dog a saddlebag, don't overburden it. Make sure that your dog is being constantly hydrated and know that you will need to take regular breaks so neither you nor your dog overheats. Perhaps more importantly than this, a good dog is also a good guard if you train it. It can be useful for protection and alerting you to nearby dangers. Keep your dog close and you should be safe. Dogs are also good for hunting if you have the right breed or if you train it accordingly. However, dogs are not carnivores, but omnivores. They need fruits and veggies too. Make sure you know what your dog can and can't have and share your food; this is good for bonding, and eventually you won't have dog food to give it. Dogs can also be taught to hop trains.

Keep in mind that any animal you take with you is subject to be attacked or killed by larger predators. Be wary of this and try to keep as close an eye out as you can if you choose to take animals on the road with you.

Selfdefense and hunting:

Keep in mind while going over this section that you can't learn to hunt or make weapons simply by reading about it. Don't expect to be an expert on any of these things after reading this – you will probably remain a beginner at all of these things until you get good at them, which will only happen with practice. Picking up these skills before you need them is essential to survival preparation, so start early and start seriously.

The first thing to understand about selfdefense is that nearly everything has the potential to be a weapon. You have knives and everything you can use for hunting is also good for selfdefense. That said, weapons are not easy to make and require a lot of practice both with construction and use. You will likely be using more handmade weapons than store-bought ones, as the materials to make them will be more available to you and ammunition is a finite resource.

Perhaps the most popular survivalist weapon choice is the gun. While guns can be good to have, they are woefully high-maintenance and cumbersome when you are on the move all the time and trying to survive. Also, assuming you are trying to survive outside of existing civilizations, any authority figures you might happen across will single you out for having a gun. This is especially

true if you are female or a person of color, but still applies to everyone because you have been living in the wild and will look it.

Regarding the high-maintenance nature of guns, if you don't keep your gun well-maintained and cleaned regularly, it will jam on you and what good is that? Further, bullets are finite and in a real survival situation, they are also a huge commodity – other people will want them, which will lead to unnecessary violence and possibly a grievous waste of bullets. Guns are heavy, particularly the heavy caliber rifles - Especially hunting rifles (because you may not want to hunt with a hand gun) and they really only have the one use. While surviving on the road, speed and efficiency is key. You do not want to be tied down to a heavy, bulky weapon; it will not do you any good. Stay small, stay light, and you'll stay alive.

For the most part, proper gun maintenance and use are things which require a bit of training – hunting with a gun (or with anything, really) is not a thing you can just pick up and do; you might hit your target, but if it is not dead the first time, it runs much faster than you, even injured. And while, yes, you can chase after it, but do you know how to follow a wounded animal, what to look for? If you hit the right spot, the animal should be bleeding a lot, follow the blood and it might be dead by the time you reach it – good for you. If you missed, the animal is gone. More importantly than that, guns are extremely loud and will scare off everything within a mile radius, so if you are not successful in your first attempt, the job of hunting will become much harder the longer you are out. Unless you have experience or

training with guns or there is someone in your party who does, you don't really have much reason to carry one.

If you still want a high-impact, ranged weapon, you can choose between a crossbow and a bow, instead of a gun. Both of these require a good deal of skill, but if you pick one, a compound bow is ideal, and you can, and should, get started training with it now, as early as possible. Crossbows are pretty cool and if you know how to use them, they are great, but you run into the same weight and maintenance problems with these that you do with guns. A compound bow is the best of your ranged options as it is lightweight, fairly compact and made in such a way so that it requires less strength to shoot while maintaining the high-impact shot you require. Of course, a good bow is still more difficult to use than a gun, though not really by much – so get started early and learn now. All that said, there is still the major drawback of finite ammo to consider. Of course, arrows can be made if you know how to make them; you can choose to learn this as part of your preparation if you like.

One very basic weapon you can make in times of dire need is a spear. All you need is some basic materials. First, make a spear shaft with a long branch by stripping it of bark and offshoots and then find some sharp rocks and turn them into sharper rocks with a bit of sandpaper or a metal file (the latter you might have in your utility knife), and then secure it to your spear shaft with some strips of leather. If you are into whittling, you might even put some designs on your spear shaft. If you are doing that, why not also try to work it

down to a good balance so it is useful for hunting or selfdefense? A spear should be balanced more toward the front because that is where all of the weight is. Depending on the weight of your spearhead, about three quarters of the way up from the back end of the shaft would be ideal. When hunting, the balance point of the spear is where you hold it to get the best distance. Hold the spear lightly when throwing (just firmly enough to keep your grip), the foot opposite your spear hand in front, pointed toward prey, spear hand all the way back, body side-face and twist with the throw. Keep in mind that spear hunting is illegal in several countries, so be aware that this is only for survival situations. Also, don't expect a huge distance with a spear throw, this kind of hunting involves getting pretty close to your quarry before you get noticed and run it off. Spears are also good for fishing, though your net might be easier.

Another option for hunting in a survival situation is trapping. This is probably the most practical way to hunt if you are surviving with what you can carry on your back. Trapping requires a lot of skill and resourcefulness – keep an eye out for the movements of nearby animals and be aware of your surroundings. This is a skill you should be learning now, as it will take some time to practice and really perfect your trapping methods. According to Winyan Staz, “unless you take the time to know your quarry you won't catch much. Watch for well used paths, fresh scat and know the times they move along those paths.” Hunting and trapping require tactical thinking, an understanding of your surroundings and a familiarity with your quarry. You can't just set traps anywhere, they need to be set in places where you know the animals will be going regularly for food,

water, or whatever might attract them. Once you have set your traps, check them every day to make sure nothing else gets to your food before you do or otherwise to keep the animal from suffering needlessly.

There are two classic traps you can make with nothing and improvise as needed (so long as you don't forget the actual physics behind them): the snare and the figure-four deadfall. Staz suggests that “you can make snares out of cordage, shoelaces, light weight wire (best) or things like string, yarn, ropes, etc.” Snares are wicked simple and useful for catching small prey (like rabbits, squirrels or very young deer) and you can make them from practically nothing. What you want is your rope or shoelaces, some sticks and a nearby sapling (or large rock to use as a counterweight). You need two sticks of about the same size that have a sharp hook shape. These should be sturdy, because you will need to hammer them into the ground (use a rock). You will need another long, straight stick to lay underneath these two hooks and another that you will stick in the ground maybe a foot or less away from your hooks. Take your shoelaces or rope and tie one end to the sapling, you will want to bend that little tree over the trap to get the leverage you need for this spring snare to work. Take your shoelaces/rope down to where that long stick is under the hooks and find the place where you have the most tension before securing this part using a small piece of wood (about an inch long) tied to the shoelace and snug under the stick

What should happen: the tension will hold the stick off the ground and fasten it into your hooks. Now, you will make a slipknot with the end of your string (shoelace, rope, whatever) and lay that out, using small sticks as stakes to hold it open (not tight, just open). Next, just take one more stick, the last piece of your trigger system, to run down the middle, fixed between the first stake you put down (across from your two hooks) and your hooked stick. Secure your trigger sticks together by creating notches in them to hold them together.



The figure-4 deadfall is a bit simpler and it comes right out of Wile-E Coyote's book of tricks. To build this, get three sticks and some bait, make sure your sticks are big and strong enough to hold up the log or rock. Make some notches in the sticks so they can be finagled into a number 4, as shown in the diagram on the left. Your diagonal stick will be the longest; this is the one that holds the weight of your deadfall. It will be balanced in place by the vertical and horizontal sticks. The horizontal stick rests on a notch near the bottom of the vertical stick and the end pokes inward toward the underneath of your deadfall – this is the actual trigger mechanism. Bait your trigger point and leave the trap, check it daily.

When checking your traps, if you find an animal and it is not dead, kill it by slitting the throat. This is good because it is quick – no reason for the animal to suffer needlessly – and it will bleed out faster as well. Once this is done, you can move on to field dressing the animal you have caught. It is dirty business, so if you have some good gloves, wear them (this isn't totally necessary, but some people prefer to keep their hands clean).

Field dressing is basically just removing the guts. In the interest of not letting things go to waste, there are organs that are edible, such as the heart and liver, but if you are not accustomed to that taste, I'm sure your dog (if you have one) would appreciate a nice snack. To begin the field dressing process, make an incision beginning below the diaphragm (lower part of the chest) and ending down near the genitals. If preferable, you can start by taking a strip of skin first instead of making a full incision, this will clear the area of hair, open it up some more and allow you to get genitals out of the way first. When making your incision, be careful not to cut too deep or you will nick the bowels and that is a stench you won't soon forget. Once you get to the organs, disconnect them from the diaphragm first (careful not to nick the stomach), then get in and cut away the trachea and esophagus. Finish with the rest of the connective tissue and pull those guts out. Remove the head and hang your animal upside-down from a tree to let it bleed out before you skin it. Hanging it with the legs apart will make skinning easier.

Once your animal is bled out, you can skin it - separate the muscle tissue from the hide – that is what the skinning knife is for so make sure it is sharp. Start with the inside of the back legs just below the knee joint (from your upside-down point of view). Be careful not to cut into a tendon or the leg will collapse and make your job harder. Work your way down from the knee toward the pelvic region and just keep working until both the thighs and pelvic region are nice and stripped. From there, you can almost just pull the skin right off, cutting out anything that might give resistance in the process until you get to the forelegs at which point, again, you will be starting on the inside of the leg and working down to release the hide from the chest and neck area. Now, with the skin off and the innards out, you have access to meat and bone. Cut the meat off, separate and clean the bones. Remove the forelegs at the shoulder joint. Cut the ribs away from the rest of the body. Cut excess meat and fat from the outer ribs. Go ahead and throw those ribs over a fire, this work makes you hungry. Remove the back legs at the hip joint. This might be tough because you are cutting out the cartilage at the joint, so make sure your knife is sharp as it can be. Once your meat is separated, carve what's left off the spine and remove the tendons from the legs (they are not tasty, but a dog might like them if you have one). You can carve the meat from the rest of the bones if you want, but it is unneeded.

Once you have your meat, you need to cure and dehydrate it so that it can be preserved. First, trim away all the fat you can and save it (use it to make grease for cooking). Cut your meat up into strips and rub it down well with salt and herbs, seal it up (wrap it securely with

leaves or something), for an hour or two. Boil your marinated meat for 5-10 minutes to sanitize it. It can now be dehydrated by smoking. Gather some good wood; maple, mesquite or hickory if available and start a fire, one that will make a lot of smoke (pine needles help with this). Hang your meat strips over the fire and let the heat cook them and the smoke cure them. It will toughen as it dries, and once fully dehydrated will be protected against bacteria. Dehydrated meat (or jerky) is great for traveling because it is lighter than other meat and doesn't require refrigeration.

While you are letting the meat smoke, you can get to tanning the newly obtained hide. One great and easy way to do this is brain tanning. Brain tanning will be how you keep a supply of leather strips, shoelaces, clothing, bags, patches, potholders or gloves. According to braintan.com, “you can make soft, washable leather with emulsified oils and wood smoke. This is commonly known as brain, smoke or Indian tanning. Animal brains are traditionally used as the source of emulsified oils, hence the name, but you can also use eggs or a mixture of soap and oil.” Emulsified oils can be made by combining warm water with the brains of the animal you have caught. To begin the tanning process, take what bones you have, making sure they are clean – these can be sharpened and used as pegs to peg down your hide. You can also make a tanning rack with some thick branches if you don't have a flat surface to stretch the hide out on. Just poke some holes around the edges of the hide and tie it tight to the rack. Use a knife to scrape off any excess meat and fat that might still be clinging to the flesh side of your hide.

You can choose whether or not to remove the fur and grain from the hide, depending on your need. You will need to dry the hide by applying a layer of salt to the flesh side once it is cleaned, roll it up and let it sit for a day or two somewhere dry, clean off the old salt, apply new salt and do it all over again to make certain that all the moisture is removed from the hide. Don't be stingy with your salt, and don't just throw it on and roll up, really rub it into the hide or you won't get the full effect. The hide is done when it is tough and dried out rawhide.

While you are drying out the hide, go ahead and prepare the brain. Making three incisions at the top of the head, in the shape of a triangle, you should be able to access the brain matter. Use a spoon or just shake it out. You can mash it up into a raw brain soup to make this easier and mix it with about half a gallon of boiling water to kill bacteria. Warm brain will absorb into your hide more quickly than if it is cold. Let your brain water cool until you can stick a hand all the way to the bottom of your container without burning yourself. Work the dried out hide into the brain water mixture and leave it there to absorb the oils. You can tell where the hide has or has not fully absorbed the mixture by its texture – it will become noticeably softer and lighter in color.

You will need to do more than just hunt for food – despite what some folks may think, people require much more than just meat in order to

get the nutrition we require. Diet is important to survival – you can eat all you want, but if you don't get the nutrients you need, you will be malnourished and it could mean your life. However, foraging for edible plant life is different for every bio-region. As already stated, you will need some local field guides and familiarize yourself with local edible plants growing naturally in your region if you don't want to accidentally poison yourself.

There are some foods you will find in multiple regions, including berries. You must be careful with these, as many berries are poisonous, but some of the more common edible ones are easily recognizable. For example, blackberries are an extremely invasive species. They grow in temperate areas and you can find them almost anywhere in the US. You can find wild blackberry patches growing in the spring and into the middle of the summer. Blueberries, strawberries and raspberries grow in temperate, sunny places. They like water, so they grow well in warmer, rainy regions during the summer months as well. Harvest season for these berries is nearer the end of the summer season.

If you come across some berries that you don't recognize and you have a few hours on your hands, here is a process to follow in order to determine whether or not they are poisonous:

- First, take one and crush it between two fingers. Rub them together. Wait about 45 minutes to an hour.

- If nothing happens, scrape a bit of skin (don't flay yourself, just use your nails), rub the berry juice in, wait.

- Still nothing? Put the berry to your lips, crushing out the juices. Wait.

- If nothing has happened yet, taste the berry and wait again.

- After several hours, you have determined the berry is good to eat if no reactions occur through exposure.

- Eat one berry and wait again just to be sure and if you feel nothing, you can eat more of them, but slowly and cautiously.

- If at any time during this test, you feel or see any kind of reaction from the berry's juices, put it down and walk away.

- If you are starving or don't have hours to spend, leave the berries alone for now and check your traps; who knows? Maybe you will find some blackberries.

As fruits are an excellent way to combat scurvy, I suggest you eat a lot of them. However, finding good fruits in the wild may not prove

especially easy considering lots of fruit trees in North America (especially the US) are not indigenous. This includes oranges, kumquats and possibly apples, making them difficult if not impossible to find in the wild. Beyond that, since fruits are such a popular commodity, their production is pretty heavily regulated; however, if you are willing to do some urban foraging, most popular fruit trees can be found in backyards and orchards so if you are looking for fruits, find some abandoned houses or orchards nearby, if available.

There are also a variety of different vegetables that can be found in the wild in some form or another, including potatoes, wild yam, asparagus, kale, rhubarb and several others, but these are less nutritionally important than tree nuts. Tree nuts are some of the most important foods you can depend on in a survival situation. To remove the shells from tree nuts, you can use two rocks or your mortar and pestle. Some easier shells can just be cracked with your teeth. Unless you have allergies (in which case, the nomad survival strategy may not work so well for you), nuts are an excellent source of protein and good fats (Omega-3 or -6 fatty acids, especially). They will keep your energy high and your appetite sated on surprisingly little. Pine nuts from any pine tree anywhere in North America (Pine pollen can also be used in teas) are delicious and will energize you. Walnuts are also fantastic, but almonds are even better because they are higher than most other nuts in protein and fatty acids and can be crushed up with your mortar and pestle – just add some water and you will have almond milk (if you have some honey, which we'll get to harvesting later, you can even sweeten it). Don't scoff at almond milk, it is creamy with a slight nutty flavor and aside from

being delicious, it will keep you well nourished. You might also find cashews, pecans, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, *etc.* You get the idea. Nuts are good for you and there are millions of different kinds. Some are better than others, but in general, collect tree nuts and eat them (unless you are allergic).

One tree nut that the true survivor should never ignore is the acorn. A pound of acorns is roughly 2,000 calories and, though they are bland, they will keep you going. Simply collect acorns, shell them and you can mash them up with your mortar and pestle to make acorn paste. You start this process after shelling them by cooking the nuts in oil (or fat grease) for a few minutes to soften them and then crush them up until they make a fine paste. Any nuts can be turned into a paste in this manner, which can be used for making pancakes or just to be eaten. Make sure not to confuse buckeyes or red horse chestnuts with acorns as they are in the same genus as oaks and their fruits come in similar capsules. According to many experts, there is much argument over whether or not buckeyes and red horse chestnuts are toxic. Apparently, the “green seeds/husks are more toxic” Proceed with caution.

As stated in numerous manuals, these nuts are rumored to be toxic to horses and livestock and may be fatally toxic to toddlers. They have been reported to cause upset stomach or muscle spasms in cases of overdose. However, Juliette de Bairacli Levy, the grand dame of veterinary herbalogy, states that the Horse Chestnut's name was derived from how horses consumed large quantities of these

fruits. Also, it was observed that horses showed improvement in respiratory conditions after eating the nuts. Juliette goes on to tell how gypsies and Spanish peasants used the nuts as feed. The bitter taste is often neutralized by grinding the nuts to a powder and then treating with a lime/water solution, washing, and then heating the meal. In this way a highly nutritious starch is produced in Europe. Ms. Levy advises feeding it as a general tonic, which particularly strengthens the pulmonary apparatus. She feeds 2-3 handfuls of prepared chestnuts daily.” It seems that buckeyes or red horse chestnuts can be dried and eaten if cooked and prepared (just to be safe). Just don't overdose or you may become ill.

Last but not least, you might come across some peanuts if you look hard enough. If you find some peanuts, either growing wild or planted deliberately, go ahead and take them. They are delicious, and almost as good for you as almonds. Almost.

Just because you are surviving on whatever you can find doesn't mean you can't have some sweets – if you are brave, well prepared and allergy free, you can harvest some wild honey. If you do plan on doing this, add a mason jar or two to your list of things to pack so you can store your honey somewhere. You can use honey as part of your meat curing marinade, or you can make some mead with it. Aside from that, you might also end up with some beeswax, which can be used for all kinds of things. If you have some good gloves (perhaps made from some leather you cured yourself), wear them. You will also want to protect your face with a net. Now, in order to

harvest honey from beehive in the wild, you first need to find out where one is. If you find an area with lots of flowering plants, it is likely that you will find some bees there too. Make sure these are honeybees, don't confuse them with wasps or another kind of bee that doesn't make honey. If you do find one, follow it around until you find the hive. This will usually be in a crevice inside of a tree or something. If you see a bunch of bees around, flying in and out, you have found the beehive.

Now, you will want to distract the bees so you can steal their honey (not all of it, you won't need that much). For this, smoke will work. You can make a lot of smoke by burning Spanish moss or pine needles. Light some of those up and waft the smoke into the hive, this will make the bees think there is a fire nearby and they will respond by gorging themselves on honey. While they are gorging, check to see if you can figure out which one's the queen. She'll be bigger than the rest and won't be able to fly. Most of the hive will stay near her. The better honey is farther away from the brood (where the queen is). The brood honey is called "dirty honey" and has more pollen and dirt and such in it. (Note: dirty honey is ideal for making mead, but not as good for eating as the "pure honey"). Once the bees are distracted, they won't even notice you taking some honey so just grab a good knife (doesn't need to be huge, this could be a pocketknife as long as it is sharp) and cut off a piece of honeycomb. There may be bee larvae mixed inside of your comb, these are full of protein and okay to eat. Remember, just because the bees are distracted doesn't mean you won't get stung a few times, but if you do it right, you shouldn't get swarmed. Be careful – too many stings

even for someone who isn't allergic can be fatal. Next, just take your honeycomb back to camp and contain it in something; leave it there for a few hours and let the honey ooze out.

You will also need herbs and mushrooms for food and medicinal purposes, but these, more than anything else, are incredibly numerous and unique. Depending on your region, the types of mushrooms and herbs you find might change – there are entirely too many different species with too many toxic look-alikes to give any proper introduction to this type of foraging. That said, going into the wild with no knowledge whatsoever of the herbs and mushrooms around can be incredibly hazardous to your health. Part of preparation should be to familiarize yourself with as many of the plants and animals in your specific bio-region as you can – this is especially important for wild herbs and mushrooms. I can't stress the need for field guides enough – one good guide for mushrooms is the Smithsonian Handbook for mushrooms; it covers every kind you might find growing in the wild with photos for reference and very specific detail to help with identification.

Conclusion:

As we have seen, there are many considerations to take in when you start thinking about Mobile Survival. The most important thing to remember about survival is resourcefulness. Use what you have around you and pay attention to the environment you are in. It is

important not to resign yourself to solitude and mistrust in situations like this as well – you never know when you will need help and have to rely on strangers. Traveling in groups is the best thing you can do for safety and security, particularly if your band of nomads is made up of people with diverse skills – the more people with you who know how to do things needed for survival, the more likely you are to actually survive.

As part of your preparation, extend your research beyond this. That doesn't just mean take classes and read more survival guides – go out and explore. Get to know your environment by being in it, participating in it and becoming a part of it. Read books about your particular environment. Learn the flora and fauna. Going mobile after a world-changing event can mean the difference between survival and demise. Being a Nomad Prepper won't work for every person, in every situation, but if it is an option for you and your family, it is one that you should seriously consider. Being mobile provides the benefits of increasing your food supply, staying safe and unpredictable, and being able to discover safer areas or finding help of some sort in another location. It's not always going to be easy, but it can be done. Practice your survival skills – as with most things in life, practice makes perfect. This is the best thing you can do to prepare for going mobile after any life-changing situation, and for keeping you and your family safe.

Prepping with Children: A Family Survival Guide

Introduction

We live in a time of uncertainty. At any moment, we could face a drastic event that could change our lives as we know them. It could be something produced by Mother Nature, such as a hurricane, an earthquake, a wildfire or a tsunami. Or it could be an issue created by our government, such as economic collapse, a military coup, or civil unrest. Other dangers that could end life as we know it are widespread medical emergencies, such as an outbreak of a new fast spreading disease or the return of an old, slightly-changed menace like smallpox. The danger could even be from something as simple as a power grid failure, or as complex a terrorist attack. The list of possibilities is exhausting. Preparing for any number of these events can be too. Even more so when you have children. There are a lot of situations to teach your children to be ready for, but in the end, prepping with children will rely on the same principles as teaching your children anything: patience, repetition, and familiarity. Children are not going to always understand what you're trying to teach them or why it's critically important for them to learn, but prepping and survival skills are all valuable skills to teach them, no matter what type of event you are preparing for.

It would be impossible to be prepared for every possibility and every consequence of each event, but prepping is done in order to make your life sustainable and as comfortable as possible if life as we know it ceases, even temporarily. This is particularly true if you are

prepping not only for yourself, but for an entire family as well. You'll want to do everything within your power to ensure the survival of you and your family, and if your children are knowledgeable about prepping, it will make survival much more likely. Prepping as a parent may mean that you are just adding a few extra supplies to your stash, but that would be the most basic solution, and it really should be much more than that. It is a complicated area, ranging from what you should tell your children about the situation, to what you choose to shield them from and how you prepare them for the worst, while teaching them to hope and also prepare for the best.

Life as a parent takes on a whole new meaning, with or without a doomsday scenario. When a child comes into your life, the level of responsibility that you have explodes by multitudes. Life as a prepping parent creates even more responsibilities, more detailed planning, and extra tasks for everyone involved. There are many extra challenges that parents who prep must face. Of course, there are the obvious adjustments to a disaster plan, like planning to have more food and room in your shelter, but there are also many more nuanced things to take into account if you are prepping with children. You must plan for their safety, mental health and preparedness. You have to figure out the best way to explain disaster preparedness to your children without creating unnecessary fear in them. You will also face extra prepping tasks, factoring in the extra supplies your children will need for their safety and comfort. You will have to teach your children a different level of responsibility and skills that other parents may not be teaching their children.

Although being a parent prepper is not an easy role, it should be very rewarding knowing that your children are more likely to be safe in a disaster situation and more prepared to deal with any aftermath of a catastrophic event, whether or not you will still be around. Even if we are lucky enough to never face a catastrophic event, the skills they learn as children preppers can serve them well as they continue in life. A well-prepared parent can make prepping an enjoyable and educational experience for their children, and create many bonding experiences as a family that you and your children can cherish for years to come.

Why We Prep

One of the hardest things for a parent to tackle is exactly how to tell your children *why* you are prepping. If you have been prepping since before they were born, or before they were old enough to form lasting memories of minor situations (about three or four years of age), then they probably don't question what you do in terms of preparation. Since it has always been a part of their lives, they accept it as a normal family activity. They probably assume that all families prep. This can drastically change when your child reaches the age when they have sleepovers or play dates at friends' houses, or if you don't start prepping until they are a few years older. If they go into homes of people who do not prep, or have non-prepping friends over, then they will realize that their family is different from their friends. It's possible that in another family's home your child wouldn't notice one way or the other; it is more likely to be an issue when other children visit your home. Although, the topic may never

come up if the visiting children do not notice your preparations or if you do not allow the children into your storage area/bunker. However, this situation creates a great opportunity to talk to your children about why and how you prep and why others may not be prepared for catastrophic events. If one of your children's friends ask about your preparations when visiting your home, you should keep the answer simple so as to not create unnecessary concern for the visiting child.

Another reason to keep it brief and act nonchalant about it is if you do not want news of your preparations to spread through the neighborhood. If you are new to prepping, sit down with your family and discuss why you have decided to now join the prepping world and why you feel it is important to your family. Explain to you children why you want them to learn certain skills. Your children may have questions you cannot answer, but do your best to inform, educate, and allay their fears.

When you explain to your children your reasons for prepping, keep in mind that you do not want to create fear in your children. Keep things simple in terms of scenarios. Children have very vivid imaginations and any scenario you present could create a whole new world of worry and concern for your child. The fact that you are a prepper should not lead to you child having nightmares about people breaking into your house to steal your well-planned stores of food, supplies and weapons. The fact that you have a stockpile and are prepared should create a feeling of security for your children. People

who are prepared really are doing it because they love their families and want to protect them. As long as you can get your children to understand that, it should alleviate any fears they have. Keep the dialogue open between you and your children about prepping. If they have questions about why you do certain things, be sure to take the time to explain it to them in terms that they can understand.

Make Prepping Fun

It is also important to take into account your children's mental well-being as part of your prepping, before, during and after a catastrophic event. While you are gathering items for your safe zone, or bunker, make sure you include items that will help occupy your children's minds. This might include some board games, cards, or age appropriate books. If the day comes that you have to stay in your shelter for two or three days, you will want to keep the children occupied. Time seems to pass much more quickly when you have a task or something else to keep your mind busy. If they are busy, they have less time to dwell on whatever situation is taking place outside of your safety zone. A fun game or book will also help take their mind off of things.

As part of preparing your children, make sure that you limit their electronic entertainment, such as computers, cell phones, and handheld gaming devices. If your kids are used to being in constant contact with their friends via computers and cell phones then they are suddenly cut off from the outside world, it is going to make their time in a shelter more difficult. Handheld gaming devices tend to use a lot of power (or batteries), and are not very practical in a survival

situation. Since these games are not a necessity, make sure your kids are not going to be stressed by having to temporarily give these items up.

Another idea to keep your children's hands and minds busy is to give the children tasks or chores. It is great that they have something constructive to concentrate on, instead of just sitting around while you do all of the work or important things. This can be helpful to the children as well as yourself. Busy minds have less time to worry. You will get some extra help and the children will feel useful.

As a parent prepper, you must decide what you feel are important skills and knowledge for your child to have when doomsday, or any major event, comes. Prioritize the skills, so you do not overload your child with too much knowledge at once. Start with the most important, but basic items. Remember, most of the skills you teach your children have to be practiced or reviewed occasionally in order for them to keep their abilities and knowledge sharp. When you think about what skills you should be teaching your children, an easy way to approach it is to think about the skills a pioneer would have to have. The pioneers always focused on the four main survival needs: water, fire, shelter and food. Some of the basic survival skills they mastered were how to kill and cook a small animal, how to start and maintain a fire, how to build a basic shelter, how to sew clothes and repair broken goods, how to find safe drinking water, how to grow food, or forage for food, and how to store food when you finally had some. There are many more skills that will help your children in

today's world, but it is a great starting point for many families. Some of your choices will be based on your living situation. If you live in a large city, fishing and hunting would probably be lower on your priority list than teaching your kids how to barter and socialize properly. Depending on your own skill level, you may not have even tackled or mastered some of the skills you feel are a high priority. If that's the case, learn them together as a family: you'll all learn vital skills and you'll grow closer as a result of having learned those skills together.

Another tip for making prepping part of everyday life: When preparing your safety zone or bunker, create a small library of manuals and books. It can create a sense of safety knowing all of the knowledge your family needs to survive will be available to them, night or day. It should include a medical book, a mechanical book, basic survival book, a book about preserving food, edible food book and a medicinal herb book. There are many more that would be suitable, but it is a personal choice as to your priorities, and the amount of space you can devote to your library of survival knowledge.

Some things your children will need to know how to do without taking the time to research, or if your family has left your shelter for another secure location, you may not have access to your books and resources anymore. So although the library is helpful, you and your children may not be able to get to it, or may not have the time to research something if immediate action is required. In the world

today, we are used to being able to look up anything in a matter of seconds on the Internet; this means of instant information will more than likely be a no go during a crisis, when power and the Internet stop functioning. Teach your children how to use the index of a book to more quickly access the necessary information they are seeking, and use some of your prep time to read portions of these books with your children. This will get them introduced to the topics, give them a sense of security to know where they can find information, and help you grow closer through the shared experience.

Life-Long Skills

The skills you teach your children as part of your preparations can be skills they enjoy and use for the rest of their lives. One of the easiest ways to introduce some basic survival skills is through camping. Camping teaches kids to work together as a family unit. It also teaches them to live without some of the modern conveniences that many of us have grown accustomed to. Camping should not be a one-time trial run at basic survival. Introduce camping as a regular, fun family activity. Each time you take your children camping you can try to add a new skill to their repertoire, and give them more practice at the skills they have already learned. Maybe through your conversations with your children, they will come up with a task they feel is crucial to your family's survival that you have not yet mastered or had not thought of. If they are old enough, let them research the skill and then teach it to the rest of the family. This is a great way to make your children an active prepping team member.

One of the critical skills they can learn while camping is how to make a fire. The first step in teaching about fire is educating them on where a good location for a fire is. Show them how far away from the tent or a building they should be. Explain to them why they should look up for low, overhanging branches before picking a spot. The next step would be to show them how to create a fire pit to help control the fire.

You can teach them several ways to start a fire without using matches. Some of the more common methods that people teach are flint, friction bow, and magnifying glass (or lens). Before you go camping, give the kids a chance to do some research on starting a fire without matches. There are so many ways, let them pick one and try it while you are camping. There are a lot of videos online that can help instruct your children so they have a better understanding when you let them make their first attempts. Forewarn them that starting fire is not easy. Let them practice under your supervision. This is also when you should be teaching them about fire safety. You can even make a game out of fire starting techniques; if you have children close in age, they can compete to see who can start their fire first. Friendly competition can make the experience a little more light hearted than concentrating on the negative reasons that it is imperative that your children learn skills such as this.

Once they get the fire going, you can teach them to cook some basic foods over an open fire. Camping is also a great opportunity to teach your children all about food safety. Your children should be able to

identify foods that are perishable and nonperishable. Teach them how to keep perishables edible as long as possible. They should know how to open a can of food with or without a can opener. If you don't know how to open a can without a can opener, this is an opportunity for you to learn along with your children. Along with food safety, teach your children about edible and inedible plants. It is important for your children to be able to identify a few safe plants that could sustain them for a short period of time. This should include not only greens, but nuts and berries too.

Water is another basic element that is vital that your children are well educated about. It is important that you teach them to find drinkable water, how to identify if water is drinkable and how to filter and boil water to make it drinkable. A great family project is to build a simple water filter. Make sure your children are aware of the dangers of drinking water that is not suitable for consumption. Also teach them to not go to the bathroom near the fresh water source when outdoors. Explain how water can become contaminated, and that several things can help keep your water supply drinkable.

When you take your kids camping, you can teach them the basics of building a basic shelter to keep them out of the weather. It is great that they know how to efficiently put up a tent, but they should know how to create shelter out of natural resources if the need should arise. It is also great to teach them how to build a camouflage shelter to keep others from finding them if the situation should arise that they need to hide from other people. Take this opportunity to explain

to them why they may need to hide from other people, and when to make themselves known. Some families employ a safe word, and even a stay-hidden code word. It may or may not be something you want to teach your children, but it is something to think about. Sometimes when adults are in a confrontation, it might be a useful tool to have to use the code word to let your children know that it is not safe to let their presence be known.

The great outdoors gives your children the opportunity to learn so many skills. You could never teach them all in one camping trip. Sometimes an overnight stay isn't needed. Head to a local state park and take your kids hiking. It will not only encourage physical fitness, but you can teach them how to navigate in the woods with a compass and without a compass, using clues from Mother Nature. Educate them on the following trails, and when they should avoid trails. Tracking is another survival skill you should teach them. It can help them avoid predators and to identify the tracks of small edible game. Being able to identify animals by their tracks is an important outdoor skill for their safety as well as a food source.

Fishing is another skill that many people can learn while they are camping or even during a day visiting a lake. You should teach your child not only to fish with a store bought pole, but how to catch fish without a pole. There are many options on ways to catch fish, including with a traditional pole, with nets, with spears, or even with your bare hands. Your children's confidence will soar when they fashion their own pole and catch their first fish, build a net to scoop

the fish up out of the water, or build a fish trap. The look on their face when they peek into their fish trap and see a fish is a priceless moment, and one they will never forget. In addition to catching the fish, proper fish deboning and cleaning is a necessary part of the process for children to learn as part of their new skill. Fish is also a great food to teach children to cook over an open fire. They can learn to cook it in a pan or in chunks on stick, depending on the type of fish, and what cooking utensils you have available. All in all, fishing, and it's accompanying activities, are a great way to get your children interested in learning prepping and survivalist techniques, and there is a wide range of skills you can teach them along the way.

Some basic outdoor survival skills can also be taught in your own backyard without going camping. Teach your children to look up into the sky to find out many things. Direction they are headed, estimating the time of day, guessing which type of weather is coming. The sky provides clues to all of these, including the time of day, incoming weather and directions. They can even make a sundial, although it would not be ranking high on the scale of necessary skills to have in a survival situation, it may still be fun for the children and get them interested in learning more. What better way to spend a family evening that snuggled up in your backyard looking at the constellations?

Your own backyard can also be the location for food sources your children learn to create. A garden will provide your family with healthy foods and numerous teaching opportunities. Gardens can be

a learning center for your children. Teach them how to properly plan and plant a garden. Which seeds to use depending on where you live and the climate. Which food is easiest to grow (and thus, more useful in a survival situation) versus those that are too fragile or finicky to waste time on in a prepping scenario. Gardens help families become self-sufficient and to rely on outside sources of food less and less. This is extremely important in a survival situation, so the sooner your children learn to feed themselves with homegrown food, the better off they'll be. Gardening not only teaches your children how to provide for their family, but it teaches them about plants, biology, and responsibility. Show your children how to start a garden from seeds, and they will gain a respect for where their food actually comes from and the work that is required to bring it to their plate. They can even learn to start the seeds indoors. They can also be responsible for weeding and watering the plants. When it is time to harvest the goods, let them help with that. This will teach them responsibilities and help them to feel involved with your family's prepping practices.

After your children have helped you in the garden, they will begin to realize the different amounts of time needed to get from seed to maturity, depending on what is being grown. They will recognize that some food grow more quickly than others. The garden can provide food to eat now or food to be consumed later, so they will need to learn to process the foods or store the foods grown in your garden. One of the processes they can participate is to keep the foods for later consumption by learning canning. Some people with generators or solar powered bunkers have a freezer and supply of frozen foods.

If you fall into this category, you can teach your children how to safely freeze vegetables from your garden. This isn't practical for everyone, however, especially if you lose your shelter and find yourself on the road. You can also teach them about the food from your garden that can be stored for long periods of time, such as potatoes. They need to be taught the best place and temperature for storage and how long the food can be stored before it needs to be eaten. You can make this fun for your children by giving them a brand new journal, where they can write down their notes about different food types and best practices for storing or eating. This will help them to feel as though they are in control of their learning, which will inspire them to press on.

Another lesson that must be taught is how to harvest seeds from your current crop in order to continue growing plants year after year. You can also teach your children to extend their growing season by doing things such as interplanting crops, using raised growing beds, and building a cold frame. If you are not fully up-to-speed on these concepts yourself, and you think it makes sense for your family's prepping plans, it would be wise to learn and study these techniques together. You can find many books on farming and even DVD's. Make a monthly day where the family learns something new about farming and you'll all benefit from it.

Since we have been covering survival in an outdoor setting, it would be helpful to mention that there are a few novels geared towards teens that are centered on survival. One survival novel that might

strike a chord with your preteens is Hatchet by Gary Paulsen. It is a great novel for preteens to read. It is about a boy who survives a plane crash in the Canadian wilderness alone. He must learn to survive with the few items he has. It can be very inspirational for teens/preteens to read about this boy's struggles and triumphs in the wilderness. Hatchet actually evolved into a series of books, but preteen boys seem to really connect with the first novel of the series. It really relays the point that he needs skills and must rely on himself to survive. Later in the series, he also must help another person that he becomes into contact with through another traumatic event survive in similar circumstances.

There is also a popular series of books that places the female as the hero in the family. She must not only survive herself, but she must help her family survive. It is controversial because it involves killing people for survival and entertainment. It is called the Hunger Games. It is based a bit more on fantasy, but there are still numerous takeaways that young girls and teens will find helpful when thinking about self-sufficiency and the need to fight to stay alive. I suggest reading the book(s) before passing them on to your children, just to make sure you are okay with the content. But keep in mind that books are a great way for children to learn more about prepping and become inspired to start on their own.

Prepping Games

Not everything you teach your kids has to be set up strictly in a teacher/student mode. We all now that children can become bored of "learning" if it's too much of the same. To break up the monotony and

introduce some freshness into their prepping, games can be a great way to learn. They can teach skills or help reinforce information that will be helpful later. For example, one fun way to pass time during long car rides is to play games. There are some interesting games you can play while you are in the car that will help teach your children important things without them even realizing that you are prepping them for emergencies.

One such game is the “Friends and Family Quiz”. As you are driving, ask you children questions such as, “How is Aunt Suzy your Aunt?” and “What does Uncle Bill do for a living?” Have the children explain how different people are related to them or different facts about those people. This teaches them their family tree, how different people are connected to them, and what skills these people have. This is especially important when it comes to people who could be helpful to your children in an emergency. For instance, they may know “Steve” is a friend of Dad’s. But by playing the game, they can learn that “Steve” is a police officer that Dad went to high school with. Later, you can then introduce the idea that some people can be more helpful in certain situations than others. By being a police officer, Steve might be more helpful to your children (in your absence) if they need to leave their home due to some natural disaster evacuation or other event. This game will help children begin thinking of who is in their network, and who would be most helpful in what situation.

Another game you can play is the “What if?” game. Give your kids some basic scenarios and ask them to explain what they would do. It gives them a chance to do some problem solving, while showcasing their knowledge and creativity. It also gives you a chance to give them advice about what can happen because of the choices they make. For instance, say that you give them a scenario where Mom and Dad go to a large city 75 miles away for the day to purchase a new automobile, and while you are gone, our city comes under attack (something similar to the September 11th attacks), school is dismissed and the roads are closed. Then, ask them: In this situation, what would you do? If your child answers something along the lines of they would go home, lock the door and prepare to stay there until you could return home, you can discuss the correct and incorrect points of their plan. You can tell them going home is a good idea, but how would they get home if they find the roads are closed? Or what would they do at home if the doors are all locked? This game can present many different scenarios that can become important teaching moments. Your children are able to formulate plans in a non-stressful situation, while showing you how they think and giving you a space to guide them towards the right answers. This teaches them to think through their plans and think of the possible consequences of their decisions.

On a day when you have some free time, another idea is to take your children and go for a ride in the car or walk around your neighborhood on foot. Let your kids direct you on how to get to emergency contact’s homes, or how to get to a safe place (police station, fire house, etc). Let them pick the directions and how you

would get there, and you can correct them, or praise them along the way. If something should happen to you, you will want to make sure that your children know the address and directions to family members' homes, and how to tell someone how to take them there.

Alternatively, you can spend a free day or two teaching them how to read a map. This is a skill that will be helpful to them their entire lives, and even more so in a prepper event. Even in a world with GPS on every Smartphone, you children should know how to read a map. Electronic help and satellites can easily become disabled. Let your children know that using a cell phone also lets others track their movements to a certain degree. Depending on a situation, this could be helpful or harmful to their survival. Being able to read a map will be a great survival skill and, if you learn together, most children find it to be a very fun process.

You can also play a lot of other games at home to teach survival skills in a fun way. For instance, hide and seek is a common children's game, but one that can be used as a vital teaching tool. Let your kids play it with you being the seeker, and them trying to hide from you. Then, after you find them, teach them better ways to hide. You can explain why the spot they chose to hide may not be the best choice. Give them different options that they can consider next time. Later, you can let them employ camouflaging techniques to make the game even harder. You may be surprised at how quickly your children become masters at hiding, and this is a skill that will serve them well in any survival situation.

Rabbit and Fox is another game that can teach survival skills. In this game, both the person acting as the rabbit and the one acting as the fox are blindfolded. The object of the game is for the fox to catch the rabbit only by listening to the rabbit's movements. The rabbit is trying to reach the safety point (a spot determined before play begins). The blindfolds are to simulate the fox hunting the rabbit at night. This game teaches children to use their other senses and to incorporate stealth like movements, as well as how to be aware of your environment at night.

There are other ways you can make playtime into learning experiences as well. For example, as part of outdoor play, teach your children to climb trees. Show them the best trees to climb quickly. Show them the trees that provide the best cover when using them as a hiding place. This can help your child escape a predator or escape detection from people. These are just some of the games you can play with your children that will also serve as great teaching moments. The more you engage with them and the more you involve the entire family, the greater of an impact that any of these games will have. Make these games part of your regular family entertainment, and you'll be instilling survival skills in your children, all while having fun and growing together.

Activities Outside of the Family

Apart from prepping at home or with the entire family, encourage your children to join groups and teams, which will teach them many

different types of skills that will be useful throughout their lives. Groups such as the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts can teach your kids a lot of outdoor and survival skills. Sports teams are also great for your kids. They help keep them in good physical condition and they teach them how to work as a member of a team. Being a member of a team helps them build relationships with people outside of their family. It helps prepare children by experiencing the disappointment of things not turning out the way you hope or expect, while also increasing their social abilities, which can come in very handy.

At some point, either in group sports or other non-family activities, your children will also probably experience the disappointment of dealing with people who do not act with the group's best interest at heart, but who, rather, act in a selfish manner. Dealing with these types of disappointments and successes helps build your children's character and prepare them for life's trials and tribulations. Bigger disappointments and successes will undoubtedly come later in life, but these early learning sessions will help your children to be better equipped to deal with them. If you are active in your church, youth groups centered around your church can also help your children build connections outside of your immediate family.

Another great "outside of the family" activity: First Aid. You should look into signing up your kids up for a first aid class as soon as they are old enough to take one. This should include basic first aid for wounds and injuries, as well as CPR training. Some of the

emergencies you will probably want your children to be able to handle are burns, cuts, sprains, and how to stabilize or deal with trauma. You can also sign them up for more advanced classes that teach more in-depth information about medical emergencies, such as seizures or heart attacks, and a wider class of wounds and injuries. The three most important medical skills that your children can learn for doomsday are treating trauma injuries, stitching wounds and CPR. At the bare minimum, find a class that will teach the basics of these 3, and your children will be better equipped than 95% of the rest, should the need arise.

Speaking of health care and safety: Another simple technique your children can learn that can save someone's life is the Heimlich Maneuver. Depending on your children's age or body size, it may not be a maneuver that they can execute themselves, but in an emergency, they can convey the necessary instructions to another person.

In addition, you should educate your children on your family's specific medical issues. If you have a member that is diabetic, make sure the kids know warning signs of an insulin spike or drop and what to do if there is an issue. They should also know each other's allergies. Make them familiar with the family's prescription and OTC medications. Teach them how to read medical labels, especially dosage charts. If you wish, you can also educate your children (or yourself) on medicinal herbs. There is so much information about medicinal herbs that this would be a situation where your child

should learn to research and study the medicinal herb book you should store in your bunker. Knowing about your family's specific medical information will help your children feel connected to the reasons you are prepping, and could prove to be the difference between life or death later on.

If the big event that spurs a meltdown and a need to switch to survival mode is a medical event, such as an outbreak of a new contagious disease or the return of smallpox, make sure your children understand how germs are spread. Teach them to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth when they, or anyone close to them, are sick. Make sure they comprehend the importance of hand washing, and how to sanitize items. Medical masks should be part of your medical kit, and you should teach kids how to properly use them. You should also make them aware that if a medical event is the catastrophic event that leads to you implementing your preparations, that they should avoid contact with others outside of your house unless instructed by you to do so, or unless they can determine the others are completely safe.

Vitamins should also be part of your proactive approach to staying healthy before or during a disaster. If food supply is limited in a disaster scenario, your family might not get adequate vitamins and minerals from the food you are eating. In order to combat this, have your family members take vitamins while sheltering. Children should be aware of the dangers of taking too many vitamins and should be educated on how, when, and how many vitamins to take. The

gummy vitamins might be easier to get your children to take in the beginning, but in an emergency situation, they might be very tempting to a child to take too many of them, and therefore they would be putting their health at risk. Teach them proper vitamin usage and the importance of vitamins, and they'll have one more tool in their arsenal, should the need arise.

There are a lot of community classes that can benefit your children, whether doomsday comes or not. When they are young, do everything you can to teach your children how to swim. Swimming lessons are available at most YMCA's and health clubs. If these are not an option, you need to teach them yourself, while they are still young. This is a skill that can save their life or someone else's, and it is a skill that is fast on decline in our modern world. If the need arises to evacuate the family's safe area, there may be a time when they have to cross a creek or river to reach safety. They also might be in a situation where they have to swim to escape people or to save someone else. Swimming is one of those things that is much easier for children to pick up and latch onto when they are young, so all efforts should be made to teach this to them at an early age, and to foster their growth as swimmers as they grow up.

Safety and Defense

Selfdefense is another type of class you should consider signing your children up for. It could be basic selfdefense tactics, like how to escape from someone trying to grab you, to more disciplined martial arts training. Martial arts training takes a lot of time and commitment, so it may not be for everyone, or you may want to start off with the

basic selfdefense and progress to more finely skilled martial arts. Martial arts include Karate, Taekwondo, and Judo. Self defense will not only give your children the skills to handle situations where they feel endangered; it will also build their self-confidence, since they will feel like they are more capable of taking care of themselves. How much selfdefense training you wish to give your children can depend on your personal views and your family situation, but it's safe to say that, at a bare minimum, we would want our children to have a basic knowledge of how to defend themselves, if necessary.

One course that is a necessity if you own firearms is a gun safety course. It is absolutely vital that your children understand how to safely handle a firearm and the dangers of firearms. Some courses simply cover the basics of gun safety and this is okay, to start with. If your child takes the basic gun safety course, consider next enrolling them in a firearm-training course, where they will actually learn to safely load, handle, and shoot a gun. Sometimes this is best left to instructors other than yourself, if you are not fully comfortable with a weapon yet. And sometimes it's best left to someone else, not because you are not a capable marksman or don't handle a gun properly. It's just that sometimes another adult can educate our children in a way that we don't. Being exposed to another teacher is not a bad thing, particularly with something as important as handgun safety. This way your child is learning from two people: their instructor and yourself, and can retain the best parts of both instructions.

The act of shooting a gun on a range is vitally different than simply talking about doing it. The act of firing a weapon can be very powerful in teaching children the true dangers and power of a weapon. And despite other people's opinions of your child handling a weapon, remember that a child trained to properly handle a weapon is a safer child in a doomsday or survival situation. In addition, firearms are not the only weapons you can teach your children to use. There are bows, tasers, crossbows, or knives. If firearms are your first choice as a weapon, take into account your children's ages and maturity if you want to enroll them in a firearm training course. If you wish to teach your children how to use other weapons, like those mentioned above, there are many different courses, both online and in person, that will teach each of those weapons, from basic to advanced.

It's also important to teach your children that many tools can also double as a weapon in a pinch, such as axes, screwdrivers, a box cutter, shovels, and hammers. The act of firing a weapon may be too frightening for some children, and others may never feel comfortable handling a weapon. It is okay for your children to have limitations. You must understand and respect that. They do not need to master every single skill that you would like to teach them, and it is important for you to accept their refusal on some skills. Work with them and their comfort zone to find a method of selfdefense and self-protection that works best for them. Nobody knows your children better than you, and it's your job to prepare them while making them feel completely comfortable with their abilities.

If defending your bunker or safe zone is something you plan to train your children to help you do, there are several ways you can practice this. First, you should train your children to patrol the perimeter of your area. This would be your first line of defense against attackers. Teach them how to patrol without being seen by outsiders. Demonstrate how one person patrols a certain area, while another person patrols the adjoining area. These two people need to be in contact via hand signals, physically meeting, or using radios to confirm that the other has not seen any intruders and ensure that they have not been captured or injured by intruders. Teach your children what to look for, in terms of broken perimeters, threats far beyond the perimeter, or just anything that may be out of the ordinary.

To make this training fun and more memorable, some preppers get friends or family to come to their house or shelter to play a basic game of capture the flag (with the flag being placed inside your bunker or at its entrance). Have one team try to breach the perimeter unnoticed, while your children must try to spot the intruders and keep the flag safe. Other preppers have their children practice live fire scenarios by using paintball weapons in place of real firearms, depending on the age of your children. The paintball option is a great practice technique for those who want a more realistic situation, but should be taken with caution and care.

Besides defending the home, you should help your children practice how to escape from your bunker or safe zone if you are attacked. An escape plan should be in place for your home, your safe zone and even your bug out location. Your children should know this escape plan and be able to recite it from memory. Doing a live escape drill every so often will help cement this plan into their minds, and provide a new take on training for it. If you need to escape your home or bunker, you may want to implement your Bug Out plan in this situation, or you may want a different place to meet up after you escape.

Bug Out Plan

Crafting a Bug Out plan is usually one of the first steps preppers take or, if they are completely inexperienced, it is one of the most important steps that people simply skip. A Bug Out Plan involves having a location that you and your family plan to escape to if you need to leave the immediate area, and an idea of how to get to that place. It is a meeting spot for your family somewhere safe, if your current location becomes unstable. Most people prepare a BOB or bug out bag that is filled with a few necessary supplies to sustain you until you can secure more supplies or return to your home. Bug Out Bags are also referred to as PERKs (Personal Emergency Relocation Kits) and GOOD Bags (Get Out Of Dodge).

Some people prepare a bug out bag for each family member, as having their own bag can help children feel more involved and more invested in the prepping plans. A BOB can be as simple as a backpack for a child with a blanket, a comfort item, a bottle of water

and a granola bar. For young children, the fact that they have their own bug out bag can make them feel important and give them a sense of security in an uncertain situation. For older children, they can actually help shoulder the burden of the supplies you are taking. If you are bugging out on foot, too many fully-loaded BOB's could be a great strain off of your back. Having your children prepared to carry their own bag makes this much easier. Make sure your children are aware of your bug out location, where the BOB's will be stored, and how quickly to get to the BOB's and start heading towards the bug out location. If something happens and the family is not together when the event takes place, you want your children to know where to meet up with you. This may be the only thing they remember and the only thing that drives them forward.

One bug out location option could simply be to meet at home and bug out together from that point. If the event occurs while you are at work and your children are at school, having a plan to meet up at home first, before anything else, can be an important way to make sure the family sticks together. Another option could be a plan like: Mom picks up the youngest child at daycare; Dad picks up the older children at school - and then the family meets up five miles outside of town at a predetermined location. Children should know where the BOB's are located in your home and which one is theirs. If the emergency arises, you will be rushed and the children can help you gather the BOB or the multiple BOBs and get out of your home quicker.

You should also plan for different scenarios for your bug out plan. Most people do not do exactly the same thing everyday. Children may have play dates at a friend's or be spending the afternoon at the movies with a family member. Have some alternate plans in place in case your bug out location is compromised in the catastrophic event. Some people create another BOB that they keep in their car in case an event would prevent them from returning home to get their BOB. You can try this – or keep one at home, one at the office. There are any number of ways to approach having a BOB and a bug out plan, but the important thing to remember is that ALL of the family should be aware of both parts of the plan, and how to follow it, should the need arise.

Additional Skills

Communication:

Earlier, handheld radios were mentioned as part of a perimeter patrol for security. There are both good and bad points to having handheld radios. If you choose to use radios, that can be a great tool to keep children involved. Make sure your children understand how to use them, the range of the radio, and how to recharge them. On the other hand, you should also teach them that the radios are not a secure method of communication. Other people, maybe desperate people, can hear the transmissions made from one of your handheld radios to the other, and may try to track you or your family based on those communications. So if you choose to use the radios, please create a shorthand or code that only your family will be able to decipher.

When my children were toddlers and we were getting ready to go somewhere, we would ask the children “Ready, Freddy?” It was a simple, fun rhyme. So our code word on the radio for being in position and ready is simply “Fred”. If your child said, “I am Fred” on the radio, someone else would think he was just saying his name. We don’t say, “Freddy” because it is too similar to “ready” when heard over the radio. So you don’t need to come up with an entirely new language, but think about some phrases that only your family uses or nicknames only you would know. This is often the best way to communicate over the radio. Teach your children not to respond when outsiders try to talk to them over the radio unless instructed to do so by you. The radios really are an invaluable tool, but they have to be used with caution. There may be situations that evolve out of a doomsday event that would make radio usage dangerous. Warn your children that if things get extremely desperate, they may need to go radio silent just to keep others from locating your family based on the range of their radio transmissions.

An alternative to using radios is using signals. Teach your children how to make signals with reflective objects, and using hand signals. Being able to communicate without making a sound could save their lives, and when patrolling around the perimeter of your shelter, it can save some energy by signaling that they are in distress or that they are okay without making physical contact with the other person. It is also another great option in case the radios become inoperable due to lack of power or breakage.

Driving:

Another skill you can teach your children, even if they are not yet of legal driving age, is how to operate a motor vehicle. Your best bet, if you do not have a large property yourself, is to take them to a friend or family member's large property outside of a city, so they have a large area to practice in. Another option is a remote area where you will not encounter any other moving vehicles. Some people may think this skill is unnecessary, but in a situation where you become injured or incapacitated, it could be vital to your survival if your child could drive you to assistance. It also gives your teenage children the ability to leave an unsafe situation if they are not with you when doomsday strikes. This is not suggesting that your child drive on the streets as an unlicensed driver at any point in the normal course of things, but in an emergency, it may be the best choice they have to reach safety or seek assistance.

Think about a Bug Out situation, if you are fleeing to the woods, and there are several heavy gates that have to be opened and then closed. It would be a time saver to have a child who is capable of maneuvering a vehicle through the openings as you opened and closed gates. This is a skill they will learn as a teenager anyway, but even a preteen is capable of operating a vehicle, when necessary. If possible, teach your child to operate both an automatic and a manual transmission vehicle. You may have to exchange vehicles or borrow them at some point, and you won't be picky when that time comes. Teaching them to operate other types of vehicles could be helpful too, such as motorcycles, four-wheelers, and golf-carts. You can easily stress that this skill is only to be used in an emergency

situation, and that it is part of the prepping process. Most children can easily understand this distinction and will take on learning to drive as something of great importance.

Sewing:

Sewing, or even basic mending of clothes, should be something your children are taught, whether you are prepping for doomsday or not. Sewing is a skill that seems to fall to the wayside more and more these days. People in today's society seem to feel that clothes are a disposable item. When a piece of clothing rips or has a hem come out, people just toss the clothes into the garbage can and go buy another. It is wasteful, not to mention expensive. Teaching your children the basic stitches to mend clothes will save money, and give them skills that will be very handy. It will make them less likely to be wasteful, and in the event of doomsday, they will be able to keep fix simple tears and keep clothes usable. They should be able to sew on buttons and replace a zipper. Basic sewing skills can also come in handy in altering clothes to fit. If the major event is prolonged, there may need to be alterations to clothing to keep them usable. Adults will probably have some weight loss and children will continue to outgrow their clothes. Just knowing how to release a hem could make the difference between comfortable clothes and uncomfortable clothes.

Just like the pioneers and generations before us knew, scraps of clothes that are no longer usable can be repurposed into something usable, such as scraps of cloth turned into a quilt or tying up

shelters, or kitchen rags, or a hundred other things. Some people choose to take prepping to the next level by learning to harvest wool, spin the wool into yarn and then weaving the yarn into fabric. This might be a task you want to teach your children, but it goes beyond the basics for many preppers. At the minimum, your children should know how to sew, to mend hems, to fix rips, and related tasks. This will prove useful after any major prepping event, will give them something to do to keep their minds occupied, and is just a good skill for them to know in general.

When you are preparing your items for your stockpile, you'll want to take into consideration the sizes of your children and the climate you live in. If you live in an area that sees a wide variation of temperatures throughout the year, make sure you store clothes for every season. Make sure you store clothes in different sizes for your children, keeping in mind that you won't know for how long the emergency or survival situation will last. For instance, if you are preparing clothes in the middle of summer, make sure you are putting away a winter coat one size larger than your child is currently wearing. The same thing goes for shoes. Update your stockpile of shoes on a regular basis. It would be unfortunate to have stored a pair of size 4 boots, and then have an event happen a year later and the child needs a pair of size 6 boots. Waterproof boots are a great item to have for children. They are easy to slip off and on in a hurry, but make sure you have comfortable walking shoes in your stockpile for your children too.

Having discussed all of the above survival skills that would be helpful for your child to know, there is no way that those cover everything. There are some simple tasks that you should teach your children that just don't quite fit in with other areas of training. For example, tying knots is a very usable skill, either in a doomsday scenario or in everyday life. A good knot can save you from some big headaches. Some of the basic knots that children should learn are the bowline, clove hitch, taut-line hitch and whipping. Practicing tying knots can be a good pastime for kids when you need to them to have a quiet activity, for instance on a long car ride. As their skills increase, you can add more difficult knots to their repertoire. Or, if your kids like to learn things on their own, they can go online and watch videos on tying knots. They might even teach you a new knot or two. For most knots, they just need a small length of rope to practice with. It's a cheap skill to learn, but one that can prove very valuable in a survival situation.

Another skill that doesn't necessarily fit in another category is making rope from natural materials. It is an easily researchable skill, and a multitude of videos exist online demonstrating how to do it. And the final skill that doesn't really fit in with any of our other categories is candle making. It is definitely a skill that pioneers would have learned, and could be useful to your family if we experience an end to the power supply that was not restored for an extended period of time. Most people think that they will just rely on generators, but even those are a finite source, depending on how much fuel you have.

Personal hygiene is another area that children may have to be reminded to take care of in a doomsday situation. One thing that they cannot slack on is brushing their teeth. If there is an emergency, dental care is going to be hard to come by, and anyone who has ever had a toothache will tell you that it can quickly make you miserable. Dental infections can lead to so many more medical problems down the road, that it is best to do preventative measures everyday to ensure your dental health. Teach children the importance of keeping a healthy, pearly set of whites, and it will be one less thing you will need to worry about in a survival situation.

Besides clean teeth, another priority is making sure we have a clean body; it not only makes people feel better, but if you're clean, you'll be running in top shape. When you are clean, you are more likely to feel energetic and to feel good about a situation. When you are dirty, it can be depressing. It would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of mental health in a survival situation, and staying clean is one small step that can have a huge impact for you and your family. It is best to keep a supply of shampoo, soap and deodorant in your stockpile for this reason. Soap making is a skill you may want to teach your children, or learn for yourself. Some preppers stockpile large amount of personal care items they purchase using sales and coupons. For these preppers, soap making is probably not a skill they would feel they need to teach their children, or the effort is not worth the time investment, and they would rather spend a few bucks to make sure their stocks are full. For families who already try to

implement a more self-sufficient lifestyle, it might be a better fitting skill.

Another hygiene item many people purchase is baby (or diaper) wipes. Depending on the age of your children, baby wipes may be a great thing to keep on hand. They take up a relatively small amount of space and can be purchased inexpensively with coupons. They have a fairly long shelf life until they are opened. They can be regenerated if the container dries out before use, just by adding some water to it. They can be used to clean toddlers and young children when a bath is not available. They make great hand cleaners, and are even great for refreshing some the smellier parts of adults. Often overlooked, these wipes can have a wide range of uses and might be worth considering.

Preppers who are females or have female children will also have to take into consideration female hygiene. To prepare, you should have a stockpile of sanitary pads and tampons. They can be multipurposed in an emergency. Pads are great to use when putting pressure on a bleeding wound. Some people sew flannel pads that are washable and reusable, which were referred to in the paragraph about sewing. They are a great alternative if your supply dwindles or doesn't exist.

Food Prepping

Next to water and shelter, food will be your most pressing concern in a survival situation. Animals are, of course, a great food source, and

can be a continual food source, if managed correctly. Two great animals for your children to raise before, during and after a doomsday event are chickens and rabbits. Both take up a relatively small space and are easy to manage. Another benefit of these two animals is that they are commonly allowed within housing areas that have livestock restrictions, even in some big cities, in the case of chickens.

Chickens can be great because they produce eggs for a constant food supply, but by breeding the chickens, you can also get chickens to butcher and consume. The feathers from chickens can be washed and dried, and then later used for stuffing for beds. Eggs are wonderful source of protein and energy, even if you don't use the chicken for meat. These are some of the easiest animals to take care of and to involve children in the care of.

Rabbits breed at a quick rate, so they can make steady food source also. Rabbits are also good because they can forage and eat food that will more than likely be readily available, even in the event of doomsday. In addition to being used for meat, rabbit pelts can be tanned and used for other items such as blankets, clothing, and stuffing for bedding. Also relatively easy to raise, some children may have a harder time, emotionally, raising rabbits to be used for food, but if you explain the reasoning and the necessity of the situation, most children are eager to learn more about animal husbandry.

A third animal to consider, but one that is not allowed in some zoned areas, are goats. Goats are another great small animal for kids to help raise. They require very little upkeep, and are very sturdy, durable animals in most climates. In addition to meat, they can produce drinkable milk. Goat milk is not just good to drink; it can be used to make soaps, lotions and shampoos.

Sometimes you cannot produce enough meat for your family with the livestock you have, or maybe your family desires a wider variety of meat choices. Hunting for small and large game is certainly an option for any survival scenario. Children can be taught to hunt for both large and small game. There are so many methods of trapping and killing game that I won't go into great detail here, but there are some basic things to take into consideration when teaching your children to hunt or trap animals. They should know what types of animals they should be looking for and tracking, and which animals are either not worth the hunt, too risky, or simply don't have enough quality meat. They should also know the typical behavior of the animal, and which of their senses is heightened. You can take children on hunting and camping trips and help them learn how to look for animal tracks or other signs, how to follow an animal trail, and how to hunt and clean an animal.

One of the reasons that children should know about typical animal behavior is that if an animal is acting extremely unusual, it could be either diseased or injured. An animal that is potentially diseased is not suitable for eating. Also, by knowing the typical behavior of some

animals, your children will know the animal's strengths and weaknesses. For instance, whitetail deer have strong senses of sight, smell and hearing. This makes them a more difficult animal to kill than, say, a squirrel. Wild turkeys can also be difficult if you are inexperienced, because of their keen eyesight. These types of tricks and tips will be fun for children to learn and will serve them well as they grow into even better hunters.

Another consideration in which animal to hunt is the amount of food the animal will provide or the amount of meat you will have to process. If your family is on the move from one location to another, it would not make sense to hunt a large animal like a deer, when most of the meat would go to waste. On the other hand, if you're staying in one location, a deer would be an excellent animal to hunt, because it can provide an enormous amount of usable meat for its size. Your children should also be familiar with setting up a trap, and how to do so without trapping or injuring themselves. One of the easiest trapping methods is using a snare wire. More information on traps can be found in many survival books at your local library, or simply online. There are far too many to cover here, and I typically hunt with a rifle or a bow, so I'm not the expert on every type of trap.

Your children also need to know how to properly process and preserve any animals that they hunt. The first step is teaching them to gut the animal. This is not a pleasant process for most children the first time they see it done. But again, it is a great lesson to learn, and becomes easier with each passing time. Not only does it teach about

the circle of life, it can be a great anatomy lesson. The decision has to be made of what process is best to preserve the meat. If it is larger game, like deer, they can salt the meat, smoke the meat, or can it. Canned meat is less common than the other two methods, but all of the methods are a means to an end. They provide an edible source of protein to be available for your family at a later date. It is important that your children learn and are aware of the great amounts of effort that go into feeding your family. Everything from tracking an animal, to hunting or trapping, to processing, to cooking, and to storing. Learning all the parts of the process will help children appreciate the work that goes into eating, and will get them thinking about what they need to know to be able to do it themselves.

Other Skills

Mechanical repair is another area that your children can help you with during a survival situation. To prepare them for life after a major disruptive event, they should be able to identify all basic tools such as a hammer, crescent wrench, socket wrench, screwdriver, tape measure, pliers, drill, saw and level. They should know the difference between a Philips and flat screwdriver. They should be able to find a wrench or a socket of a specific size. Teach them to read a measuring tape, and how to use a level. Even if doomsday never comes, they will thank you for this knowledge when they move out into their first apartment or home.

There are some unusual skills that you may want to think about teaching your children, in addition to the above. Now, no one is encouraging you to teach your children to be criminals, but some of

these same skills could be very useful to your family post-catastrophe. Of course, you know your children best, so use your judgment when determining whether they are old enough, or mature enough to master some of these skills. They aren't for everyone, but in a survival situation, they can become extremely useful skills to have.

The first such skill is picking locks. Not the first skill that people think of learning. But, it could help you gain access to food and supplies, reach a new location for safety, or even just save you a headache if you lose a key. It is a skill many adults do not know, so you may have to learn it before you can teach it to your children. You never know when it may come in handy though.

The second skill is hotwiring a car. Unlike the movies and television, it's not quite that easy. However, it's certainly not impossible, and could even be very useful in a survival situation. This would be used to start your own vehicle if you lose your keys, need to get your car started in an emergency situation or borrow a family member's car. Or say you're forced out of your shelter and need to flee. Your car is gone. Your neighbors are gone. You see one of their cars still on the street, sitting empty for the past 6 months. Wouldn't you like to know how to get it up and running, as opposed to trying to walk and find freedom?

Another skill is siphoning gas out of a vehicle. If you own more than one vehicle, the time may come when the use of one is a priority over the other and if gas is scarce, siphoning may be the best option. You may have other things that have gas that could service you, like your lawnmower or go-kart. But you need to know how to get that gas out, and back into your car. This is where siphoning comes in handy. I would only teach this one to older children, as it is a bit more dangerous, but no less useful, if you find yourself in a tight spot.

Miscellaneous Skills and Things to Consider

Communication skills, as mentioned above, are another area that your child should master whether it is doomsday or not. By being effective communicators, they will be able to build good relationships, be more effective leaders (if needed), and communicate in an efficient and productive manner. When people communicate effectively, it can save time and persuade people to work together. Part of communication is being able to talk to adults in an adult manner. This can be necessary if your child would end up in a type of confrontation with an adult post-doomsday. Not only that, but good communication skills will serve your child well throughout life.

A child who can communicate as an adult will command more respect. If your child is bartering for items, this will be a necessary skill for them to have; otherwise adults will try to take advantage of the situation and trade unfairly with them. One of the best ways you can teach your children the skill of bartering or trading is by taking them to garage sales or flea markets. Pick a small item and let them

haggle for price with adults on their own. It is a confidence booster and puts practice to use with someone outside of the normal group of adults they usually interact with. Part of bargaining or trading is knowing the value of items. A fun exercise to do with your children is to give them scenarios of items you have and items that you need and what would they trade. Obviously, the point of this exercise is to teach them what is necessities and what is not. They will also learn to evaluate what will be valuable to others given certain scenarios. It is a fun game to play for children, and they'll be learning important lessons along the way.

One thing you may overlook when prepping is preserving family photographs. Now, you may be thinking that they are not a necessity but maybe would be nice to have around. The truth is, you do need them. And not just for sentimental reasons (though they are nice for that, as well). If a family member becomes separated from the rest of the family, you would need a photograph to go out and search for them. How else will strangers be able to tell you if they have seen your family member or not? It is handy when making copies of missing posters. Since you are a prepping parent, you know how quickly children change and grow. Try to keep a recent picture of all family members in your shelter. It will not only provide comfort during the dark periods, but can also be extremely helpful, if the need arises.

There are many things you can talk to your children about preparing for, but there is no real way to practice. The best thing we can do is

teach our children the skills and personality traits of survival. One important one is perseverance. Hopefully you have taught your children to not easily give up if at first they don't succeed, but again it is something that is taught to your children over a long period of time, and something they will keep learning their entire life. Another one is compassion for others. Compassion is something that we want our children to have, of course, but something that becomes very important in survival mode. We want them to be kind and caring to others, but in the event of doomsday, their compassion has to be kept in check. Although there will be people in need of help, you will not be able to help everyone without compromising your own safety and viability. It is a fine line that you will want to discuss with your children when they reach a level of maturity when they can handle this harsh reality of life after a doomsday event.

One of the best ways you can make the experience of life after a doomsday event better for your kids is to provide them with a sense of normalcy, as much as possible in that situation. Your life may be completely different, but try to set up a new schedule in your new life. If children know that lights are out at 7:30 pm every night, and everyone gets out of bed at 6:00 am, it will provide comfort in the long run by establishing these new rituals and giving them something to rely on each day. Another way to create a sense of normalcy, besides setting a daily schedule, is to explain the new life situation to the best of your ability, and limit their access to scary news reports via Internet, television or radio. Occasionally, let them make a minor decision so that they feel like they have a bit of control in this new

environment. It's important that we keep them from becoming completely overwhelmed, or they may just shut down.

If you have a special needs child, you will know what extra steps will be necessary to keep your child safe and comfortable in the event of doomsday. Extra preparations are probably already a part of your everyday life, so you will be able to handle the thought of the extra care you will need in preparing your child. It will be even more important to keep instructions, skills and stress to a manageable level for your child.

Some movies about survival can open up a dialogue with your children about the choices the characters make or what your children would do if they were faced with the same scenario. Or maybe they can just be a great way to spend an evening with your family. Some great survival movies for families include Castaway, Swiss Family Robinson, the Life of Pi, Red Dawn (either version), I Am Legend, War of the World (Tom Cruise edition), 2012, and The Day After Tomorrow. Depending on the age of your children, there are more movies that have somewhat more adult themes to them, but that are no less helpful. They include Zombieland (comedy), the Book of Eli, the Postman, The Grey, Alive, and The Edge. A fun movie about life after an "End of the World" event in the shelter is Blast from the Past. It gives preppers a good laugh about what would happen if they mistakenly went into a shelter for 10 years (or longer) then emerged into society again. Left Behind is another good movie, but it is Christian based so it may not appeal to some preppers.

My Story

One of my first experiences with preparing my family for a major event was making sure we all had an Every Day Carry (EDC) bag. This is a special challenge for a child in public school, as knives and any fire-making tool will get them expelled, but there are many things that they can still have to keep them prepared in an emergency situation. My wife and I gave them a small flashlight, a compass, a map, a few bandanas, balloons, waterproof lipstick in a bright color, crayons (a grease pencil is also an option), a small memo pad or a few sheets of paper, a compact mirror, a 9-volt battery, paperclips, a small roll of electrical tape, a length of whatever rope you prefer (550 Paracord is always a good option) and several rags. My kids keep all this in a runner's pack, though there are several other options available for them to keep their tools.

Now, no matter what you put in an EDC, it makes no difference if you don't know how to use it or what it's for. The compass, the map, and the flashlight are obvious to anyone and I think one of the first survival skills to teach your children is how to use a map and a compass. It's good in almost any emergency situation and, even without having a map available, being able to use a compass is a very good skill to have. One of the methods I used to teach my children was having a scavenger hunt around the house using only compass directions and a homemade map to each location.

If your children are a bit older (mine were 4 and 6), you can set up other challenges for them to overcome on their search. Knot tying

and signaling are two I added quickly to these games, though you can add your own based on your family's needs. Remember to tailor the difficulty of the challenge to your child's abilities; you don't want them to get entirely frustrated and give up. You want them to be encouraged by early successes, as this will fuel their desire to learn more skills. Show them uses for the skills they're actively learning and they will be more eager to learn new ones. While you're teaching them about navigation, teach them how to navigate without a compass, even if it's just by using the sun to figure out direction. Making games around the skills you're teaching them has been a universally effective tool for me with young children.

Survival Items

I've covered various survival items in the preceding pages, but I know there are always some that even I forget. My wife has kindly reminded me to not forget to add these, as we've found them really helpful for us and our children. So this next section is about survival items that may not have been covered elsewhere, but which can still be very useful!

Bandanas:

These are a great multiple-use tool that I honestly believe that everyone should keep on hand.

Here are just a few things you can do with bandanas:

- They can be used as a signal by waving them.
- You can wet them in water and apply them to the back of your neck to help keep you cool.
- Wrap them over your head to prevent sunburn and heat stroke.
- Bunched up, you can use them to grab something hot (more

effective if you use three or four).

- They can be used (especially with rope) as a sling. This is a David and Goliath sling, not a medical sling, though you could probably figure out a way to use them for that as well!
- You can strip them down for a short length of rope or strip them down for a longer but weaker cord.
- They can be used as a bag for gathering food or other survival objects.
- If you tie a stone in one and a rope to the other end, you can easily throw a rope where you want it.
- They easily allow you to filter particulates out of water, making it safer to drink.
- If you tie a few stones or a large stone in one, it makes a club for selfdefense.
- You can wash yourself or equipment with a clean one if you use it as a washcloth.
- They make good dust masks if worn over the face.
- They can also be cut up for their merits as fabric, clean strips of bandana are decent bandages (especially with the tampons we'll come to later for absorbency).

And that's just off the top of my head. Another good “training game” to play with your kids is to help them figure out as many uses for a bandana (or other item) as they can think of. It's a good way to get yourself into a use-everything, creative survival mindset, and you'll be surprised how ingenious some of your children's ideas are.

Balloons:

I know. They may seem odd for a child's EDC but they are another invaluable multi-use survival tool.

Balloons are watertight and remarkably elastic, you can easily carry a liter of water inside one. Though, keep in mind, when filled with a liter of water, a balloon is also very fragile, so put it inside a sock or wrap it in other fabric (one or two of the bandanas from earlier come to mind) to lessen some of the fragility aspects.

Being watertight has other uses as well. Storing things that need to stay dry is very useful, so you can carry your tinder or your matches (should you use them) in one. Also, cellphones and cameras, or anything else that you don't want to get wet.

That elasticity has other uses as well. A couple of balloons and a y-shaped branch make a decent improvised sling-shot (I recommend at least four balloons on each side though, they don't have all that much power).

Latex is flammable as well, so if you apply one of your matches to the balloon you can use it to more easily ignite your tinder.

Here's a fun fact: Did you know that you can fit your hand inside a balloon? What use does this have, you ask? Well, if you need to touch something without getting the bacteria from your most likely dirty hand on it (such as a wound, food, etc.), a balloon that hasn't been out of its wrapper yet gives you a very crude rubber glove that is cleaner than most things you'll find. While we're on the topic of

medical uses for balloons, they can make pressure bandages on the smaller parts of the body, and you can also use them to keep a wound from getting wet. (Cut on your foot? Have to walk through a dirty stream? Put the foot in a balloon.)

For slightly less practical but still useful purposes, a balloon filled with something soft (loose dirt is an option, as is native moss) makes a makeshift pillow.

Stretched over something that needs a lid, it keeps bugs, dust, and water out. See; just look at all the things you can use balloons for. And, I'm sure if you ask your children, they'll have even more ideas.

Lipstick or Crayons:

Between waterproof lipstick or crayons it's a toss-up. I like to keep one or the other on hand for marking a trail or other marking purposes, and while lipstick is easier to apply to surfaces that crayons won't mark on, the crayons are more easily flammable and I would never pass up another way to make or fuel a fire in a situation.

If you can find it (and I've had difficulty finding it and have ended up making it), dyed quality wax is a better option than crayons.

However, crayons are cheaper wax which burns faster and with more smoke. Most people recommend beeswax and I am still deciding which wax I prefer though I am beginning to like soy wax for most purposes. If you do find (or make) a nice dyed wax, it has several other uses, including protecting your skin and gear from the elements (think, chapstick). Also, with bits of bandana you can make a candle from the wax and them and where a candle may not be as

useful as a full-on fire, it does have its own uses (lighting my way to the bathroom if I don't want to waste my battery on a flashlight - also reading at night. (And if the size of my kids' packs allowed it, I would put a book in there too. I keep a book in my EDC but I use a bigger bag).

Paper:

Paper of some sort is useful for a lot of things, not the least of which is communication. Having the ability to leave a note for someone saying which direction you or your kids set out in when gathering food or looking for something is a useful enough thing on its own but paper also makes a better fire starter than a match, once lit. In my family we use it as gum as well - rip a piece off and chew it on the trail. Something to keep your mouth busy, stimulate saliva, and keep it from getting dry. If you're worried about an anarchic emergency situation, teach your children a simple (or not so simple) cipher to prevent your messages from being used by other eyes. I don't find it to be a useful thing to learn but my needs and emergencies are not your needs and emergencies.

Mirror:

The mirror is a dual-purpose item. First, it is an excellent long distance signaling device. Second, it can be broken for something sharp to tip an arrow or a spear. It won't do any really heavy work but something with a point you can fish or hunt with is better than nothing at all. It's no substitute for a knife but if your kids go to public school, a knife is out of the question for an EDC.

Teaching your children Morse code would be a good thing to do while you're teaching signaling. It's usable with smoke signals, tapping, or mirror flashes and is simple enough to teach to anyone. My kids learned it at the same time they were learning the Latin alphabet. We made flashcards with both of them (and a few others) on them and went through them after school.

Battery:

The 9-volt has only one real purpose (other than something heavy to tie in a bandana for rope control) and that is that when combined with the paperclip, it can produce sparks for a fire. Touch the paperclip to both of the battery's terminals (teach electricity safety here and make sure that your child's hand is insulated, even though it won't hurt them) and run it back and forth to create sparks. No substitute for matches or for my personal favorite fire starting method, a trusty butane lighter, but again, if they go to public school, your choices for what they can carry on their person at all times are hampered.

Be sure to teach fire safety before teaching them how to make fire though. A small child with reasonably easy access to fire and no restraint over when to use it is a dangerous thing. My brother got 2nd and 3rd degree burns over almost 30% of his body because he knew how to make a fire but did not know how to take care of one safely. Don't let your children make the same mistake. Start them with candles and work your way up.

Electrical Tape:

Electrical tape is a strictly personal recommendation. It is my adhesive of choice for an EDC. I prefer it to duct tape for its compression abilities, its portability, and its more precise applications. I would always keep one or the other in an EDC though. When combined with the rags, they make Band-Aids better than the ones you can find in the store.

Electrical Tape can be stretched and then it returns to its original size so it can be used to compress a wound more easily than duct tape. When thinking about urban survival, tape is invaluable and, even in wilderness survival, tape is useful. Though, unlike basically everything else in this list, it's not flammable. Though if you wrap a pan handle (or something else that gets hot that you know you'll be needing to handle) that non-flammability and insulative quality is very useful.

Rope:

Do I even have to explain the value of rope? The reason I recommend type III paracord so highly is that it comes apart to give you eight times the length of rope you're carrying. In addition, when it's taken apart, only the nylon sheath does any real heavy lifting, so the other lines can be used as fishing lines, shoe laces, *etc.* It can also keep a structure together in moderate conditions.

For an everyday carry situation this is my go to rope. Though it is not ideal in all situations, it is the best overall cordage I can think of,

especially Mil-spec (Though that's not to say that the cheaper commercial stuff isn't extraordinarily useful as well; in fact it's what I put in the kids' bags because it came in their favorite colors) Again, I could probably spend an entire book (maybe even two or three) on the merits of various knots, what knots to teach your kids, and how best to teach them, I'm going to avoid getting off on that tangent again. I will say: teach them a bend, a hitch, and a loop at the minimum. And, to quote something many people have said before me, "It is better to know a knot and not need it than need a knot and not know it."

Okay, so your kids have an every day carry bag but that's only one aspect of preparedness. What's next?

Your kids clearly now need to make a bug-out bag, and yes, they need to make it themselves (under your supervision of course). They will feel much more involved and take a greater interest in it if they are making it themselves.

Now, this is an area where your local school system has less to say about what they can put in this bag. Especially when working with small children (like mine were when I started this process with them), you have to take into account what they can actually carry. I could recommend a thousand products for what to carry but I don't think that's the best way to teach children how to build a BOB. They need to know what's going in it, why it's going in it, and what other uses they can have for these things. Having said that, there are seven things that every bug out bag needs, and those things are:

Hydration:

Every bag needs water and this is one of the places where a child is going to begin to have problems. Three liters of water is about seven pounds (eight, depending on what you carry it in) and where that's not much on its own, when combined with other gear (like food and a sleeping bag) and additional water for anything you have to use water to cook, it becomes a lot of weight for a little person to manage. Now, I'm not saying that you should skimp on having the little ones carry water but it is something worth taking into account.

Something my kids have taken to carrying along with water is tea bags because if we end up outside longer than our bottled water lasts, we're going to end up boiling any water we come across anyway and we may as well make tea while we're doing it.

For storing water I recommend wide-mouthed aluminum water bottles instead of plastic. Yes, they are a little heavier but much more durable and you can boil your water directly inside the bottle in a pinch. Now, I personally don't have my kids carry their own water filtration system - I'm going to make sure they stay with me and I carry one (so does the wife) but they do carry a couple of iodine tablets just in case we get separated. Not a bad idea.

Sustenance:

Food is number two on the list of things that I worried most about when thinking what to put in their bags. It had to be something light

but nourishing and not need too much water to cook, otherwise it defeats the purpose. I couldn't find much of anything, other than MREs or power bars, and I didn't really want to do that, so we made hard tack. Here's how ours are made.

Step 1: Find a quality nutrition powder and a quality protein powder.

Step 2: Mix 2 parts flour to one part water with a teaspoon of salt for every cup of flour.

Step 3: Mix in protein and nutrient powders (as much as the dough will really let you incorporate) and possibly some seasonings (we like garlic powder for the savory ones and cinnamon sugar for the sweet ones).

Step 4: Bake in the oven at 375F for 45 minutes.

Step 5: Let dry in a warm dry place for at least three days; you want the moisture gone.

Step 6: When eating, soak in liquid to soften, then consume. They're also good soaked and then pan fried, and then drink the liquid you soaked them in.

These were my first lesson with cooking with my kids, actually.

Something I learned from that experience is that, especially when cooking (and I do encourage you to let your kids help you make these or just have them make them themselves by a recipe if they're a little older), is that you have to let them have room for mistakes. My six year old spilled almost five pounds of flour onto the flour while trying to get four cups into the bowl, (and I had just turned my back to check on his sister for two minutes!) and my four year old, when it came to her turn to help, set the smoke alarms off by leaving an

oven mitt in the oven when we went in to check on the them cooking. Either of these incidents could have derailed the session, but I wanted to make sure my kids had a positive experience with making the tack, in case they need to do it again, by themselves someday. So accept that mistakes happen, and try to make it a fun, positive learning experience.

Clothing:

This is one of the most variable matters of a bag. Climate, taste, and season all have their factors to play in terms of what clothes you should wear but here's what we came up with for my kids.

2 pairs of shoes (the ones on their feet and the ones in the bag).

2 pairs of pants (long pants, not shorts. One of them should be reasonably warm. We lucked out and found wool pants at a thrift store).

3 shirts (2 t-shirts and a warm long sleeve shirt or sweater in the winter).

Whatever jacket is in season.

Underwear (When we first started these bags, I carried twice as much underwear and twice as many pants because my four year old was still having accidents).

A baseball cap or winter hat, depending on the season.

Three bandanas (see uses for a bandana earlier).

This is just an example. Your clothing will vary, depending on your children's ages, your location and climate, and the time of the year you are planning for.

Shelter:

This is another one where personal taste plays a big role. Some people prefer tents, others tarps, others just a waterproof bedroll. For my kids, I still keep it to a sleeping bag and a small tarp that fits inside the bag when it's rolled up. This is big enough that each can carry one and if they sleep next to each other, they're big enough to cover over them or to go underneath them. This is also dependent on climate and season though, so plan accordingly.

First Aid:

Gauze.

At least one pressure bandage.

Needle and thread (stitches could be vital. Sterilize the needle with the lighter that's going down in the fire section).

I recommend some sterile gauze and tape over prepackaged adhesive bandages for customizability of the bandage mostly.

Aspirin, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, any daily medication, Allergy medication, Benadryl (Especially if someone has a bee allergy).

Popsicle sticks for finger and toe splints.

I don't recommend a venom extractor, as from all I've been able to read they're a waste of money and space. I do however recommend a pair of high boots. Most snakebites or other creature bites happen low on the leg; a pair of high boots should prevent most, if not all, of these.

Fire:

I'm a firm believer that esoteric fire making methods (magnifying glass, battery and steel wool, soda can + chocolate bar) are all good in theory but for something as important as making a fire, and especially when surviving with kids, you want something that is going to work basically instantly every time, under any condition, and for that we turn to the humble butane lighter. Some people prefer matches but I don't like risking getting my fire making equipment wet. Everyone in my family keeps at least three lighters on them in any bug out situation. One in a pocket, one around their neck, and one in the bag.

I didn't put a pan in the kids' bags for cooking but as I mentioned before, aluminum water bottles that they can boil water in.

Light:

Flashlight, headlamp, and batteries. I personally keep a kerosene lamp but that was cut from the kids' bags for weight. Though, when they get a bit bigger they'll get one too, because it's basically a portable fire.

Weapons:

The only weapons I gave my kids were pepper spray and a safety whistle. I don't trust them with anything like a firearm at their age and they're too small for hand-to-hand combat. My wife and I considered tasers but decided against it for economy and the fact that the ones we could find ate batteries something fierce and that was extra weight for the little ones.

And finally...

They need a knife! The needs of a child for a knife are the same as an adult's. Help them pick something that will fit in their hand and realize that that measurement will change about as often as they change their shoes.

Now BOB preparation is one place where we've had a lot of luck. Our house is backed against a forest and we do three-day drills twice a year. We go out as far as the kids could walk on Friday afternoon and "get lost" and camp out of our bags for two days. Then we find our way back on Sunday night. The kids quickly learned to add a book or two to their bags (which I highly recommend for everyone but especially for children), due to the down time, but other than that, they've loved the excursions and have learned an enormous amount of skills. If you can practice in a "real-world" situation, at least by going camping, I would strongly recommend it.

So, at this point we've taught our children how to be prepared in the moment, how to run from a dangerous situation, where to meet up with us, and how to pack a bag. But in my mind, there's still one crucial aspect that's missing. That's the ability to survive for the long term in a bad situation, preferably in a central location. There are some essential skills that especially Americans have lost in the past fifty years that I feel need to make a reemergence, just in case things get bad. There are too many to go through how to teach them all to your kids here but these are some of the most needed, in my humble opinion. Feel free to disagree, change things up, or add your own that are more applicable to your family and your personal situation.

Use these as a starting point for discussion with your family and go from there.

First and foremost comes the art of canning and preserving food. These are skills that have been almost entirely lost among the younger generations. Heck, even most people in my generation have no idea how to can anything (and I'm not even that old, I like to think!) And canning is not just for vegetables; you can also can meats.

Now I'm not saying you should entirely neglect purchasing cans of goods, as they are cheaper, more durable, and more readily available but in even a couple of weeks in a regional survival situation, the cans are eventually going to run out and being able to make your own would be a great boon if you wanted to go "off the grid". They would be invaluable come winter when your crops are no longer producing, and they are a great skill to teach your children.

Now, why do I place canning above gardening or hunting? You can find abundant food in the outside world in the spring, summer, and autumn. You can trade for it and you can (if needed) steal it but in the winter there is never enough natural food to go around and having a supply of your own that is safe through the winter is an invaluable resource. And, if you're particularly good at this skill, you can trade your canning skill into something else valuable by offering to can food that people bring you for some other service.

The value of storable food is something we often underrate in our modern mega-mart society but I have lived in the Northwest long enough and have been rained or snowed in often enough to realize that there's not always easy access to food, even without a disaster of some sort to complicate matters further.

This is one of the rare times in one of my books where I will make a product recommendation and say that everyone seriously interested in the subject should pick up a copy of the Ball Blue Book of Preserving and practice working from it. You can find a lot of this information online as well but the book would be an incredibly invaluable commodity should we have a societal collapse (I also just like having physical media on hand, especially in the kitchen). There are several other good books to have on hand but you can get this one for less than ten dollars and it is well worth it.

I'm a very big believer in getting kids into the kitchen, so help walk them through the recipes and techniques and then have them make them themselves. The skills you can learn from canning (knifework, cook times, and sanitation among others) are useful in all aspects of cooking and being able to cook is a valuable skill in any situation, emergency or not.

Other emergency cooking skills worth learning and teaching include smoking and curing meat. Curing meat is easy, though you need either curing salt (pink salt - you can find it online or in specialty

stores) or celery/spinach juice (some other leafy green vegetable juice will also do the job here).

There are countless recipes online for smoking and curing your own meat. I prefer brining (that is wet curing) to dry curing. I find the seasonings penetrate the meat better. However, dry curing is often easier. Remember that you're going to want to add more than just salt to your curing or your meat will just taste like salt. Something sweet will help cut that saltiness a lot (honey and brown sugar are traditional). One of my favorite chefs brines his turkeys before roasting them for Thanksgiving dinner. Here's an example.

His recipe for a 14lb turkey is:

1 cup kosher salt

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1 gallon vegetable stock

1 tablespoon black peppercorns

1 1/2 teaspoons allspice berries

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped candied ginger

1 gallon heavily iced water

Now I recommend that you make sure your meat is in smaller, more manageable and storable portions, but you can brine an entire turkey whole - it will take longer to cure than smaller pieces though.

Brining is an easy one to practice with your kids. I use a scaled down version of that recipe for roasting chickens and we do that about once every two weeks. We set it in the brine in the morning and put it in the oven at 4:30PM (I like to roast my birds at high heat ,so we put them on at 500-600F degrees, depending on what sort of oven you

have. My minimum roasting temp is 450F; it gives you a much juicier bird than the traditional 350.) Now, a one-day brine is not long enough to properly cure meat but it teaches your children the method, which is the important thing. We've eaten cured pork two years after preserving with no ill effects but always make sure that you cure safely, with proper sanitation and be sure to get your sodium nitrite in there. Botulism is a very, very ugly thing. Something that I have never seen happen, but I have had other people who have cured meats and all of my old curing books tell me about, is that a small amount of white mold may grow on your preserved meat after some time. This is harmless and prevents more dangerous molds from taking root. If it were to occur on my meat, I would probably cut the outer layer off (just because I'm very squeamish about bacteria) and serve the rest. If anything green grows on your meat, get rid of it; there is no saving it.

Now, for a bit of black magic. No, not really. Did you know the Egyptians had functional refrigeration thousands of years before electricity? (History lesson with your kids here). Now, think about that for a moment. How they did it was reasonably simple and is an excellent opportunity to teach your children science they wouldn't otherwise learn until college. It's also a good family weekend project to make a few of these and let the kids experiment with them. (I put one each in the kids' bedrooms to keep the water they like to keep by their bed cold)

Here's what you'll need.

- 2 clay pots (UNGLAZED) - the smaller one needs to fit inside the

larger one, with some room around it. Be sure to plug any holes that are in the bottom of the pots (as you're most likely to find unglazed clay pots as flower pots and they have holes in their bottoms) - clay, epoxy, cork, large rocks, or my personal preferred, electrical tape will plug these holes quite effectively.

- Sand (reasonably coarse sand works better here but anything will do.)

- Water

You take the large pot and fill it with enough sand so that the top of the smaller pot will sit at the same height with the top of the larger one. Then you place the smaller one inside and fill the gap between the two pots with sand, leaving a small portion unfilled (about a finger's width from the top). Take water and wet the sand between the two and cover the top of the inner pot with a wet cloth until it gets cold. Then, just keep the pots in a warm, dry place and evaporation will do the chilling for you. You'll have to make sure the sand stays wet (this requires adding water about twice a day)

The children loved making these and believed they were magic until I explained the science of thermal exchange to them. Not a long-term preservation solution but I love having mine to keep things cool without the need for electricity. They are rather water intensive though so only use them in an area where water is plentiful. I've kept uncured meat in one of these things for over a week (ten days, I think) and they keep water icy cold for drinking.

One point on which I will probably be in the minority with almost every other guide you will read is on the point of hunting and selfdefense. I don't believe that guns are your best choice here, necessarily. They are loud, cumbersome, and their ammunition cannot be easily homemade or found (because in an emergency situation, the gun store is going to get raided extremely quickly).

On the other hand, I am a very firm believer in learning how to make bows, crossbows, and slings, and becoming proficient in their use. Crossbows are good if you're used to guns, though a bow is often the better choice for children who don't have that built in muscle memory that many of the adults who will be teaching them will have in terms of shooting. Now, this is a point where I am definitely saying **MAKE YOUR OWN** and teach your children to make their own: Arrows. Knowing how to make and use arrows will give you a nearly limitless source of ammunition long after the last bullet has been fired.

Guns do have their uses and if you have the money to purchase a few shotguns and their ammunition, that is not a bad option, but for most emergency purposes, a bow will do you as well, if not better, than a handgun or small caliber rifle.

You can make a bow in the following way: Take about a four-foot piece of a hardwood (oak is a decent starter - a 48inch by 1/2inch piece of trim from your local hardware store works wonderfully) and a two-foot piece of soft wood (poplar is a good one), wood glue and

rope. You will also need a planer or a knife.

Glue the softwood to the hardwood with your wood glue, place the softwood in the center of your hardwood beam (remember that it should be twice as long) and tie or clamp it in place.

Once the glue has set (at least overnight), plane the bow down. You want it to taper from thin to thick with another thin point in the middle (the handle), almost like two opposing teardrops. It's very important that you make sure that both sides of the bow are even.

Then, cut notches out for the string. They should be a few inches from the top and bottom of your bow

Once the bow is strung, check the draw strength. If it's too hard to draw back to full extension, you'll need to plane more to thin the bow and weaken the draw strength. There's no real way to increase the draw strength of a bow that I know of, so it's better to reduce it progressively than to go too far the other way.

There are several good resources on how to tiller a bow. That is to make sure it draws well and evenly without having to go back and replane it two dozen times. It is the subject of it's own treatise and not something that can (or should) be covered in this book. Though I said to use a 48-inch piece earlier, don't forget to adjust the size to the size of your child. You never want to fire a bow taller than you are.

Be sure to keep a longbow unstrung when not in use; you don't want

them to take a permanent curve or they lose power, though if you make a compound bow (and that is a very technically demanding piece of craft), you don't have that worry.

Don't neglect armed melee combat in terms of selfdefense. So many people I know seem content with learning a martial art and ignore the fact that many of their attackers will be better armed. I have been teaching my kids from ancient fighting manuals (mostly maces and axes) that are available online. We all practice against each other with properly weighted weapons coated in thick foam. It's great fun and it has allowed us to work against moving and resisting targets without risk of hurting each other too terribly.

The reason I recommend axe and mace combat above using a sword or a machete is long-term access to them. Most of my family's prepping is for natural disasters and societal collapse and in a societal collapse situation you need to be able to make your own tools and it's very technically demanding to make a functional sword. An axe, spear, or mace is far simpler to produce and easier to learn to use. Anyone can use a mace with a reasonable level of proficiency; it's no different than swinging a bat around. Knife combat is something that could be worth teaching as well but I've always preferred to have a reach advantage against an enemy.

There are many, many other skills worth learning, and maybe I'll have to write a couple more books on them all! Among them are brewing (beer is a valuable commodity and it is a safe liquid to drink, the brewing process kills bacteria), basic construction, especially if

you use the ancient Japanese techniques of constructing without nails or stone construction (very useful, just in case nails become a scarce resource).

Something else that is often overlooked is learning to tell stories and play an instrument. It's something to keep the mind busy in any situation. Learn to amuse yourself without the need for electronics or even without outside tools at all. It's often made the difference in our own lives between a hopeless and boring trip back home and a lively happy one. It is also a tool you can always barter with.

The value of a basic scientific education is often underrated as well - biology, chemistry, and physics (especially the physics related to the laws of motion and how energy is transferred) is very useful in a survival situation. Of course, learning what food is edible and what isn't should be on the list, though remember that if you're in an area where you are unfamiliar with the local plants, you're going to need to do research on what is safe and what isn't. It is always better to do this in a time when you don't need it than in a time when you do.

Something else to mention is to get involved with other preppers in your area. Especially ones with kids - it gives you a social connection, gives your kids someone to play with, and you can all teach them and each other different skills that others may not have. We learned to make bows from a family that I met on a prepper website that happened to live in my local area. Moderately sized groups will be able to get more done than several smaller ones as

well and if you can band together with others in your area you will be better off than just your family alone. Just make sure that they are people you can rely on and not ones that will leech off you if things get bad.

Also, it's worth thinking about children when stockpiling goods. If you have children, or even if you don't, it may be worth getting baby supplies to trade or use for yourself. Children aren't going to stop existing in an emergency, and if you have diapers when all those around you have run out you, are going to be a hero and highly in demand. Same with baby formula or jars of baby food.

Some of the other things my children have taught me to stock up on are books and cards. The kids were talking to some ex-military people who told them that a deck of cards or a good book was one of the best things you could get in a care package. It got us to thinking about that sort of thing in an emergency - even if it's just a citywide power outage, having card and board games could be a wonderful trading commodity and source of entertainment. Most of the stockpiling my family does is for trade though; we trust ourselves to be mostly self-sufficient in terms of food and other things like that.

The final note I will leave you with is how to best teach all this, and more, to children.

Step 1: Allow them to make mistakes. Mistakes are the price we pay for growth. You cannot expect children to understand something the first time and get it right away. Some will understand some things

immediately but there will be other things that they will struggle with. Learn the skills yourself and learn them several different ways so that if a child isn't grasping it one way, they can try another. (This last point is true of all education and it is worth remembering that there almost always multiple ways to accomplish something; let them find their own way to do it)

Step 2: Explain not just the *how* but the *why*. This was something my wife and I learned with food preparation. Our children knew that they needed to keep a sanitary workstation when canning but they didn't know *why* and so they often forgot and contaminated what they were working with. Now there are two ways to handle this: you can either punish them until they just stop forgetting or you can explain to them why it's important and once they truly understand, they will often be more aware of the need to do it. It has worked with my children for everything from school work to sanitation and I swear by teaching my children why we do things instead of just how we do things and if I cannot adequately explain why something is done the way it's done, I clearly don't know enough about it to be teaching it!

Step 3: Make it fun. This is something I learned when writing children's' educational books and applied to my own children. They're much more likely to grasp something and remember it, if it's enjoyable. I found when I was teaching music that the kids who enjoyed their instruments made more progress than the ones who did not, and part of that is that they practiced more. If you can slip preparation training into a game, you've won.

It really is that simple to teach children almost anything. Let them learn these things in a non-emergency situation so that they have them in case of an emergency.

Hopefully this book has provided some food for thought on a skill or two that maybe you had overlooked. I hope you find prepping with your children to be a rewarding and educational experience.

Hopefully the day never comes that your children will need the lifesaving skills that you have taught them, but you should sleep better at night knowing that your children are capable of taking care of themselves and helping those around them.

Bugging Out or Bugging In?

Introduction

There are plenty of guides that tell you all about bugging out and what to do if you need to bug in, but this guide will cover each option in depth. You will find checklists of items you will want to get together to make bugging in or bugging out work for you and your family. There are plenty of tips, tricks and best practices to help you be successful in your goal to be prepared for nearly anything. You will find everything you ever needed to know about storing food, water and other necessary supplies.

This is the kind of guide you will reference often as you pack your bug out bag and stockpile food and water. There are so many factors to consider when it comes to prepping it is easy to overlook a small, but very important detail. This book is meant to guide you through every aspect of prepping while providing you with ideas and options you can apply to your life and where you live.

What is Bugging?

If you have an interest in survival and prepping, you have probably heard the term “bugging out” or “bugging in” quite a bit. It is essentially what prepping is all about. So, what is it? The term bugging was originally used by military personnel. When things became too dangerous for troops and other military personnel to remain in a location, they would bug out. Meaning, they got out of an area before there was an invasion or attack. Now, if you want to get really technical, the phrase is rumored to have stemmed from actual bugs scattering from a location, but that cannot possibly be proven. Another theory is the British military used the term bugged out and the Americans quickly picked up on it. From there, civilians have begun using the term in prepping circles.

Bugging is the act of surviving the aftermath of an event that leaves the world as you know it upside down and inside out. If you have read blogs or other eBooks about survival and prepping, you have probably seen the terms, TEOTWAWKI and SHTF. The first stands for The End Of The World As We Know It and that last is a little more vulgar and stands for when S*** Hits The Fan. When one or both of these things happen, your bugging plan goes into motion.

If you haven't taken the time to prepare, the hours and days following a major event can be overwhelming. It can be extremely devastating to your state of mind, which survivalists will tell you is a huge concern. Your mind is a powerful tool. Imagine the comfort you will feel knowing you have food, water and medical supplies when the rest of your neighborhood has been turned upside down.

Although you will still have a lot on your plate, marking off the necessities of life can make a dire situation, tolerable.

People who have taken the time to learn about what is needed to survive an event are referred to as preppers. Prepping to live seems pretty natural, but many are still not on board. When you add the word bugging to the equation, people really get uncomfortable. However, for those who understand what it means, it is actually a little comforting knowing you are prepared to bug in or bug out.

What's the Difference Between Bugging In or Bugging Out

You understand the idea of “bugging,” but how do you know when it is time to leave the comfort and safety of your home or other location and head out for the open wilderness, forest or whatever the surroundings? Bugging out is setting out with whatever you can carry on your back or in some cases, in your car. This is always going to be a decision that needs to be made hours or days before an impending event. If you feel like your location is secure enough for you to bug in, that will be the focus of your preps.

City dwellers and those that live in the suburbs often plan to bug out to a secret location where they will bug in for the duration. Bugging out involves carrying a single or several bags that have been packed ahead of time. The bags are filled with the necessities you need to survive in the outdoors.

If you know your home is not a suitable place to try and ride out a major storm, a terrorist attack or other catastrophic event, you need to make plans to bug out. The moment you see a major storm headed your way or the moment you know an attack is imminent, it is time to bug out if the safety of your home will be compromised. Now, depending on the scenario, you may only need to bug out to a hotel or a relative's home in a neighboring city or town. It is impossible to predict with accuracy what kind of situation you will be faced with.

On the flip side of that, if things are going downhill in a hurry, you need to do what is necessary to secure your home to bug in. If it isn't safe to leave or you don't think you can make it to another

location without encountering danger, bugging in is usually the best bet. When you are in your own home, you have those creature comforts you have come to love and appreciate.

Every family will have to make the decision based on the circumstances. Later in the book, we will discuss the things that you need to do to prepare for either scenario. Every prepper knows you have to be ready to deal with almost anything. Putting all your “eggs” in the bugging in basket could be extremely dangerous. You just never know when an attack is going to hit your home. You also don’t know if you will be able to safely bug out when the time comes. You need your home to be stocked enough to keep you and your family alive until it is safe to bug out.

The old saying, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry,” can and should be applied to prepping. You just never know.

Common Reasons for Prepping

In the survival world, you will find a wide number of reasons given for why people are getting involved in the prepping movement. You could ask 20 different preppers the same question and you are likely to get 20 different answers. The reasons people decide to start prepping vary widely, but the goal is always the same—to survive a catastrophic event.

The following are just a few of the reasons people choose to prep.

- War on our soil
- Civil unrest
- Terrorist attack
- Natural disaster *i.e.* hurricanes, earthquakes, severe storm
- EMP—electromagnetic pulse from the sun
- Pandemic
- Worldwide economic collapse
- Personal comfort in case of job loss, family tragedy
- Religious reasons
- Major climate change

Your reasons may be all of the above or something totally different. Ultimately, if you are prepping for a specific event, like a pandemic, your preps may be a little different than somebody who is prepping for a major financial collapse. No matter your reason for prepping, it is always done with the same goal of surviving. Parents

tend to make up a majority of the prepping population. It is instinct to want to protect your children and that includes helping them survive situations that could otherwise be life-threatening.

Preppers have taken the initiative to prepare for a disaster because it is highly likely there will not be help readily available in the aftermath. When there is some catastrophic event, it could take weeks or even months before there is any relief. You have to be able to survive on your own without the luxury of having a store to run to or the ability to call 911 or receive government assistance. Many people do not fully understand what it is like to truly be on their own. We have become so accustomed to getting everything we need at a store or calling for help, it will be a major adjustment for everybody. Those who have prepared will even struggle a bit to come to terms with the situation. People who didn't prepare are going to be devastated.

They are going to be forced to do things they may have never considered in the past just to survive. That does not bode well for society. Crime will likely be out of control as people become savage in their search for food, water and critical medicines. With no law to regulate those who are killing and thieving, it will be a very rough world.

Although preppers tend to be a quiet bunch who don't like to talk a lot about what they have (for good reason), you will find there are plenty who would prefer it if the entire population did their own prepping. It would make things much more civilized if everybody had their own food stores to turn to. Unfortunately, that isn't the case and the majority of the population will scoff at the idea of stocking up on food and water.

Bugging Out

Bugging out is something that requires careful consideration. If you are leaving the safety and comfort of your home and heading off into the forest, desert or whatever the terrain, you cannot afford to forget a single item. One single tool could mean the difference between life and death. If bugging out is your plan when things go sideways, it is important to make sure the whole family is prepared to survive without the comforts of the home. You would be doing yourself a major disservice if you were to haphazardly run through the home tossing things in a bag that you think will help you survive in the minutes before or after a disaster. It would likely send you off into the wild blue yonder with a false sense of security. When it came time to set up a shelter or procure water, the large amount of food and your toothbrush are not going to help you.

It takes a great deal of planning to pick and choose the right items to put in the bug out bag. You should also spend some time packing the bag carefully. The more organized your packing job, the more stuff you will be able to fit in. When you are forced to act in haste, your decision-making suffers.

What is a Bug Out Bag

In order to bug out, you need a bug out bag. This is the bag that is going to keep you alive. In a serious catastrophe, everything you own in life could very well be in that bag. Without stores or somewhere to buy supplies, what you pack in your bug out bag will be all that you have to carry you through a disaster.

A bug out bag is a backpack filled with key tools that will aid in survival. The bag is going to hold your food, water and various tools needed to get more food, clean water and build a shelter. The bags are packed and ready to grab when it is time to bug out. When you have a bug out bag, you don't have to spend precious minutes deciding what to pack and shove it into a bag haphazardly. If you go this route, you can pretty much guarantee you are going to forget something important.

Every prepper and survival expert knows the key to staying alive and making it through a disaster situation is a well-stocked bug out bag. Our military carries backpacks into the field in case they are not able to make it back to camp. These bags are essentially their survival packs. A bug out bag is basically the same thing, but used by civilians. Our military has come up with some pretty awesome ideas and preppers are constantly integrating them into their own lifestyles and preps. With all the experience and hands on training in the military, it is safe to say what works for them will work for civilians. There is no need to try and reinvent the wheel so to speak. Learn from them and you will save yourself a lot of time and energy.

Picking the Right Bag

Bigger packs are not always better. Take some time picking out a backpack that you can wear comfortably. Ideally, framed packs are your best bet. You have the option of choosing from an internal frame or an external frame. In many ways, they are equal. However, external frames tend to be a bit heavier. There is some new technology that has made external frame packs a little lighter, but unless you are willing to spend a great deal of money on one of these packs, your best bet is an internal frame.

Framed backpacks are ideal because they spread the weight of the pack across your hips and take some of the pressure off your back and shoulders. You can also get a lot more supplies in a framed pack. The downside to the framed packs is their cost. They can be very expensive, upwards of \$300 for a good, sturdy pack. You can often find the packs at secondhand stores and online. However, you want to inspect the pack carefully to ensure the stitching is still tight and your goods are not going to fall out as you climb a hill.

If you are opting to go with a standard backpack, make sure it has adequate shoulder padding, lots of pockets inside and out to maximize space and is not made of a material that is prone to shredding. Wide straps are ideal. When the backpack is loaded down, you don't want thin straps that will dig into your shoulders as you walk. A hip belt is a very important accessory. It will keep the pack positioned on your back so it isn't flopping around when you are walking and climbing. You need to be able to maintain your balance and a shifting backpack will impede your ability to move. A

sternum clip is nice, but not necessarily a necessity. It further anchors the pack to your body by maximizing the chest bone.

Yet another concern is the material that will be against your back. You will want to choose a bag that has a mesh or breathable lining that will be against your body. While it will still be hot and you will likely still sweat a little where the pack rests against your body, you don't want it to be overly hot. This will create chafing and be uncomfortable in general. The breathable material will allow for some airflow to reduce the majority of the sweating.

You also should avoid brightly colored packs. If you are bugging out, chances are you don't want to stand out like a sore thumb. You want to be able to blend into your surroundings. Higher quality packs are worth the extra cost. A flimsy bag will not be able to withstand a lot of wear and tear. You need something that is rugged and durable. Because the bag is going to hold your life in it, it is a wise decision to make the investment to buy at least one really good bag. You can buy a few other bags that are of a lesser quality to keep on hand for family members to pack out.

Pick a bag that has lots of loops, straps and zippered pockets that allow you to hang things from the outside of your bag. Outside, zippered pockets are ideal. These allow you to store things that you need quickly and most often, like flashlights, water purification methods and a knife. Zippers keep gear where it is supposed to be. Invest in what the military refers to as MOLLE clips. These are clips that you hang from the outside of your pack and are used to hold gear you need in a hurry. The clips detach from the bag with a simple snap, which allows you to reach critical gear quickly without

digging through your bag or unzipping pockets. Your whistle is best left hanging from your bag as is a flashlight or canteen.

Newer bags that have been designed for hikers have camelbacks integrated into the pack. These are luxurious! You can carry water without packing around a heavy bottle. A camelback is a flat bladder that would sit across your back. A straw is connected and brought over your shoulder for you to sip on when you get thirsty. These are ingenious and oh so valuable in a bug out situation.

Size matters when choosing a bag for each member of the family. REI has created a chart for you to use to help you determine what size of bag will fit best on your body. The length of your torso will determine which pack is right for you. See below.

Pack Size Torso Length

Extra Small Up to 15 ½ inches

Small 16 to 17 ½ inches

Medium/Regular 18 to 19 ½ inches

Large/Tall 20+ inches

Some people will opt to use a duffel bag, but this is generally not a good idea. They are not easy to carry. While you can certainly pack a lot more gear in a duffel bag, they are just obnoxious to try and carry over rough terrain.

What to Pack in Your Bug Out Bag

This is probably the most important bag you will ever pack in your life. It requires careful consideration and planning. Unfortunately, you can't pack everything, including the kitchen sink. You are going to be carrying this bag on your back and cannot afford to pack it so full it becomes a major burden. A bag that is heavier than you can pack with ease will hinder you and can cause you to trip, fall or be unable to move as fast as you need to. There is a fine line between packing too much and packing enough to survive. Bigger packs are not always better. While some burly men are okay carrying 70 pounds on their backs, the general population is not cut out for that. As you pack your bag, you are going to want to weigh it on your bathroom scale and test it out on your own back.

The following list includes the things you absolutely must have in your pack. Another list will outline some additional items that can make life a little easier, but are not necessarily crucial to your immediate survival. Keep in mind, these supply lists are made with the idea of sustaining one to two people. If you are bugging out with your family, you will want to create bug out bags for each member. In the next section, we will discuss the process of creating a bug out bag for a child—yes, they need one!

Essential Bug Out Bag Supplies

- Water purification method; tablets, filtration straws, portable filters
- Fire starting method—at least 2 ways; waterproof matches, lighter, magnesium stick, flint rod and steel

- Cordage *i.e.* paracord, rope
- Canteen or collapsible water bottle
- Good quality knife
- Poncho
- Trash bags—these have numerous uses *i.e.* water containment, ground barrier, poncho and etc...
- 2 Mylar survival blankets—these aren't meant to keep you warm necessarily, but make an excellent heat shield and can keep you dry. Choose high quality blankets when possible.
- First aid kit—see next section for what to pack
- Folding shovel
- Headlamp—LEDs are best, lightweight and last longer than a typical flashlight
- Wool socks
- Work gloves
- Compass
- Whistle
- Energy bars
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Medications you need for survival
- EpiPen if you have one

Those are the bare minimums. The next list you can pick and choose from based on your personal needs and preferences.

- Sleeping mat
- Personal hygiene *i.e.* toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Wet napkins
- Washcloth-compact cloths that are about the size of a 50-cent piece are perfect
- Tinder bundle material
 - Lint from the dryer
 - Dried moss
 - Cotton balls soaked in Vaseline
 - Dried grass
- Multitool—Swiss Army knife
- Tarp
- Wool blanket
- Change of underwear
- Freeze-dried food packs
- Portable stove—mini burners
- Metal cup
- Hand crank radio—battery powered is optional, but batteries are heavy
- Duct tape
- Selfdefense *i.e.* gun, knife, Taser, pepper spray
- Ziploc bags for storing supplies, keeps bugs out and gear dry
- Backpack cover to keep pack dry
- Fishing line and hooks

- Super glue—serves a number of purposes and can be used to close wounds
- Sewing kit
- Bandana—used for signaling or covering the face to block dust or keep warm
- Light sticks

First Aid Kit list

The following list will help you put together a first aid kit to store in your bug out bag. Keep in mind; this is meant to be a personal use kit. You can certainly give out a band-aid or two, but your supplies are going to be limited so use cautiously. You will want to store your first aid kit in a small pouch or large Ziploc bag. For small kits, pencil cases work great for keeping all of your medical supplies together. You could also use makeup bags that are clear. This makes it easy to see what you need. Hard cases tend to be heavier. Gauze will still work, even if it is a little smashed. You could ensure your first aid supplies stay dry by putting them in a small case and then putting the case in the large Ziploc bag.

- 2 2x2 gauze pads 2 4x4 gauze pads
- Medical tape
- 4 band-aids in each size, small, medium, large
- Gauze roll—remove from box and put in small sandwich bag to save space
- 4 pain reliever tablets *i.e.* ibuprofen/acetaminophen
- 2 packs of aspirin
- Triple antibiotic cream
- Alcohol wipes

- Mole bandages for blisters
- Butterfly stitch bandages
- ACE bandage
- Latex gloves—2 pair minimum
- Antihistamine tablets—Benadryl
- Pepto-Bismol tablets—stop diarrhea, which could lead to dehydration
- 2 absorbent compress dressings—feminine napkins work great!
- Tweezers
- Medical scissors
- Iodine
- Garlic tablets—garlic is a natural antibiotic and can help fight an infection when there are no antibiotics
- Small book that outlines basic First Aid

Do not get carried away with your first aid kit. Your bug out bag and accompanying first aid kit are meant to get you from point A to point B. The kits are not meant to be a complete kit that can be used to do surgery in the field—if you even knew how to do that. If you have a bug out location in mind, store your major medical supplies there.

A note about water filtration devices:

There are plenty of different options on the market to clean water. However, you must realize you need something that is portable and will last longer than a single use. Tablets are easy and fairly quick to use, but when they run out, what will you do? Filters are excellent as well, but again, after filtering so many gallons of

water they are ineffective. Boiling is one of the only constants you have, which is why a cup or pot is important to have. You need to be able to heat your water to kill off pathogens.

When you are shopping for your water cleaning tools, there are two main kinds, filters and purifiers. They are not the same.

Filters - Filters are removing visible impurities and the majority of bacteria that may be in the water. Filters do NOT remove most viruses from the water. Filters are a physical barrier, like charcoal or a cloth that the water passes through. You need to choose a filter that filters up to .02 microns. This means the filtering system catches the tiniest germs and bacteria that may be in the water.

Purifiers - Purification is chemically treated water that effectively kills bacteria, viruses and neutralizes most chemical contaminants. However, if you know a body of water is filled with fertilizer run off, it is best to avoid it altogether. Bleach or iodine are the best ways to purify your water. Those little tablets you are packing in your emergency preps are purifiers. If you are dealing with water that has some floaties in it, run it through your bandana before dropping a tablet in.

Some people will pack along charcoal tablets to create their own filters. This will work. You could also use charred wood from a campfire or burned out tree if necessary. Charcoal grabs onto bacteria and traps it when water is run through it.

Bug Out Bags for Kids

The kids need their own bug out bags. This will help you ensure you have enough supplies for the whole family and takes advantage of every available person to help carry supplies. Everybody needs to pull their weight in a survival situation. While you don't need to load the kids up with a bag quite as big as yours, you still want to make sure it is filled with the essentials. You will also want to choose a bag that is a bit smaller and fits the child. Refer to the chart above. An overly large bag could make it difficult for a child to walk and even cause trips and falls. A fall in a survival situation is much more serious. There isn't an emergency room to run to if the child breaks an arm or splits their lip open. It can be a little difficult to find a plain child's bag in a subdued color, but look around and check the internet. You don't want your little girl carrying a bright pink Hello Kitty backpack that will stand out in a copse of trees.

The list of supplies in the first essential list can be packed into a child's backpack with room to spare. Use common sense when it comes to stocking large knives in a child's bug out bag. It isn't necessary for the child to carry a foldable shovel as well if you have one. Use your best judgment when packing bags for kids under the age of about 12. Some kids are better prepared to use the gear you are packing. If you trust your 6-year-old to carry matches, than go for it.

When you pack bug out bags for young kids, you are doing so with the intention of them being with you or another adult with an adequately stocked bug out bag. However, you also want your child to be able to survive if they get lost or have to set out on their own.

This would be in extreme situations, but in the midst of a serious crisis, things do tend to be extreme. Some people distribute supplies among the family in somewhat of a divide and conquer approach. This is a great idea if the entire family is traveling together, but if one person has the fire starting material and another has the water purification tablets and the group gets separated, all of the bug out bag planning in the world isn't going to make that situation any better. Every bag should have the basic necessities. Spread out the extra, non-essential gear if you would like.

When you think about it, having all the extra gear when you do reach your destination is a boon. Instead of having a couple bags of waterproof matches, you will have close to 10 or however many you pack in each of your family member's bags.

If you have a teenager who drives or may be at work or school when things get crazy, you will want them to be able to make it to a designated location as well. You can typically count on a teenager knowing how to use a knife effectively as well as the remaining gear. Discuss each piece of gear in the bag with your teen before it is ever actually needed. Have the teen keep the bag in their car.

In many cases, your kids are not going to want to carry around two backpacks - one for school and one for their survival gear. It just won't work. Keep a bug out bag at home for your child and create a small kit they can keep in the bottom of their school backpack. Those little pencil pouches are excellent for a few key pieces of survival gear as well. Toss in a bag of water purification tablets, waterproof matches, Mylar blanket, and a multitool. This is best for a child that is responsible enough to leave the gear alone

and not “play” with it. Those few necessities can keep them alive until you get to them or they get to you.

A well-stocked bug out bag is great, but if you have never used the gear and are not familiar with it, it will do you little good in a survival situation. Spend some time at least once a month working with the gear with the kids. Trying to start a fire in the rain isn't easy, especially when trying to use a magnesium stick. It is a skill that requires practice. You can save yourself some money by purchasing quality gear that can be used repeatedly. Training in a survival situation is not ideal and could ultimately cost lives. Take a hike or go out on a campout with the kids and practice! Teach them about the tools they have in their bags and when they would want to use each tool.

Where to Store Bug Out Bags

A bug out bag will be worth more than a truckload of gold in a serious crisis. You will want to protect it and hide it from those who will be willing to kill you to take it from you. When the world is in chaos, people do things they normally wouldn't do. Your next door neighbor may suddenly become your biggest enemy if he wants and needs what you have to help his family survive. There is no law and there will certainly be no order as your friends, neighbors and co-workers all fight to survive. Those who haven't prepared are going to be coming straight for your front door if they know with certainty you have gear that will keep them alive.

You need to stash your bug out bag in a location that is safe and secure, but easily accessible by you and your family members. Sticking it by your front door for all visitors to see is not a good idea. If you plan on guests coming over for a barbecue or to watch the game, just use common sense when it comes to leaving your gear in plain view. People get curious and they will ask questions. While you certainly want to discuss the topic of having a backup plan and what people can do to prepare, you definitely don't want to advertise what you have.

The back of a closet, behind some food in a pantry or in an old bucket in the garage are all good places to hide your bag. Some people get creative and hide their bag in crates that are masked as furniture. A wooden box makes a great place to hide a couple of bags. Cover the crate with a pretty tablecloth; add some knick knacks or a lamp and guest will never realize what they are looking at. The idea is for you to know exactly where the bags are and be

able to reach them quickly. Don't get too carried away with your hiding tactics. If you have to use a hammer to pull off sheetrock or tear into a floor to get to your bag, it defeats the purpose.

It is a really good idea to have more than a single bug out bag. You never know when a disaster could destroy your home and your survival gear with it. Ideally, you will want to have a bag in your car as well. Hide it under a blanket in the backseat or in the trunk. Many cars have a small space under the floor of the trunk. This is a great place to stash a small bag. A bag in an outdoor storage shed in case your home is destroyed gives you another layer of protection. It is always better to be over prepared than under.

Check out some of the other places you can hide your bug out bags.

- In a rubber tote marked "Christmas decorations. Throw a strand of lights and garland over the top, just in case somebody looks.
- Inside a box in a closet marked, "winter clothes" or something along those lines
- At the bottom of a garbage can in the garage or on the porch. Put a liner in the can and add a few bits of trash.
- A hollowed out area under a stairwell, camouflage the area with a rug or hang a picture if it is in a wall

You will want to get creative with your own hiding spots. Just remember to keep the bug out bag somewhat accessible so you can grab it in a hurry. You will also want your family members to know where it is at and how to get to it should they be in charge of retrieving the bug out gear. There are times when you won't be home

or you could be injured. There are some places you don't want to put your bug out bag. Hiding your bag in a place that can cause your gear to become damaged will defeat your purpose of survival.

- Areas that are prone to wetness *i.e.* under kitchen sink, on the floor in basement
- Avoid areas that are prone to extreme heat—this can degrade things like your food supplies and Mylar blanket. Ideally you want a place that has an average temperature of 80 degrees or less.
- Avoid areas that are prone to extreme cold—outdoor sheds in areas where the temperatures drop below 10 degrees is not a good idea.
- Keep the bag out of direct sunlight

Bugging In

If leaving your home is not the best plan for you and your family, you need to plan to hunker down and weather whatever catastrophe has stricken your area. This is probably the ideal thing to do for most. There are numerous benefits to staying in your own home in an area you are familiar with. Maybe you have like-minded neighbors who will be able to offer support. Small communities provide normalcy and can help make an area a bit safer.

However, if you live in the middle of a city, hunkering down after a major disaster isn't always a good idea. A heavily populated area will mean more people trying to survive on little to no supplies. Those people are going to come looking and your home may be compromised. With that said, there is a lot to be said for bugging in. It gives you the chance to create a healthy stockpile of food, water and of course, it provides you shelter. Being able to stay in your own home also provides a level of comfort and security that is vitally important in uncertain times. There are many preppers who essentially prepare for the worst—bugging out, but hope for the best—bugging in.

If you only need to ride out a storm or some similar event that will be over in a matter of days, staying home is usually the best idea. The government often advises people to do this. It is safer to stay inside, with your head down so to speak. Wait to leave the house until you hear it is safe to do so.

What to Store for Bugging In

When you think about bugging in, it can be a bit overwhelming. This section will break it down into easy to swallow bite size pieces. Keep in mind, you don't want to run out and max out your credit card trying to buy everything you need to keep your family alive for a year. Be frugal and buy food items when they are on sale. Do some shopping around to compare prices. Buying online is usually going to be your best bet, but there are often closeout sales in local business that can save you money on shipping.

You need to assume you are going to be living in your home without access to outside food, water and other supplies. What you have in your home when disaster strikes is what you will have to live on. There are a lot of different considerations you will have to think about when planning to bug in. You have to plan on taking care of your entire family for days or even months. Be prepared to do a little math as you determine how much food and water you need to store. If you are new to the idea of prepping, it is helpful to start small. Begin with stores to last 30 days. Once you have that, build up to 3 months and then 6 months and finally, a year's worth of food. In a way, you can think of it as preparing to run a marathon. You need to do some training first before you jump in with both feet.

Food

Your food storage should be enough to last at the bare minimum 3 days. That is the very lowest you should ever have on hand at any given time. Ideally, you should stock enough food to

feed your family for about 30 days. Available space, funds and your personal desires will dictate how much food you ultimately store. As mentioned above, you will need to ease into. Don't ever stop prepping once you reach your goal of 30 days or whatever you have decided upon. It is something that is always at the forefront of your daily life. If you come across a sale that has tuna fish at .50 cents a can, by all means buy 20 if you have the money. If you already have a healthy stockpile of tuna in your food stores, it doesn't matter. The more food, the better.

Food stores are not about providing enough food for the family to eat until they are full. It is about providing enough food to keep the family going strong. It is more about the calories than the actual amounts. Don't get too hung up on calorie count and try to get by with the bare minimum. There is a rule in survival prep—You can never have too much food!

Here are some facts about the amount of calories you need to survive.

*Count on an average of 2500 calories per person

*You will burn more calories in a survival situation as you chop wood, hunt, carry water and garden

*Young men will need upwards of 4000 calories to maintain their strength

*Women need fewer calories—approximately 2,200

*Children will need about 1,400 calories a day

*While you can technically go 3 weeks without eating, you will become weak, lethargic and lose muscle mass within days of not eating

Using the assumption that you want to store about 2,500 calories a day per person, use the following formula for each member of the family over the age of about 13.

$2,500 \times \text{number of people in home} \times \text{number of days} = \text{the amount of food.}$

You will need to pay attention to the labels on the food you are storing. For example, a freeze-dried meal of chili provides 400 calories per serving.

There are 16 servings in a can. $16 \times 400 = 6,400$ calories in a single can.

$6,400 \text{ calories divided by } 2,500 \text{ calories per person} = 2.5 \text{ days of food for a single person.}$

This will give you an idea of the amount of food we are talking about when talking about storing for a month. Of course these are just examples and many of the freeze-dried foods will have higher calorie content. This is meant to give you a real idea about the amount of food it takes to keep a family of 4 alive for a month. Many people get into a false sense of security when they start buying those cans of freeze dried meals. It looks like a lot when it is sitting on your shelf. You figure a shelf filled with 30 gallons of freeze-dried food is going to last your family months—it won't. If you were to stock only those gallons of food, you would need about 15 per person to last a month.

Ideally, you will want to stock a variety of freeze-dried foods, canned foods, grains and beans. This will give you the freedom to change up your diet and make balanced, typical meals. Although that might sound trivial when talking about a survival situation, maintaining a sense of normalcy is extremely important to your

mindset. Your kids will appreciate sitting down to a normal meal of potatoes, spaghetti and a slice of bread. All of which are possible with a well-stocked food storage.

These are some key items you will want to include in your food storage.

Meats

- Tuna
- Spam
- Chicken
- Sardines
- Jerky
- Textured vegetable protein

Grains

- Flour
- Whole wheat
- Oats
- Cornmeal
- Rice

Vegetables

- Variety of dehydrated vegetables
- Canned veggies
- Freeze-dried vegetables
- Dehydrated potatoes sliced, shredded
- Instant potatoes

Fruits

- Dehydrated fruits

- Canned fruits
- Fruit leathers

Dried beans

- Pinto
- Kidney
- Navy
- Great northern

Dairy

- Powdered milk—best for cooking
- Instant milk—best for drinking
- Powdered butter
- Powdered cheese

Pasta

- Spaghetti noodles
- Macaroni noodles
- Egg noodles

Condiments

- Salt
- Sugar
- Honey
- Variety of spices *i.e.* onion powder, garlic salt, oregano, cilantro
- Bouillon for soups

Luxury Goods

- Chocolate
- Chocolate powder
- Coffee

- Alcohol

Renewable Food Sources

If you live in a rural area, it makes sense to raise your own animals for the purpose of survival. A renewable food source like chickens, pigs and even cows are one way you can ensure your family always has food to eat. Chickens are prolific breeders as are pigs and rabbits. Cows are a little tougher to manage and do not reproduce s often. Goats are a better option and can provide milk.

Along with raising animals with the purpose of using them as a food source, you will also want to experiment with gardening. Not everybody can be a natural green thumb. You will want to get the hang of it before you need it to survive. Creating a garden space now will give the soil time to become fertile and more pliable to your attempt to grow food.

Water

Water is by far the biggest space hog in your food storage plan. It is bulky and there is really not much you can do about it. You need to store 1 gallon of water for each person in the house per day. 4 people in the home multiplied by 30 days equates to 120 gallons of water. That is just for drinking. That isn't factoring in cleaning or bathing. Don't panic yet. We are going to discuss some ways you can store enough water for your family. On a side note, water is an absolute necessity. It is more important than food. You can't just hope it will rain enough to keep your family watered.

If you have a well, purchase a hand pump so you can continue to pump fresh water. You can store a little water and pump the rest as needed. If you live near a body of water, you can also rely on it to supply your family with the water it needs to survive. Although it may not sound possible, that old fish pond down the road is perfectly suitable for supplying your family with water. If you are going to be hauling water, make sure to do it when it is safe. Use the buddy system whenever possible. If you are not sure about the water in your area, buy a map and use a compass to create a circle with a 5-mile radius around your home. Walking 5 miles is not a lot of fun, but it can be done. Having a wagon or cart is always a good idea if you are planning to haul water.

All water is considered dirty, unless it is coming from a well and you are not dealing with some kind of biological warfare that contaminated your water. You will need to clean all water before drinking it. You will need to store some kind of water purification system in your bug in supplies. Tablets, water filters and water

purification straws are all options. Boiling the water is also a possibility if you have a barbecue or camp stove available. One of the benefits of bugging in is the fact you will have your entire kitchen at your disposal.

A useful tip about boiling water for drinking: the second the water comes to a boil it is safe! There is no need to waste water by boiling it for 5 to 10 minutes. This causes steam and evaporation and your precious water is lost! Boiling the water for a certain amount of time is a myth. The very second the water reaches boiling temperature, the pathogens are effectively killed.

Cisterns

You can plan ahead by storing a large amount of water in large vessels often referred to as cisterns. You will need some space on your property to place the cistern. They are available in a variety of sizes with some as small as 50 gallons with large ones big enough to hold 1000 gallons. These are often used on farms and places where water is scarce. There are a couple of different options you can use to place the cistern. Bury it slightly uphill from the house to take advantage of gravity or place it in the backyard or if possible, on a hill. A pipe will feed water into the house using gravity. You could also use a hand pump to pump the water out of the vessel. It is a wise idea to have a rain catchment system that will feed the cistern. Rain water is generally considered safe to drink, but if you are dealing with nuclear fallout or biological warfare, it would need to be cleaned. To be safe, boil all water before using.

Pools and Hot Tubs

Your backyard pool or your neighbor's backyard pool if they have bugged out is an excellent source of water. An average in ground pool can hold around 17,000 gallons of water. That is certainly enough to last you a while. It will be chlorinated, but the water still needs to be cleaned before drinking. A benefit to using a pool is the open top will allow it to catch rainwater. An in ground pool is not your only option. Even the kids' kiddie pool will hold water. If it is full, you have a few gallons. Leave it uncovered to catch rainwater. If you have a hot tub on the back patio, you have about 300 gallons of water at your disposal.

Rain Barrels

These are an affordable way to store 50 gallons of water. Set your rain barrels outside at the corner of your home's roof to take advantage of the runoff from a rain storm. You will be amazed at how fast these barrels fill up after a single storm. You will want to cover the top with a screen to try and keep out the majority of the debris that will run off the roof of the house and into the barrel. Keep several barrels on hand. When one barrel gets full, quickly exchange it with a new one to save every drop of water possible.

You can buy ready-made rain barrels at your local hardware store for anywhere from \$50 to \$100 or you can make your own for under \$10. Check with restaurants and container stores and ask to buy their 50-gallon food-grade barrels. NEVER buy a barrel that has previously held chemicals. Many places will give away these barrels or leave them outside for trash pickup. One man's trash is most definitely another man's treasure! Buy a spout at your local hardware store. Drill a small hole for the spout towards the bottom of the barrel

and seal it with silicon. It is an easy project that could end up saving your family's life one day.

Bottled Water

Hundreds of bottles of water are often what preppers think of when it comes to planning their emergency bugging in supplies. Bottled water is certainly convenient, quick and easy, but it is also very expensive when you consider how many gallons you need per day. Not to mention, the amount of storage space it takes is pretty substantial.

You can buy the 5-gallon water bottles to be a little more cost effective. However, these still take up a lot of space. Ideally, you want to have a supply of bottled water, along with one of the above sources to replenish the water when it is gone.

If you are planning on bottling your own water to save money, this is a possibility, but there are a few things you need to know. Do NOT use old milk jugs to store your water. This is a messy disaster waiting to happen. The jugs are made of a thin plastic that will break down over time and not a long time. It could be as little as six months before your pantry is flooded by a milk jug cracking and leaking water everywhere.

These are some containers you can use to store water long term.

- 2-liter pop bottles
- Juice bottles
- Water bottles
- 5-gallon buckets with lids
- Store bought water vessels

Before you can put your water on the shelf in your emergency food storage, it needs to be treated if you are bottling it yourself. Most people will use bleach to treat the water. While this is effective and will keep the water clean and safe to drink without further treating, it will only keep the water safe to drink for up to six months. However, and this is a big one, if you are using water from your tap and your water is already treated (which most public water is) you do not technically need to add bleach before storing. This is one of those topics of debate among preppers. It is personal preference, but many decide to err on the side of caution because you just never know—unless you have tested your tap water to check the chlorine content.

You will need to add a drop of bleach to a gallon of water and about 5 to 10 drops to large 5-gallon containers. Bleach is safe to add to your water in these minute levels. It will keep bacteria and mold growth down as your water sits on a shelf. If you are going with treated water, date the containers so you can ensure they are always fresh and ready to go. If you have fallen behind on your rotation duties and a disaster happens, you can still use the water you have stored if it is out of date. You will simply need to boil it or use water purification tablets before drinking.

When you first open a bottle of water you have stored with bleach, be prepared to smell chlorine. Let the water sit in a bowl or in the bottle with the lid off for about 30 minutes to let it freshen up. Swirl the water to help air get to the water.

How to Store Your Dry Food

If you are storing dried food like beans, rice and other grains, you need to store it properly in order to keep it fresh and free of pests. Buying in bulk is often the best way to go when purchasing dry goods. They are typically sold in plastic bags. You don't want to store them like that if at all possible. It is better to store beans, rice and grains in 5-gallon food-grade buckets with snapping lids. This will help keep out rodents that will chew right through those plastic bags. You can help prevent other pests from destroying your food stores by adding a few bay leaves to the bottom of the bucket before adding your food.

Another option is to store food in Mylar bags. The bags are vacuum sealed and can be used repeatedly. They keep food fresh for years and when stored inside a plastic bucket, you can keep out unwanted pests as well. If you are storing pastas or flour products, you will want to put the items in the freezer for a week or so before putting it in your food storage. This will kill all the weevil eggs that are in these products and yes, they are a real thing. Leave flour sitting in a warm, dry area for a few weeks and then take a look. You are likely to find tiny little bugs crawling through it.

If you have purchased freeze-dried food, you have probably seen those fantastic shelf life dates on the can. Many boast the product in the can will last for up to 25 years when stored properly. Key words there are stored properly. Your food storage, especially in the aftermath of a major disaster, isn't going to exactly be ideal. To get those kinds of shelf lives, they are referring to the foods being stored in a cool, dry, dark area at a perfect 60 to 70 degrees and the cans are unopened. Now, if you have that place in your home today, by all means use it. That is the perfect storage place. If you don't

have that place, than do your best to store your food in a pantry that is not in direct sunlight, is dry and will not reach temperatures above 80.

If you have the means and the space on your property, a root cellar is an excellent storage place for some of your fresh food items. Because you never know when disaster strikes, you will always want to keep a fresh crop of potatoes, apples, carrots and onions in your root cellar. Fresh fruit and veggies in survival situation are akin to manna from heaven. You can store these foods up to a year in a root cellar by following recommended tips and guidelines. You can also store canned foods in your root cellar. Just make sure you are always rotating your food to avoid it spoiling and going to waste.

Once you open one of those cans of freeze dried foods, you have about 30 days to eat it before it becomes stale. If you have a family of four, you can easily use through a can before it becomes stale. The cans come with lids that you will want to use to keep pests out in a survival situation. Remember, cockroaches can survive pretty much anything—including a nuclear bomb. Cockroaches, mice and other pests are going to be hungry too and your food supply is going to look mighty tasty.

You can still eat food that is past its “use by” date in most cases. It may not taste quite as good, but it is still edible if not a little crunchier than usual. The best if use by is simply a guideline and does not mean you have to toss everything out. In many cases, canned foods do not have use by dates on the can or label. You will need to use your best judgment about the condition of the food.

ALWAYS check your canned food before opening and eating. Botulism is a real possibility if cans have not been stored in optimum

conditions. Botulism is fatal. Home-canned foods are especially susceptible to botulism and need to be carefully inspected as well. The following are a few signs that a can of food is not safe to eat—not even a little bit!

- Rust around the edges of the can
- Dented cans need to be carefully examined to determine if there is even the slightest perforation in the can
- Bulging cans—the lids are pushing up and out
- Leaking from a can
- Food inside is molded
- Liquid in the can is abnormally cloudy
- A foul odor indicating spoilage

Medical Supplies

Bugging in allows you to stock a lot more medical supplies than bugging out. Although you probably don't plan on any major medical emergencies, you are going to be doing things you may not normally do in order to survive. Accidents are inevitable. You need to be prepared to treat a wound to prevent an infection from setting in. A small cut on your finger may not be a big deal today, but in a survival situation, it could mean life or death. You have the freedom to stock a little or a lot, but if you have the means; always go on the high side. All of your preps could one day be used as bartering tools.

- Boxes of band-aids
- Several rolls of gauze
- Medical tape
- Boxes of gauze pads in varying sizes
- ACE bandage
- Bottle of pain relievers
- Latex gloves
- Cold relief medicines
- Anti-nausea meds
- Anti-diarrhea meds
- Triple biotic ointment
- Rubbing alcohol
- Peroxide
- Burn cream
- Antihistamine—Benadryl
- Antacids
- Tweezers
- Emergency tooth filling kit

- Eye drops
- Calamine lotion
- Hand sanitizer
- Extra prescription meds if you can manage to keep an extra supply

If you are familiar with homeopathic meds, you will want to stock up on these items as well. If you have never experimented with natural medicine, it is a good idea to brush up on it. You never know how long a survival situation may extend and when over-the-counter and prescription medicines will be available once again. You need to have a backup plan.

SelfDefense and Security

This is a topic of debate for many. It is a personal decision each person needs to make. Having a gun to defend yourself and your family makes sense, but not everybody is okay with the idea of actually shooting another human. It is a legitimate argument. If you do choose to have a gun or several guns, you need to have ammunition. That is another area that can prove problematic. Gun owners who are preparing to rely on their weapons in a survival situation will need to make sure ammunition is stored in a sealed, climate controlled safe or ammunition can. Guns should be kept cleaned and in top working condition as well.

Pepper spray, knives and Tasers are all options as well, but hand-to-hand combat should be avoided at all costs. There is a strong possibility you will be injured in some way, even if you are the victor. Learning selfdefense is a good idea and can help you ensure a victory if you are forced to defend yourself or your home.

The government recommends you keep a roll of sturdy plastic on hand to cover windows and doors in the event of a biological attack. You will likely have towels on hand to place under the doors as well. Vents will also need to be covered.

Miscellaneous Gear

If you are bugging in, you have the freedom to really load up on pretty much anything you need should you be forced to survive off what you have in the home. While food and water are typically the top two priorities, there are some other things you will need to survive a long period of time. It could take years for the world to recover from a major event. That means that although people will start to pick up the pieces of their lives and rebuild, there is still going to be a time period when grocery stores shelves are not stocked. Basic necessities are going to be in short supply, but in high demand.

If you have the room, you will want to start storing the following items as well.

- Toilet paper
- Feminine hygiene products
- Soap
- Heirloom seeds—these will produce fruits and vegetables with seeds that can be replanted to continue growing food.
- Hammer and nails—you never know when you need to make repairs
- Axe—chopping wood for heat will be a strong possibility
- Gardening tools *i.e.* shovel, rake, hoe—you are your own grocery store
- Hunting and fishing gear—see above
- Personal hygiene *i.e.* toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, chapstick

- Face masks in case of pandemic or biological warfare. You also need to be prepared for the stench of death and decay.
- Heat source—wood stove, propane or kerosene heaters (have a supply of propane and kerosene on hand)
- Heavy duty garbage bags—there will not be garbage men and you need to keep your home clean to avoid bacteria and disease
- Entertainment—books, board games, crossword puzzles, cards are all things you can toss into your storage area that will help pass the time. You are probably going to be very surprised how much time is on your hand when you don't have computers, cell phones, gaming systems and television.
- Bleach—for cleaning your home and purifying your water. However, bleach does weaken over time. You can typically expect a gallon of bleach to last about a year.

Securing Your Home and Supplies

Creating an adequate food storage plan is extremely time-consuming and labor intensive. It can also be a huge investment of the family's funds. You need to protect it with everything you have. It is what is going to keep you alive when things are tough. If you are going to be bugging in, you need to make sure your supplies are secure and not susceptible to the looters and other folks who did not prepare. As was mentioned earlier, people are going to come looking. Many preppers are very secretive about what they have even among fellow preppers who they deem friends. This is because you just never know! People turn on each other when it comes down to a life and death situation. Put yourself in somebody else's shoes. If your child were starving, wouldn't you be willing to do almost anything to feed him or her?

It may sound a little cliché, but one of the first rules of prepping is not to talk about what you have. You can certainly talk with others about what they may want to store and what you think would be a really good idea to store, but you don't want to say, "I have a 12-month supply of food and water in my basement." Keep it to yourself! Educate your children as well. They don't need to tell all their friends about what they have in their basement. Kids talk and if they are starving after a catastrophe, they are going to tell others about what so and so told them a while ago. You would have a mob at your door and your family's safety would be in serious jeopardy.

Securing your supplies can be as simple as keeping them out of sight or as intricate as hiding them in a panic room or other secret space in your home. This is sometimes where people get the wrong idea about preppers. Preppers are often called weird or crazy for going to great lengths to hide their supplies. But, when you think of how much time and money is involved in creating a year's supply of food, it isn't all that crazy. People hide their valuables in wall safes and other nooks and crannies all the time. It is normal to want to protect things of value and when there are no grocery stores, government aid or fast food restaurants, food is going to be more valuable than precious jewels.

While a state-of-the art panic room is a dream many preppers have, it is just not feasible for most due to the cost. Bunkers are also a luxury that many preppers dream about, but again, it isn't always possible, especially for suburban preppers.

It is best to secure your home to keep out those who will try and take what you have. We will discuss securing your supplies next. A simple lock on a front door is not going to keep out the baddies. Windows and sliding glass doors are an open invitation. There are some preppers who have invested in bullet-proof glass for sliding glass doors. This is a great idea, but again, pretty costly. Many will go about putting shatter-proof glass in place of glass windows on the bottom floor of their houses. This is a common practice for people who are worried about burglaries. However, you need to consider the risks of living in a house that would impede escape if ever there were a fire.

Another way to secure your home's windows is by keeping some plywood on hand. When disaster strikes, or just before if you

know it is coming, nail the wood over the windows to keep intruders from breaking the glass. If it is a storm system you are preparing to whether, this can keep your home intact as well and keep you safe from breaking glass.

Invest in sturdy door locks or create a bar system that makes it difficult to kick in a door. These can be found online or at some home improvement stores. Investing in solid metal doors is a worthy investment. DO NOT put pet doors in your front or back doors! This is an invitation for thieves in any situation. Bars on windows are an option, but you have to remember you are going to be living in your house when things are “normal.” Bars on the window are often a signal that you have something of value inside and you may be targeted by thieves before disaster ever strikes.

Many experts agree that protecting your home’s perimeter is the best way to go. It is likely the power will be out, but you can buy motion detector lights that are solar powered. This will at least give you advanced warning that somebody is headed your way. Cameras or a security system are great, but will only work if you have power. If you are savvy enough to hook your security system up to a car battery, that is always an option or maybe you have already invested in solar power.

You can still hide your food supply throughout your home or apartment. A single pantry may seem like a good place to store all your food and it is, but it is also the first place a looter is going to look. There are several other places in your home you could hide your food, water and other emergency supplies that will not attract the attention of unwanted visitors. Basically, you want to follow some of the guidelines mentioned in the hiding of a bug out bag. There are

a few more places you can store food and other emergency supplies, including weapons. Check out some of these ideas and see if you can make them work for you.

- Behind the couch. You can create a behind-the-couch table that will successfully hide a great deal of food. There are can organizers that are as wide as the height of a can of food. You could stack several on top of each other and place between the wall and couch. Put a piece of wood over the top of the can holder and add a few pretty candles. It will look like a piece of furniture.
- Create a false bottom in your closets. Line up canned foods along the bottom of the closet. Put a piece of wood over the canned foods and dump your shoes, bags and what not on top. Anybody who pulls the closet open will see the typical contents.
- Your child's toy box is another great place to stash supplies. Create a false bottom that the kids cannot remove. Most kids won't bother trying to remove the bottom of a toy box anyways. Once they reach the bottom, they move on.
- You could certainly utilize the space under your bed, but realize many burglars and looters will look there first. However, use dark colored totes to stash your supplies in. Label the totes "winter clothes" or something along those lines. Thieves who are in a hurry may not take the time to rifle through the tote.
- Fill your attic space with totes and boxes of "grandma's things" and "holiday decorations," but in reality, your

supplies would be mingled among the boxes of what would be perceived as junk.

- A hook on the back of your bedroom door that holds your bathrobe could double as a place to hide a weapon or a first aid kit. Hang the item on the hook and throw a dingy bathrobe over the top. Thieves won't look twice. Be careful not to hang anything too heavy as this may alert the thief to your hiding spot.

Teaching the Whole Family the Bug In Plan

If bugging in is your goal, you need to make sure the whole family is on board. You need to have a plan for each family member to follow in the event of an emergency. It is almost impossible to predict when or where disaster will strike. There is a good chance you and your family will not be home when it all hits the fan. If you are planning to bug in, you need to make sure you have a plan to get everybody home. Every family will have a different plan. However, every member of the household will have an ultimate goal of making it home. Check out the following example.

*You and your spouse both work. The spouse works outside of town, while you work in town. Your oldest child attends high school, which is within a block or two of your youngest child's elementary school. Plan A—you as the in-town spouse will figure out a way to drive, walk or bicycle to the kids' school. Oldest student will have already rounded up youngest sibling and will be waiting across the street from the school for in-town spouse to escort home. Out of town spouse goes directly home.

*Plan B—Oldest student finds younger sibling and makes the trek home along a designated, preplanned route. In town spouse follows same route if possible to pick up the kids.

In the immediate hours and days following a disaster, your family may opt to hole up in the basement, a safe room or a designated area in the house. Typically, your best bet is below

ground. If you have a basement, you will likely want to hide there until things have settled down a bit. You need each member of the family to know where they are supposed to be when they hear the emergency sirens outside or mom and dad have said, “This is it!” You, as the adult, will not have time to collect children, gather any additional supplies, lock up and get to the designated area. If you have several children, have an older one responsible for getting a younger one to the right place.

Plan ahead who is going to lock the front door, who is going to shut off the main gas to the home and who is going to get the pets into the home. Run drills often to make sure everybody knows exactly what they are supposed to do in an emergency. Teach your children the importance of dropping everything and getting into the safe room. You absolutely want everybody together so you can take a head count. If your home is already secured and you are planning on bugging in without holing up in a particular area, you still need a meeting point so you can account for every member of the household. This is also the time you will want to go through the checklist of things that needed to happen to ensure your bugging in is going to be a safe place for the family.

Bugging In Checklist

- Shut off all utilities just in case—water, gas, electric
- Lock doors and windows—put sticks in windows to prevent them from being opened
- Use wood to cover windows if possible from the inside so outsiders are not aware somebody took the time to secure the home. The curtains or blinds will look normal hanging in the window.

- Make the toilet (see section below)
- Cover windows with blackout curtains or blankets if you don't have wood (you don't want others to know you are in the house)
- Grab flashlights and candles but only use when necessary to avoid detection
- Discuss what everybody will need to do for the next 24 hours
- Relax and keep everybody calm, sing songs, pray, read stories or do whatever helps your family relax.

Bug In Toilet

It isn't something anybody likes to talk about, but no matter what is happening in the world, humans still have to poop and pee. When you bug in, you are likely going to be in your home without a working toilet. If you live in the country and have a septic tank, you are still going to have to flush the toilet without power. This is a waste of water, but if water isn't a problem, consider yourself one of the fortunate ones. Because you are going to be in your home, you can't allow it to become filthy. Human waste harbors a host of bacteria and viruses that could make you and your family extremely ill. Cleanliness is extra important when you are bugging in.

1-Have a 5-gallon bucket ready

2-Have a roll of heavy-duty garbage bags

3-Line the bucket with garbage bag—to be extra careful, double line the bucket.

4-Use the bucket as a toilet and dump as needed.

5-When toilet isn't in use, cover with a lid to cut down on the smell.

If you are on a large piece of land and can safely go outside to use the toilet, do so. You can dig a hole in the ground, cut out the bottom of a bucket and place it over the hole to use as a toilet. Cover the hole every few days to cut down on smell. Place a rock or piece of wood over the area to keep animals from digging it up.

Pets—Do You Keep Them or Abandon Them?

Your family's pets are likely one of the family. You love them dearly and couldn't imagine leaving them outside as you bug in or leaving them behind if you bug out. That is a sentiment many pet owners share, but you must consider your family's needs first. Could you split the last can of beans with your pet? It isn't really fair to bring your pet along for the ride only to let it starve when food runs low. Sanitation could also be an issue if you are bugging in. If it is a cat, a litter box is adequate. If you have dogs, you are going to have to pay close attention to their bathroom needs. You will need to make sure you can open a door to let the pet out to do their business without calling attention to the fact you are holed up in your home. It is absolutely not sanitary to let the animals do their business in the place you will be eating and sleeping.

On the flip side of the argument, having what may be your best friend or your child's best friend by your side when things are scary is a huge comfort. This is true of bugging in or bugging out. Being able to pet your animal is comforting. Your children will take great pleasure in having a companion with them that is from their life before things got ugly.

There is also the possibility your pet could be an additional layer of security. You don't have to have an attack dog, but a dog will defend its owners and property instinctively. This is a handy tool to have along with you when you are trekking to a body of water to

retrieve water for your house. If you have bugged out, a dog is a hyper-sensitive alert system. Dogs can hear and smell intruders and predators long before a human ever could. This is like an early warning system for you. It gives you time to hide or prepare for intruders.

If your dog has been trained to hunt, this is another very good reason to bring it along. There is a strong possibility you will need to return to the old ways of hunting and gathering. Having a dog along can make the job much easier and more effective. If you have bugged out and the temperatures are freezing, snuggling with your pet is an excellent way to maintain your core body temperature.

Once you have weighed all the pros and cons of keeping your pet or several pets with you, it is time to make a decision. You need to make the decision before an emergency arises. It is almost impossible to make a logical decision when your pet is yapping to come along with you when you bug out. It is an emotional decision that you want to take the time to evaluate carefully before you are forced to do so.

If you do plan on keeping the pets with you when you bug out or bug in, you need to expand your preps to include dog food. You will also need to factor in the additional water needed to support the animals.

Deciding to Bug In or Bug Out

This is one of the toughest decisions you will have to make. It is best to decide before an event happens. You want to use logic to make such a life-changing choice—not emotion. It is natural you would want to hunker down in your home, where all of your things are and where you feel most comfortable. Bugging in gives you the chance to really stockpile everything you need to survive in the aftermath of a devastating storm, an economic collapse or whatever it is that has befallen you.

There is always a lot of talk about bugging out, but that may not be what is right for you and your family. It does seem the prepping world gets a little bug out happy. People are always talking about the bug out bags and how to survive off the land. While that is all very important, why do that if you don't have to? Sleeping outside when it is snowing and the temperature is hovering around 20 degrees and you have nothing more than a space blanket to keep you warm isn't exactly ideal. Don't be too quick to plan on bugging out. It is exciting when you sit in your comfortable chair drinking your hot coffee and reading about it, but actually doing it is an entirely different ball game. Roughing it isn't always that fun once the novelty wears off. If you absolutely must leave your home, fine, but don't just assume you have to bug out when disaster strikes.

There are several factors that will need to be considered before making a decision. Do not wait to make such an important decision. Talk with your family members and get their input. If you

know anybody who you would consider an experienced survivalist, get their opinion as well. Make a list of pros and cons. Brainstorm the various scenarios and make the decision to bug out if there is a terrorist attack but bug in if there is a pandemic or whatever the case may be. This preplanning will make things go much smoother when it is time to take action.

Even if you reach a decision to bug in or to bug out, you need to be prepared to do the opposite, just in case. If you have decided you are going to bug out, there is a chance it will not be safe for you to leave your home if the weather is bad or there are gunmen out there waiting to take you out. On the flipside, if you have decided to bug in and a major storm strikes and turns your home to rubble, you need to bug out. Always have a backup. Part of the prepping mentality is to prep for whatever disaster may strike. You are storing food, water and medical supplies because there is a chance things could go very bad and you are going to be forced to survive on your preps. There are no certainties in a chaotic world. You have only yourself and your closest friends and family members to count on.

Where You Live Matters

Your decision to bug in or bug out is going to weigh heavily on where you live. If you live in a rural area on a nice piece of land and the nearest neighbors are a ½ mile away, bugging in is completely doable and probably warranted. If you live in an apartment in the city, bugging out may be a better option. As a general rule of thumb, preppers will want to get out of Dodge so to speak when things are in chaos. More people, means more problems, like people trying to take what you have. Large cities become targets for attacks if it is a war or act of terror you are up against.

One of the first rules of survival is finding shelter. If your home no longer provides you with adequate shelter from the elements it is time to go. Maybe it was damaged by a natural disaster or the foundation has been compromised by an explosion. If the shelter isn't safe, it is absolutely crucial to bug out.

Another factor may be the location of your home. Floods are often a side effect of certain natural disasters. Homes that are too close to a body of water and are at risk of being flooded should be evacuated. Apartments in high rises are often targets for bombs if we are under a terror attack or there is civil unrest. Earthquakes may make the structure unsafe.

You can determine what kind of natural disasters your home is most likely to experience by checking some history. Answer the following questions to help you identify risks that could put a bug in plan in danger.

- Do you live in tornado alley?
- Do you live along a fault line?

- Do you live high up in the mountains where snowfall is excessive?
- Are you surrounded by desert?
- Do you live near a nuclear power plant?

These are all questions that will help you identify any potential dangers that could make your home a disaster waiting to happen. No matter how much you love your home and you love the things in your home, if it is in danger of being destroyed with you in it, you have to leave it all behind.

Do You Have Somewhere to Go

Probably one of the biggest factors in determining whether or not you bug out is if you have anywhere to go! Do you bug out and plan on living off the land until things settle down (which could be months or years) or do you hunker down where you at least have a roof over your head? Really prepared people will have a location to bug out too. The second location is where they will hunker down and ride out whatever disaster has shaken things up.

The second location will likely be a smaller home located in a rural area. A cabin in the woods, a bunker underground or a ranch house that looks like it has been abandoned all make excellent destinations. These second homes can be stocked with everything you need to survive. However, and this is a big one, can you get there?

- If you don't have a car, can you and your family walk to the second location?
- If you have a car, do you have gas to get there?
- Will the route to your destination be closed if there is a major disaster? Bridge crossings are not always reliable.
- Is your route through the heart of the city?
- Do you need 4WD to reach the location?

If you are planning to bug out to another location, it is important you plot out a Plan A, Plan B and if all else fails, a Plan C route. If you are leaving the city, expect there to be a LOT of traffic. Highways may be clogged and you could end up being stuck in a horrible traffic jam. A backup plan may not be the quickest route and

may involve a series of back roads, but they are less likely to be jammed up. Finally, a plan when all else fails should be in place. This may mean walking, biking or taking a boat to your secondary location.

Closing Thoughts

Preparing to survive an event that will turn the world as we know it upside down isn't easy. There are a lot of different bases to cover. We have it pretty easy right now. When we need something, we run to the store and buy it, borrow it from a friend or ask our family to help us get it. We have become accustomed to relying on various charity organizations and the government to help those who have been devastated by a natural disaster or some other horrific event. If we see something illegal, we call the police and they take care of the bad guy. If we get a broken bone or our child has a high fever, we go to the doctor.

Life isn't so bad when you list out all those luxuries we have and they truly are luxuries. When all of that is taken away, it is just you and those you can call true friends. There won't be anybody to come to your rescue. Taking the time to plan what you need today can ultimately save your life down the road and the lives of your loved ones.

Some people attach the words paranoid or crazy to the prepping movement. Those people assume nothing bad will ever happen. Some of those same people will also say that if something terrible were to happen, it is best to die with the rest of the community. A prepper will say *that* is what is crazy. Why give up when there is always a chance? If there is a chance you could keep your child alive and even thriving in a new world, it sounds crazy *not* to try and do it.

It is your life and you must do what you feel is right for you and your family. Don't worry about those who call you crazy and a freak. It is probably best if you don't really advertise you are one of those who is preparing to survive. There will be some of those naysayers who do survive and they will remember their crazy neighbor or co-worker and come calling.

The most important thing is to have a plan. Any plan. If you have some sort of plan, you will be better prepared than 99% of the population. And that advantage could very well be the thing that saves you and your family. So start prepping, start early, and stick with it!

The Prepper's Guide to Firearms

Introduction

Welcome, reader. You have chosen to arm yourself, a decision that is not to be made without some serious thought. A firearm is a complicated and dangerous tool in the hands of the unprepared, but to those that understand them and handle them carefully, a firearm is a valuable addition to your collection of skills and equipment. In any prepping or survival situation, having a firearm, and knowing how to use it, will very likely separate the people who survive and thrive from those who don't. You've made an important first step towards protecting yourself and your loved ones.

This guide will be focusing on pistols, as that will be the most likely choice for your average prepper or family. Of course, there are many other options out there, and if you are a more experienced marksman, you will certainly be able to branch out in your firearm selection. But for the ease of this guide and for the average family or preppers or survivalists, a pistol is going to meet each and every need that they have for a firearm.

For the beginner, this guide will teach you what you need to know so that you can use your firearm without being a danger to yourself and those around you. Once you have reached that level of basic competence, or if you are already familiar with firearms, this guide will go into some depth on training and use of firearms, so that you can continue building your skills.

You need to consider a variety of different factors before you choose your firearm, and you will have many tasks and responsibilities to handle once you finally have it. All of these

responsibilities are yours, but you will have this guide to help you along the way. You will be led through the consideration, selection, and purchase of a firearm. You will also be introduced to safety, operation, and how to train and employ the weapon, so that you can use it effectively and safely.

Remember, however, that this is only a guide, and it cannot cover every situation. In the end, you are the one who is going to be making all the important decisions, from which firearm to choose to whether or not to use deadly force in a tense situation. Should you ever be put to the test, it is a brutally simple pass-or-fail, live-or-die evaluation. This guide will not be with you to help you through if and when it happens. It is up to you to train and study the concepts within, until you are fully proficient with your weapon. You have to put in the work.

That being said, let us begin.

Select a Pistol

Budget

Since you have decided to buy a pistol, you need to work out a budget. Not only do you need to set aside money for the weapon itself, but you also need to think of the long-term investment in ammunition and accessories. You will need to be able to buy ammo for regular practice, or you will not have the skill needed to use your pistol when it counts. No amount of quality equipment will make up for that lack of skill. Accessories and spare parts are another expense you have to include.

A good rule is that if you cannot afford the ammo, then you cannot afford that pistol. Consider that you will need to be setting aside ammo for later. After a collapse or a when you enter a survival situation, you will not be able to drive to the store and buy the rounds you need. You can only rely on what you already have, as scavenging will not be a reliable source for very long, if at all. A lot of the ammo out there is going to be in the possession of other people, and they are not likely to give it to you—unless you consider incoming fire to be a valid form of ammunition exchange. Make sure that you have plenty for your needs, and remember: the more, the better - no exceptions.

You should have several hundred rounds at minimum, and a few thousand is a much better idea. This might sound like a lot, but consider that over a quarter of a million rounds are fired for every insurgent killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. And that number is coming from highly trained soldiers. For the average Joe, it's going to be a higher ration still. A lot of that is training requirements, and automatic

and suppressive fires burn through ammo much faster than semiautomatic pistol fire, but it does a good job of showing why you want plenty of ammo and plenty of practice. You can go through a full magazine in just a couple seconds with ease. Practice will reduce the number of rounds you need to fire to get the job done, but you will still want as much as you can get, and you will still need to buy the rounds with which you are training.

Magazines are usually relatively cheap, and you should get enough to last you for some time. Magazines will wear out and do not last as long as your pistol will, so you need replacements. The same goes for spare parts; some pieces wear out faster, or are more fragile in general. A broken firing pin, for example, means you now possess a paperweight instead of a pistol. A spare pin fixes all that, and lets you keep on going. While you could get a set of machinist's tools and all the necessary equipment to fabricate new parts, it is far more economical to simply buy them and store them away for the day you need them.

Accessories for your pistol are an additional expense that depends on your personal taste. You can get laser sights, lights, custom grips, laser grips, scopes or optics, and more. If you can think of it, you can probably buy it. The only one that you really need is a set of night sights so that you can still see the sights in dim light or darkness. Note that I am not talking about night vision, which will run you thousands of dollars, but basic glowing paint or tritium sights that give off enough light to allow you to align them even in low light conditions. You have plenty of other accessories from which to choose, but you might consider if another pistol already has the feature you want to add on before you spend the extra money on it.

As you can see, budgeting out a pistol is not as simple as it might appear. Until you have your allotment for your pistol, this should be the farthest you go in the guide. Once you have decided how much you can set aside, then it is time to start researching and shopping, not before. This will give you time to make decisions based on careful thought, not impulse and emotion.

Types of Pistols

After you have your budget set, you need to look at the different types of pistols available to you. The four main options are the autoloader, the revolver, the carbine pistol, and the muzzleloader. Within each category are a variety of different pistols that may or may not be similar to the others. Take the time to get a good idea of what is on offer. Not all autoloaders are the same, and the same goes for revolvers. Carbine pistols and muzzleloaders are fairly specific, and will not be as distinctive as the other types, but you can still find differences between them. Look at all of your options, and then make your choice. This is not a decision that you want to rush, so take your time and do your research before you buy.

Whichever you pick, be sure that it is best *for you*. Each pistol will have its own strengths and weaknesses, and will fulfill different roles. Do not allow yourself to be convinced to buy something that does not fit your needs because if it does not suit you, then it is not best *for you* even though it may be an excellent weapon in its own right. If you want something you will be able to conceal, look for a good concealed carry pistol. If you want to use it for hunting game, look for the best hunting pistol. If you are worried about the fighting and violence after a collapse, look for the best combat pistol. In the

end, the pistol that does what you need it to do is the best pistol, no matter what it is.

Revolvers

Revolvers operate exactly as the name suggests. A rotating cylinder with multiple chambers holds a round in each chamber and cycles them to line up with the barrel as the action is cycled. Unlike the other two types of pistols, revolvers do not rely on the round being fired to cycle the action. The revolver is cocked by pulling the hammer to the rear, and when the trigger is pulled, the hammer swings forward to strike the primer and fire the round.

Revolvers have one of two types of actions; the single action has one method of operation of the action, double action has two. Single action revolvers need to be manually cocked each time you fire, as they lack any mechanism to automatically cock the action. Double action pistols will automatically cock the hammer as you pull the trigger, but require a much stronger pull to get the hammer into place. You can still manually cock a double action, which will relieve some of the heavy trigger weight.

When it comes to hunting with a pistol, revolvers are the type typically chosen. They can also be carried concealed as an everyday carry pistol. Military and law enforcement have both moved away from revolvers as combat and duty pistols, and no longer see service.

Hunting is best done with a long barreled, high caliber double action revolver. You want a large round to put down large game, and many of the larger pistols are chambered for multiple rounds, so you can practice with less expensive ammunition and use the more expensive rounds in the field. As revolvers have no moving parts on

the top of the gun, you can mount a scope or some other sort of optic, which will let you take game at a respectable range, comparing favorably to shotguns. With the right pistol, you can hunt just about anything living in North America.

A revolver can also serve as a backup for a rifle or shotgun, especially if you are hunting in areas with predators such as bears, cougars, or alligators. A long gun is far more awkward than a pistol at close range, and a revolver will allow you to get more rounds off in an emergency. Many people living in rural areas carry a pistol at all times for the purpose of defense against the local wildlife. In case of attack, a revolver can be drawn, aimed, and fired faster than a rifle, and it saves weight and the effort of carrying a hunting rifle on you at all times.

Smaller revolvers work well as concealed carry weapons. The simple mechanism allows for a much smaller pistol to be built, with some small enough to fit in your hand. Hiding one of these on your person is as simple as could be, as you could fit one in your pants pocket if you wanted. It is hard to notice such a small item when you are intentionally trying to hide it.

In summary, revolvers have several advantages over other designs. They have a wide range of cartridges, meaning more options for loads on both ends of the spectrum, large and small. They are mechanically simple, and have fewer parts that can break, which also means that they are simpler to operate. It does not require nearly as much practice to load and fire as other types of pistols do. The all-metal construction makes it harder to damage them and they are not as susceptible to extreme heat and cold.

Revolvers do have their drawbacks. They are almost entirely made of metal, with the grip being the only part that uses any other materials, so they tend to be heavy for their size. They are more sensitive to obstructions, and need more attention when they are being serviced to prevent buildups of dirt, rust, or carbon that will affect the action. Without constant care, a revolver can easily seize up and become an expensive chunk of steel until you dismantle it and scour it clean. They are harder to shoot than other types of pistols, as they are both heavy in the hand and on the trigger. Trigger pull is an important component of accuracy, and revolver triggers are not very forgiving to the novice. They have by far the smallest capacity among firearms, with the typical cylinder holding a mere five to seven rounds.

Autoloaders

Autoloaders are magazine fed, semiautomatic pistols that use gas pressure and recoil to cycle the action, extracting and ejecting the spent casing and feeding in a new round each time the weapon is fired. Magazines are inserted into the bottom of the handgrip/magazine well, and the slide is pulled to the rear and then sent forward to feed a round into the chamber. Autoloaders will be either hammer or striker fired, though there is little significant difference between the two designs. Hammer fired autoloaders have an external hammer with a double action, allowing it to be fired whether or not the hammer is cocked. After the first time the pistol is fired, the slide automatically recocks the hammer as it ejects the case. Striker fired autoloaders have a spring-loaded striker within the slide that is automatically cocked each time the action cycles.

Hunting with an autoloader is rare because so few autoloaders are suited to the task. Autoloaders have many options for concealed carry, making them a popular choice. Military and law enforcement made the switch over to autoloaders decades ago, as they are a superior service or duty pistol.

Using an autoloader for hunting is not advised. The inherent characteristics of these pistols make them unsuitable for hunting. Only a few autoloaders are chambered in a caliber suited for hunting, which drastically limits your choices. The moving slide makes mounting a scope problematic, reducing the range at which you can effectively target game. They are light, which makes the recoil difficult to manage on any reasonable hunting caliber.

The only situation in which you would use an autoloader for hunting is as a backup, in case of emergency. An autoloader should be chambered in a fairly powerful caliber, with larger calibers preferred, running hollow-points or other special ammo to do as much damage as possible, as fast as possible, at medium to close range. This setup can be used for hunting if needs must, but is really intended as a response to an attack. It is direct and brutal, and the goal is to put as many bullets into your attacker and hope that one of them gets something vital or it bleeds out before it can hurt you too badly. Using your pistol this way can be effective, but it is more of a last ditch resort than anything.

Concealed carry is a specialty of autoloaders. A variety of sizes are available to fit the owner. It is easier to fit a larger cartridge in a concealable autoloader, making the shots you have more powerful. They do not require as much material as the other designs, making autoloaders more concealable across the board.

If you want to conceal a pistol on your person, then you need to take into account your size. Shorter and slimmer people are going to have less space in which to hide a pistol. They will have to make sacrifices that a larger person will not. Autoloaders come in a wide variety of sizes to fit your particular needs. They are made as small as a few inches long, and they can still hold a respectable number of rounds in the magazine. An autoloader does not need to sacrifice as much from the caliber to save on size, so a small pistol is able to hold a larger caliber than the other types.

A larger caliber is going to require a larger pistol, but autoloaders can manage this much better than the other pistol categories. Concealing an autoloader is also made simpler by the narrow construction. Less material means less weight, as well, which makes carrying an autoloader a more pleasant prospect. Autoloaders pack more rounds and larger calibers into less space, making them a superior choice for concealed carry.

While law enforcement uses the autoloader as their main duty weapon, military personnel carry them as backups for their rifles. Both groups use them the same way; at close range or when they are riding in a vehicle. Autoloaders allow for quick follow up shots, and the larger magazines allow you to fire a lot of rounds very quickly. If you carry a rifle or a shotgun and it jams or runs out of ammunition at an inopportune time, having a sidearm can be a lifesaver. An autoloader will allow you to fend off an attacker until you can get your main weapon back in the fight, buying you some time until you can reload or perform corrective action.

Space is tight inside a vehicle, and longer weapons can be hard to handle and aim while you are still in your car or truck. An

autoloader can easily be operated with one hand while you operate your vehicle with the other. If someone tries to carjack you, an autoloader can quickly be drawn and fired at your attacker inside the confines of your vehicle. They are also easy to store, as you can fit one just about anywhere in reach.

While autoloaders are more complex, they are very well engineered. This means that despite the fact that they have more moving parts than other pistols, they are still very reliable. The parts most prone to wear are easily available as spares, and autoloaders do not seize up as easily as other types of weapons, both among pistols as well as firearms in general. Not cleaning an autoloader is never a good idea, but it is less a problem than with many other weapons.

The advantages that autoloaders have are their size and speed. Being smaller than revolvers or carbine pistols makes them easier to carry with you, and faster to draw when you need it. Autoloaders can be fired in rapid succession, and they are easier to bring back on target because of their weight, which makes for more time to make accurate shots. They are easy to conceal, and do not suffer as many drawbacks from being designed for concealed carry.

The drawbacks of autoloaders are their lack of power and range. They have fewer of the large, powerful calibers available, and those that do often sacrifice much. Range is a problem because of the inability to attach a scope to an autoloader and the shorter distance between the sights. They are designed for close quarters work, and suffer when used beyond this.

Carbine Pistols

Carbine pistols are scaled back versions of a full sized carbines or rifles. They are based off of the semiautomatic civilian versions of military rifles such as the M16 or AK-47. The changes in the design involve removing the stock and shortening the barrel to more manageable proportions, although it varies on the weapon being modified. They use a variety of different actions, such as gas piston or gas impingement, depending on the rifle from which it is derived.

Carbine pistols are very useful for hunting. They use rifle ammunition, which has far more power and range than comparably sized pistol ammunition. Scopes and optics designed for the larger rifles will fit their smaller counterparts just as well, and the sights that come with carbine pistols are designed to be used out to five hundred meters or more. The calibers available are enough for most anything you are likely to come across.

You may have problems with large game as the calibers best suited to hunting them are not suitable loads for carbine pistols. If this is the case, then a carbine pistol should only be used at ranges where you can quickly fire several shots at your prey. Dangerous game is less likely to be a problem because of the magazine size and the fact that you are firing a rifle round. If twenty or thirty rounds cannot bring it down, very little else would have been able to, and you should not have been hunting it in the first place. Keep these limitations in mind if you plan to use a carbine pistol as your main hunting weapon.

A carbine pistol cannot be concealed short of a backpack or a messenger bag, so do not even try. If you need to infiltrate an area without looking like a threat, a carbine pistol can do the trick, as it is

more concealable than a full sized rifle, while offering similar firepower. Tuck it in something subdued, and carry it right in. Other than that, it simply cannot be done; any attempt will fail, and will draw more attention to you than if you simply carried it openly. Keep in mind that it will take longer to get to it, as it has to be put away, where you can carry other pistols on your body without anyone knowing.

Carbine pistols really shine when they are used as a combat weapon. They are maneuverable in close quarters while still being useful at a distance. Military personnel and bodyguards the world over use weapons very similar to carbine pistols, such as personal defense weapons or submachine guns. In fact, submachine guns have largely been replaced with short barreled rifles, which is basically the same as a carbine pistol with a stock attached*.

*Note that attaching a stock to your carbine pistol without the proper paperwork and permissions can be a very serious crime, and simply possessing a stock that can attach to a carbine pistol is considered the same as having it attached. Make sure that you are not breaking any laws.

If you are worried about heavy fighting then the carbine pistol is your best option. Realistically, a rifle would be best, but sometimes this is not available to you. If you live in an area that has banned you from owning a rifle, the carbine pistol is the next best thing, being almost a rifle itself. No other pistol is going to give you the same options and features all in one package as a carbine pistol does. As a hybrid of rifle and pistol, they are far and away the best option if you are going to face lawlessness and disorder.

The main advantage of carbine pistols is that they allow you to have nearly all of the benefits of a rifle while they are still legally

considered to be pistols. They have better range and power than other pistols. They can mount all the accessories of their parent rifle, giving you plenty of options for customizing your weapon to you. They are also useful for someone who needs a rifle but cannot handle the size and weight. They also hold the most ammunition, with a variety of high capacity magazines available beyond the standard twenty or thirty round magazines that come with it.

The disadvantages of carbine pistols are that they are still essentially rifles as far as functionality is concerned, even if they are a bit smaller. They are almost impossible to conceal, and cannot be drawn quickly if you need them while you are carrying concealed. They are many times heavier than other pistols, and you will have to carry it or sling it wherever you go, which can be tiring. They are not a sidearm like other pistols are, and should instead be considered a primary weapon on their own.

Muzzleloaders

Muzzleloaders are single shot pistols that are hand loaded from the muzzle rather than the breech. They use loose powder and a separate bullet instead of a single preloaded cartridge. The powder charge is added and then the bullet is pushed into place with the help of a ramrod. Once the bullet is seated, the muzzleloader is cocked by pulling the hammer back. Once it is fired, the entire process must be repeated to reload.

As they use black powder and bullets instead of a full cartridge, muzzleloaders cost very little to fire. Even in the case of a complete collapse, you will still be able to reload them, as you can easily make your own black powder and cast your own shot. Making black powder by hand is simple to do once you know the proper

proportions, and the tools required are simple and easy to use, both for the powder and the shot. Supplying ammunition for muzzleloaders is a trivially easy task.

Muzzleloaders are excellent hunting pistols, as they were designed for that purpose. Concealed carry is not recommended because of the limitations inherent to muzzleloaders. The military abandoned muzzleloaders more than a century ago and they are no longer used in combat.

Muzzleloaders are useful for hunting all but small game. The large bullets do plenty of damage, and the accuracy of the pistols allow for precise shot placement. Mounting a scope will assist your aim at longer ranges, so that you can keep more distance between you and your prey. The accuracy is a necessity, though, as the long reloads will make it very unlikely that you will get a second shot.

If you are hunting dangerous game, muzzleloaders have one serious drawback. The single shot means that if whatever you are hunting decides to come after you, then you have just the one shot, maybe two if you can reload in time. If you miss, or only wound your target, you will not have much chance to make up for your error. The large bullets used in muzzleloaders will do plenty of damage, but it may not be enough to stop your prey with a single shot.

While it is possible to conceal a muzzleloader, this is not a use for which they are designed. With the large frame and carrying only one bullet, they are not suitable for concealed carry. If you do manage to conceal a muzzleloader then if you ever need to use it you will have one shot, then you will have to immediately retreat and begin reloading. This is a last resort, if you have nothing better.

Muzzleloaders are completely inappropriate for any sort of combat. While having one is better than being unarmed, it is not by much. Firing then having to hide for ten to twenty seconds or more to reload is a terrible tactic, and so any other type of firearm is a better choice. Retreat is preferable to an attack if you end up in a fight with only a muzzleloader. It is only in the most extreme circumstances that the muzzleloader should be used in a fight, and the situation is desperate indeed if you are forced to resort to using one. If you are at all worried about having to use your pistol for anything other than hunting, do not use a muzzleloader.

The largest advantage of a muzzleloader is that it is not legally considered a firearm, so you can buy one without having to register it or go through the background checks. In addition, both the pistol and ammunition cost less, especially considering the large caliber bullets used in most muzzleloaders. It makes an excellent hunting pistol, and provides an economical way to hunt large game.

The disadvantage of a muzzleloader is reloading. It takes a long time and is a complicated process. This means that firing multiple shots takes

Summary

Revolvers:

Pros:

- They have a wide range of calibers and more options for large calibers.
- They are mechanically simple with fewer moving parts.
- They can mount a scope.

-They retain shells after firing, leaving no presence and allowing for reloading.

-They are less expensive.

-They are concealable.

-They have a durable, all metal construction.

Cons:

-They are very heavy for their size.

-The trigger pull is heavy.

-They have low capacity and longer load times.

-They can be awkward and unwieldy

-They require frequent cleaning.

Autoloaders:

Pros:

-They are lightweight.

-They hold more rounds and changing magazines to reload is quick and simple.

-They are very reliable.

-They can be drawn and fired quickly

-They are concealable.

-They are easy to aim.

Cons:

-They do not have many large caliber options available.

-They are not accurate beyond close range.

- They have wear issues with certain parts.

Carbine Pistols:

Pros:

- They fire more powerful rifle rounds.
- They are accurate out to longer ranges.
- They have lots of options for scopes and accessories.
- They are excellent weapons for a gunfight.
- They have more options for large capacity magazines.
- They have a variety of different types to match your needs.
- They operate like the rifle from which they are derived, letting you cross train.

Cons:

- They are heavy.
- They are expensive.
- They keep any of the problems the original rifle had.
- They are not concealable.
- They can be difficult to control.

Muzzleloaders:

Pros:

- They fire large caliber rounds.
- They are mechanically simple with few moving parts.
- They can mount a scope
 - They are accurate.

- They are less expensive.
- They use cheap ammunition.

Cons:

- They only fire one shot.
- They are slow to reload.
- They are heavy for their size.
- They are very loud.
- They need to be cleaned frequently.

As you can see, each pistol has its place, and what one pistol does well, another might not. It is all based on what works for you. If you are planning on bugging out and may have to fight your way out, a carbine pistol might be what you need. If you want to carry concealed so that you will always be prepared for an emergency, then an autoloader or a small revolver might be right for you. If you are going to be hunting or defending yourself from the local wildlife, then a large caliber revolver or a carbine pistol is where you should look. If you want a pistol for your wife or girlfriend so that she can defend herself, go for an autoloader.

Calibers:

Once you have decided on the type of pistol that you want, you need to consider the caliber that you want. The caliber should do what you need it to, whether that be hunting or defending your home.

The number of calibers available is massive, and you can find one for almost any situation or purpose.

Calibers are designated by their approximate sizes of the bullets in inches or millimeters. .45 AUTO is an inch measurement, noting that the round in question is about .45 inches wide, specifically .452 inches. 9x19mm Parabellum is a metric measurement, which is actually 9.01 millimeters wide. The specific caliber is important, because each pistol is designed for one or more specific cartridges, and loading a cartridge other than what that pistol has been designed to fire is incredibly unsafe.

For hunting, you want a larger caliber, with more power. The .357 Magnum is about the smallest caliber that is acceptable for hunting, and will be sufficient for deer and similar sized prey. For large game, you would be better off looking into the .454 Casull or .45 Long Colt. These have the power and range to kill large game animals, including bears. You may want to look for nonleaded bullets in these rounds, as fragmentation can occur with faster rounds, and having small pieces of lead in your meat is not very appealing.

For a concealed carry, smaller rounds are typically better, as they take up less space. At close range, the lower power of these rounds is not a problem, and having more, smaller rounds is an advantage in a gunfight. Calibers like the .380 AUTO or the 9x19mm Parabellum are good choices, especially when using jacketed hollow-points. Larger calibers take up more space, and are more dangerous to be shooting in public because of the risk of over penetration.

Home defense and combat share many similarities, and so the same rounds will do for either of them. Pistol calibers should be

enough to incapacitate or kill, such as 9x19 Parabellum or .45 AUTO. The idea should be to have a pistol with a lot of bullets, such as the 9x19, or a few very powerful bullets, like the .45. It comes down to a personal call to which style you prefer. If you require a rifle round, then either .223 Remington or .308 Winchester rounds are good. Smaller rounds allow you to carry more, but larger rounds do more damage and travel farther. Again, personal preference.

Whichever round you choose, it should be commonly available, or you will need to buy a lot of it. In the event of a collapse, you can no longer go to the store for ammunition, and finding a rare or specialty caliber on a scavenging run is not a sound plan. The alternative is reloading. Although it is expensive up front, you can end up saving a lot of money by reloading your own ammunition. The supplies are cheaper than the preloaded rounds you can buy in the stores, and if you can reload your own ammunition, you are in a good position. You will no longer be limited to the rounds you had before the collapse, as you can take the cases and load them again.

You should buy the cheapest ammo that will reliably feed for your training. Since you are going to be shooting it at the range and not at someone trying to kill you, it does not have to do anything but hit a paper target. For the rounds that you plan on using in a real life situation, you should buy quality ammunition. Jacketed hollow-points do much more damage than hollow-points do, so you are better off getting them, although they can be more expensive than full metal jacket. The exception to this is when you are planning on hunting large game, because you will need the increased penetration of a full metal jacketed bullet to reach deep enough inside the animal to do damage.

Comparison of Pistols to Rifles and Shotguns:

It is important that you understand how pistols are different from rifles or shotguns. Knowing what those differences mean to you in practical terms. Pistols come with certain advantages, but also have their disadvantages. You need to know when a pistol is or is not sufficient for the task at hand, or if another firearm is better suited to get it done.

Pistols are smaller, lighter, and faster than rifles and shotguns. They are also weaker and closer ranged. They can be concealed and drawn quickly and easily. Rifles are larger, longer, and heavier than pistols. They shoot larger, faster rounds, at longer ranges. They can only be concealed in pieces. Shotguns are larger, longer and heavier than pistols. They shoot larger shells, with different bullet loads.

Pistols are by far the smallest type of firearm. They are designed to be fired with one hand, and though the larger examples may need two hands to handle, they do not reach the size of either rifles or shotguns. They are not as heavy, and they take up less space. Rifles and shotguns are comparable in weight. They need two hands to fire because of their length and recoil. They are heavier and take up more space than pistols, shotguns even more so than rifles.

Pistols can be concealed on your person, ready to go. They can fit in a belt holster, in a jacket, or in a shoulder holster. When they are needed, it is a simple task to draw and fire them. Rifles can only be concealed if they are taken down into sections, and then only in a backpack, briefcase, or messenger bag. They have to be

reassembled before they can be used, which will take a minute or two. Shotguns are not concealable, as they are simply too large.

Pistols use smaller rounds that do not have the energy of rifle rounds or shotgun shells. They can use high capacity magazines to carry more rounds, but the higher the number, the smaller the round, generally speaking. Rifles use larger, heavier rounds that travel faster and longer than pistols or shotguns. They also use high capacity rounds, but they do not have to sacrifice as much size for quantity. Both pistols and rifles have a limited selection of bullet loads, which are essentially limited to jacketed hollow-points and full metal jacket, as specialty bullets such as tracers are expensive and of limited utility to civilians, being designed to fit a military purpose.

Shotguns use larger shells, but carry few of them. They use a tubular magazine instead of the box magazine common to pistols and rifles, and so they have a restricted capacity. Shot and slugs are the two most common loads for shotgun shells, with the former being a collection of smaller pellets inside the shell, and the latter a single large bullet. The width of the bore allows for many variant loads for shotgun shells, with some examples including beanbags or flares, among others.

Drawing a pistol is much faster than a rifle or shotgun. They are so light that they can easily be pointed and aimed. The short eye relief makes matching the sights faster than those of a rifle, but a shotgun with a bead sight is almost as fast, though less precise. Rifles and shotguns are heavy and can be awkward to carry at the ready at all times. They are longer, so you have to fight your leverage to raise them. Finding your aim is slower because of the length of the eye relief.

Pistols have the shortest range due to the smaller bullets. The smaller powder charges in the cartridge and a short barrel limit the speed of the bullet, and the short eye relief makes aiming at long ranges a difficult task. Shotguns fall in the middle, as a rifled slug can be fired accurately out to over a hundred meters. Shot shells do not have nearly the range; the grouping of the pellets spreads out and slows down relatively quickly, but they are designed for closer shots, and can be improved with the use of a choke, Rifles have the longest range, as a long eye relief, long barrel, and large cartridge combine a more stable bullet, high velocity, and precise aiming to increase the range at which effective shots can be made.

In close quarters, pistols can be aimed and fired faster, but carry a weaker bullet. This can be compensated for by making follow on shots, taking advantage of the light recoil. Rifles and shotguns are more awkward up close, as the length can make it hard to bring them to bear if space is limited. Rifles are slower to aim, but the powerful rounds will often do more damage. Multiple shots are slightly harder to make, but not by much. Recoil is stronger than that of a pistol, but the weight of the rifle helps control it, somewhat. Shotguns do the most damage, as the shot and slugs it fires are both large and comparatively slow, and so they transfer more of their momentum to the target. Follow on shots are slower than pistols and rifles, but each shot inflicts severe injuries on the target.

Summary.

Overall, rifles and shotguns are superior weapons, but a pistol is more versatile. Using a rifle or a shotgun for your main weapon is the best option, but if it not feasible, then a pistol is a good choice. A pistol can be carried anywhere you like without anyone being aware,

and when you are up close, most of the problems either disappear or benefit you instead. Pistols are also easier to handle, which means that you can use a pistol where a rifle or shotgun would be too much. Women, children and the elderly can handle a pistol where they might struggle with a rifle or shotgun. Pistols are also good for introducing someone to firearms, as they use the same principles and fundamentals for their operation, opening them up to something larger later on.

Now that you know more about the different types of pistols, their benefits and their drawbacks, and you have considered your needs, you are ready to decide. Do your research, get other opinions, and find out what pistol you want. Make sure that you take your time and do this right. Once you have made the decision, you are ready to go shopping.

Purchase Your Pistol

You have a pistol in mind, and now you are ready to go buy it. You have a few different options when you look to purchase a firearm, and they have some very important differences. You need to understand what goes into the purchase of a firearm beyond the register. The options available to you are gun shops, Internet stores, auction sites, gun shows, and private party sales.

The gun store should be the simplest of them all, but because of the government requirements for firearms dealers, it is a more complicated process than it needs to be. Once you go in and select the weapon you want, they will give you a Firearms Transaction Record, or Form 4473, for you to fill out. You will need photo identification for them to check, and you will have to provide your information on the 4473. The dealer will take this and call up the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS, which is run by the FBI. He will give them your information so that they can run a background check on you and make sure that you are legally permitted to own firearms. None of this is applicable if you are buying a muzzleloader, as it is not considered to be a firearm under the law.

Once the background check is complete, and the dealer has verified that you may legally purchase a firearm, you may complete your transaction. This is usually a fairly quick process, and should not take more than ten or fifteen minutes. Sometimes the system gets backed up and it can take longer, but this is a rare occasion. If this does happen, expect quite a wait, as it can take hours or even days for them to work through the backlog.

If you choose to go through an online gun store or gun auction site, you will have to go through the same process. Since you have to complete the form and background check in person, you will have to have your pistol shipped to someone who holds a Federal Firearms License (FFL) so they can do the paperwork for you. This is usually the closest gun store, and they will probably have a FFL fee for you to pay for their time, which is in the twenty to thirty dollar range, plus the shipping fees from the seller. You can find some good deals online, especially on the auction sites, but you will have to pay a little bit extra to get it delivered to you.

Once you have passed the background check and paid, you can take your pistol and ammunition home. The sale is complete, and you can start to get familiar with your new firearm. However, the government now has a record of you buying a firearm. With the risk of registration leading to confiscation, this may be a concern for you. The government has used registration lists in the past to go back and find gun owners that did not turn them in.

If you do not want to leave a paper trail, you can look for a private seller online or at a gun show. Despite what you might have heard about the gun show loophole, it does not actually exist. You still have to fill out a 4473 and go through the NICS check if you buy from a FFL at a gun show. What a gun show does do, however, is make it much easier to find a private party willing to sell, and if you go through a private seller, no paperwork, no paper trail. You pay him, he gives you the gun, and you are done.

You can do this at his house, your house, at the gun show, or anywhere else you decide to meet. The gun show just happens to gather together a lot of men with guns into one place, that being the

purpose of it. If some of the attendees want to buy or sell firearms, then that is their business. For this reason, if you are having a hard time finding a particular pistol you want, or you are trying to avoid leaving a trace, a gun show is a good place to look.

If you do decide to buy from a private party, or even if you buy used from a gun store, make sure to inspect the weapon before you buy it. You do not want to buy a pistol that has been neglected or abused, as it is more likely to fail on you. Check to see if it is clean or if it has signs of corrosion or other damage, and if it moves smoothly or if it feels stiff, loose, or shows signs of any other problems. If you have access to a range, ask if you can test fire it.

If you are buying from an individual, do not buy a firearm without having inspected and fired it. You can return a defective pistol to a gun store, but a private party sale is final. You might get lucky with someone being willing to take back a defective firearm, but you should not plan on it. Make sure that you are getting what you are paying for.

Once you have completed all the necessary steps, and you have bought your pistol, you must begin learning how to use it properly. Buying it was only the beginning. You have a lot to learn, and while it is a lot to take in, eventually it will become habit. The longer you work at it, and the more time you put in, the better your result.

Pistol Safety

Once you have your pistol, firearms safety is the first and most important part of your training. Safety is something that you always need to have in mind, because one careless moment or small mistake can be fatal. Make sure that the pistol you bought to protect you and yours is not a danger, instead.

Good safety procedures are covered by the Weapons Safety Rules. You may not suffer a mishap each and every time you break one of the rules, but anytime an accident happens, it is because you broke one or more of them. If you follow them at all times, you do not have to worry.

First Weapon Safety Rule: Treat every weapon as if it were loaded.

Never act in any manner that you would not if your pistol was loaded. You never know when a supposedly unloaded pistol still has a round in it. Being unloaded is not an excuse. Any weapon that you handle should be treated carefully, loaded or not. Do not allow yourself to distinguish between how you treat a loaded weapon as opposed to one that is unloaded.

Breaking one of the other rules because your pistol is empty is a bad habit to learn. The reflexes and unconscious habits you pick up while you are handling your pistol do not care if it is unloaded or not. Violate safety while you have an unloaded weapon, and eventually you are going to do the same when it is loaded.

Second Weapon Safety Rule: Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.

If you do not intend to shoot something, never point your pistol at it. You need to pay attention to where the muzzle of your pistol is pointing at all times, and it should always be in a safe direction. Point it at the ground or the sky, or point it downrange, and not anywhere else. Maintaining proper muzzle awareness at all times is very important. You should know where your pistol is pointed at any time, and check it often.

Third Weapon Safety Rule: Keep your weapon on safe until you are ready to fire

This rule may not apply to all pistols, as some do not have external safeties. If your pistol does have a safety, it should be engaged unless you are ready to squeeze the trigger. That means as soon as you stop firing, switch it back to safe. When you are carrying it around, when you put it away, and any other time that you are not actively shooting at something, you should put your pistol on safe. If you drop your pistol, the safety is another way to prevent an accident. If you have a safety, use it.

Fourth Weapon Safety Rule: Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you intend to fire.

Never put your finger inside of the trigger guard until you are preparing to fire. If you are standing, walking, or running, you should have your trigger finger pointed towards the muzzle. This will prevent you from accidentally squeezing the trigger while you are not paying attention. If you become distracted and you place your finger on the trigger, you can pull it without meaning to, and cause a negligent discharge. It is best to get in the habit of laying your finger along the weapon and keeping it there.

If you have your finger on the trigger of your pistol when you are startled, fall, or are otherwise subject to sudden stress, your first instinct is to clench your fists, which will cause a negligent discharge. This is an involuntary reflex, and it happens without you having to think about it. The best way to avoid that reflex is to keep your finger safely out of the way until you need to squeeze the trigger.

Fifth Weapon Safety Rule: Know your target and what is behind it.

Every time that you squeeze the trigger, you should have positively identified your target as well as anything behind it. If you miss, you can send a bullet several hundred meters beyond your target before it finally stops moving. Anything that crosses its path will stop it, be that the ground, a wall, or an innocent bystander. Even if you hit your target, the bullet can penetrate through and continue on. Since the bullets are going to continue on until they hit something, make sure you know what that something is.

At close range, you may over penetrate your target, where the bullet keeps its momentum and goes through the target, continuing on until it hits someone or something else. This is extremely dangerous inside a house or in a crowd unless you are using certain types of rounds. In these situation, knowing what is behind your target becomes even more important.

These five rules form the basics of all safety practices. Commit them to memory, and never allow yourself to forget them. If you see those around you violating these rules, politely remind them to be safe, and likewise, accept any corrections they offer you. Do not become a danger to yourself and others because you could not be bothered to keep safe. Respect the weapon, and train safety so that you will train safely.

Pistol Operation and Maintenance

Function Check

Now that you have your pistol and are familiar with safety, it is time to learn how it works. Take it and look it over and find all the controls. Since each pistol is different, make sure to read your manual so that you know how yours works. Once you are confident that you understand how it works, you should perform a functions test.

Take your pistol and clear it. After you have properly cleared it, place the pistol on safe if it has one, and pull the trigger. If it is working, nothing should happen and the trigger should move very little, if at all. Take it off safe, and pull the trigger again. This time it should move freely, and you should notice some indication that it would have fired, as either the hammer should have fallen or the striker should have moved.

Now release the trigger, and without cocking or racking it again, pull the trigger. The pistol should not fire. Now cock or rack it and pull the trigger again, this time holding it to the rear instead of releasing it. The pistol should fire, then with the trigger still held down, cock or rack the pistol again. It should not fire as you finish cocking or racking it. Release the trigger, and then pull it again. This time it should fire. If all the checks pass, then the pistol is functioning properly and should be ready to be fired.

If any of these checks fails, stop what you are doing, and immediately put the pistol away. It needs to be serviced by a gunsmith, as the failure indicates that your pistol has a serious problem. Do not load or fire your pistol until after it has been checked

and repaired. Any attempt to fire a malfunctioning pistol at this point is dangerous and irresponsible, and can result in injury or death.

Maintenance:

Cleaning your pistol on a regular basis is an essential practice for every shooter. It keeps the pistol operating smoothly and keeps it in good working order. Allowing your pistol to get dirty puts it at risk for malfunction or damage. It will also wear faster and is more likely to corrode than if you serviced it. The longer it goes without cleaning, the greater the issues, especially with revolvers and muzzleloaders, which will seize up if you let them get too dirty.

You need to clean your pistol every single time you finish shooting. If you set aside a certain amount of time to go shooting, some of that has to be weapons cleaning time. If you have the time to shoot, then you have the time to clean it afterwards. It does not take long, so take a rag, a brush, solvent, and oil to scrub it down, wipe it off, and protect it.

More detailed cleaning does not need to be done as often, but it has to be done regularly, whether or not you have shot recently. Once a month is a good schedule, and will keep any small problems that come up under control. You should also do a thorough cleaning after every hundred rounds that you have fired since the last cleaning.

Break down your pistol according to the instructions in the owner's manual. Scrub out everything. This is the time to get into all the cracks and crevices that you miss when you do a quick cleaning after a day at the range. Get out all the carbon and corrosion, clean all the pieces, and then give them a coating of oil to keep them safe

from the elements. Put the pistol back together, wipe down the outside and give it another light coating, then put it away for next time.

The tools you need for cleaning are a brush, a bore snake or bore punch, rags or towels, cotton swabs, solvents, and lubricants. Brushes need stiff but flexible bristles, and are used to scrub off the pistol, inside and out. A bore punch is a set of rods with a cleaning attachment at the tip, and a bore snake is a long thin cord with a thick section at one end, and both are used to clean out the inside of the barrel. Use cotton swabs to get inside small holes or areas that the brush cannot reach, and to check for any residue after the cleaning. Solvents are used to break up carbon and corrosion, and the lubricant reduces wear from friction and protects the pistol from moisture and dust.

A simple cleaning kit can be assembled from common household items. Use an old toothbrush, a wire clothes hanger for the bore punch, old socks for rags, and cotton swabs and you have all the tools that you need for a thorough cleaning session. It is best to buy solvents and lubricants that are specifically designed for firearms, but you can get by with using mineral spirits as a solvent and motor oil as a lubricant. Be careful when you use alternate solvents, as they can strip the oil from the metal, making it more brittle and more vulnerable to corrosion. Apply a generous amount of lubricant if you do, to replace what was removed.

Pistol Marksmanship

Fundamentals of Marksmanship:

Marksmanship is the skill and practice of handling a weapon so that you strike where you aim when you fire it. Besides safety, nothing will ever be as important as proper marksmanship is to shooting. You, as the shooter, have the most influence on the direction of your shots, but it requires skill to do.

Learning how to shoot well starts with basic marksmanship. The three components of basic marksmanship are breath control, trigger control, and sight use. They are easy to get wrong because they seem so simple. Nonetheless, they have to be done right. Learn them and practice them, and you will see improvement in your shooting and groups.

Breath control is the manipulation of your breathing to provide stability. It relies on the timing of your breath to take advantage of the stillness in between breaths. If you fire your pistol in the middle of a breath, your body will be moving. This will shift your aim over the course of the breath. To avoid throwing off your aim, you should fire during your natural respiratory pause, the short period of time in between the end of your exhale and before your next inhalation.

In order to understand the natural respiratory pause, you will perform a short exercise to demonstrate. Close your eyes and breathe in and out a few times, then take a deep breath and hold it for a count of four, then release it over a count of four. Once you exhale, wait a few moments until you need to breathe again. That break is the natural respiratory pause. While you are doing this,

focus on the movement of your body. Feel the slight movement during breathing, and the stillness and relaxation during the pause.

When you breathe in and out, your entire body moves, although you do not notice it. All that movement will be transferred to your pistol, making it hard to aim. Your muscles also tense up while you are breathing, which makes aiming more difficult. If you fire when you are tensed up, you will reflexively relax at the very moment that you fire. When this happens, it is at the worst possible time, as you have no time to recover. Firing during the natural respiratory pause allows you to fire without the tightness interfering with your aim, and without the relaxation throwing off the shot at the last instant. Waiting until the pause removes all the interference is the best time to take a shot.

Trigger control is the proper operation of the trigger during a shot. If you do not move the trigger properly, it will interfere with your aim, and cause you to anticipate the shot. You must squeeze the trigger instead of pulling it to control the movement.

If you pull the trigger, you are exerting force in another direction from your aim. Your hand tightens when you pull the trigger, and it will shift your grip, and your pistol with it. This will pull your sights off the target, and force you to move them back. If you muscle the pistol back into place, you will be fighting yourself. You will tire your muscles faster, and your aim will become unsteady.

Squeezing the trigger instead of pulling it stabilizes your hand and does not move any muscles besides the ones controlling your trigger finger. It moves the trigger directly backwards, providing a smoother movement. It is a more controlled movement, as well.

To demonstrate the difference, put your arm out in front of you. Make a fist with all but your index finger, so that you are pointing directly ahead. Pull your finger into the fist, and watch how your hand and arm move, muscles shift from your hand to your shoulder, and your fist moves. Next, return to pointing straight ahead, and squeeze your finger backwards like you are pinching something between your index finger and your thumb. Watch how little movement occurs in your hand and arm, and how smooth the movement is.

When you squeeze the trigger, it allows the shot to surprise you. If you expect the shot, then you will brace yourself for the noise and the recoil, even if you do not realize it. Instead, slowly squeeze the trigger to take up the slack, and keep moving until you fire the shot. That way you will not anticipate the shot, and that will prevent you from flinching or hesitating just as you fire.

Sight use consists of sight alignment and sight picture. Sight alignment is simply aligning the sights so that you have the pistol pointed in the proper direction. Sight picture is the proper focus and placement of the sights on target. Together, they will give you the correct aim. If you have one wrong, the other will likely be wrong as well, and this will throw off your aim.

When you aim down the sights, the front and rear sights need to be aligned with each other. Looking at the sights while they are out of alignment is no good, as the point of aim will be incorrect. The method of alignment is dependent on the type of sights mounted on your pistol. The two most common are notch sights and aperture sights. Notch sights are aligned by placing the front sight post in between the rear sight notches, with the tops of both the front and

rear sights level. Aperture sights are aligned by centering the front sight post in the rear aperture, both vertically and horizontally.

In order to demonstrate how sight alignment works, put both of your hands in front of your face, one in front of the other, and make fists with the thumbs up. Align the thumbs in front of your eyes, so that they make a straight line to a specific point. Now move the hand closest to you in any direction, taking it out of alignment. Keep your front hand in front of the aiming point, then move your head until your thumbs are aligned once more, and look at what you are pointing now. The distance between the two points is much farther than you moved your thumb, just as your point of aim and point of impact will be different if even a small misalignment of the sights happens.

Sight picture is the image that you see when you are aiming down your sights once they are aligned. The front sight post should be centered on your target. If you are firing at a circular target, you should be able to see a half circle above the front sight post. If you are firing at a silhouette target or a human, you should see the shoulders and head of your target above the front sight post.

When you aim, you should be focusing on the tip of your front sight post. Look at your target long enough to identify it, then shift your focus back to your front sight. Both the rear sight and the target should be blurred when you fire. It sounds counterintuitive, but if you focus on your target, you will end up striking around it. By focusing on the front sight post, you can ensure that your sights are still properly aligned when you fire.

As you can see, the differences between the right way and the wrong way to shoot is very small, and it is easy to do it wrong.

The best way to shoot well is to focus on the basics. With practice and experience, you will learn to tell the difference, and you will be able to tell what your mistakes were after you are done. The simplest parts of shooting are the most important, and once you can do them right, you will see great improvement.

Ballistics:

An understanding of ballistics is a necessary part of training marksmanship. Ballistics is the study of the way bullets act once they have been fired. You will be introduced to the three stages of ballistics: internal, external, and terminal. Internal ballistics is the behavior of the bullet while it is still inside the barrel. External ballistics is the behavior of the bullet while it travels through space. Terminal ballistics is the behavior of the bullet once it strikes its target, until it stops all movement.

Internal ballistics processes begin as soon as the primer is struck and the powder ignites. When that happens, the expanding gasses begin to push the bullet down the barrel. At the same time, the heat from the burning powder causes the bullet to expand slightly, which helps it engage the rifling on the inside of the barrel. Rifling is a spiraling pattern inside the barrel that causes the bullet to spin, stabilizing it when it exits the barrel, and increasing accuracy.

Any obstructions or imperfections in the barrel will degrade accuracy, even if they are minor. One example of this is carbon buildup inside the barrel. Deposits of the burning gasses that push the bullet down the barrel will begin to coat the barrel. Over time, these deposits will grow larger and become more of a problem.

Regular cleaning helps get rid of them, which will restore the accuracy of your pistol.

This portion of ballistics ends fairly quickly, but it is where the bullet gets its direction and momentum, which it will carry through its path until it hits something. This is why it is important that you hold your pistol as steady as possible while you are shooting. Any shifts in the pistol will transfer over to the bullet, which will alter the trajectory. You want to have as little movement as possible until the bullet has left the barrel.

As the bullet leaves the barrel, the external ballistics phase begins, and a separate set of ballistic processes start to influence it. The first is the release of gas as the bullet clears the muzzle. The escaping gasses vent out, but they do not do so evenly, so the bullet is slightly destabilized and begins a slight wobble. As it continues on, the spin imparted to it by the rifling will stabilize it somewhat, but it will also be affected by atmospheric factors like air pressure and wind, as well as gravity.

The bullet will want to continue on in a straight line, but gravity and friction will slow it down and bring it down. At long ranges, this can be quite significant, but it is negligible until you get out past a hundred meters or so. Past that, the resistance of the air will slow your bullet down and it will fall faster and faster. Longer ranged shots will spend more time travelling through the air, and you will have to include more of these factors into your aim.

Most of the different forces that alter the path of your bullet will not have as great an effect on it if you are going to be shooting in close. Even at the longer ranges that you can reach with a pistol, you will probably only ever have to deal with gravity, friction, and wind.

Once the bullet strikes an object, it begins the terminal phase of ballistics. The behavior of the bullet is dependent on the material it struck. A bullet striking a body acts differently than one striking stone, metal, or wood. This is important to know, as bullets will still retain some of their energy and momentum after the initial impact, and will act in predictable ways depending on what was hit.

When a bullet enters the body, it creates a wound channel behind it, which is called cavitation. The channel caused by cavitation will initially be wider than the bullet, as flesh is pushed outward by the shockwave of the bullet passing, but it will attempt to return to its original shape soon after, leaving a small hole. If the bullet passes all of the way through, the exit wound will be considerably larger due to the shockwave pushing ahead of it. Inside the body, flesh can compress and move out of the way, but upon exit, no more space is available, and the shockwave will push it outward, leaving a gaping hole.

Another effect of the shockwave is hydrostatic shock. The impact of the bullet is transferred through the body, possibly damaging the internal organs. It can cause brain hemorrhaging and organ damage, even in areas of the body distant from the path of the bullet. The effect is more pronounced if repeated shots are made quickly. If multiple bullets strike the target, it can cause a sudden disruption to blood pressure, which can result in temporary unconsciousness.

Some rounds will fragment when they hit their target, sending several smaller pieces of the bullet through the body. This will increase the chances of a wound channel causing fatal damage. Fragmentation usually occurs in higher velocity bullets, or in jacketed

hollow-point rounds. This is a definite advantage if you are trying to put down whatever you are shooting at, but it can be a disadvantage if you are hunting, as you would end up with tiny pieces of lead through the area where it was shot.

If a bullet only strikes flesh, it will travel in a fairly straight path until all of its energy is spent or it penetrates through. If it hits bone, the reaction is unpredictable. Sometimes the bullet will split into pieces and spread out through the body. Some of these pieces will follow the bone, which can lead them into areas of the body that are distant from the point of impact, doing further damage. Other times, the bullet will strike the bone and shed all of its momentum, which may result in the bullet being lodged inside the bone. If a bullet goes through a bone and continues on, it may begin to tumble, which will increase the size of the wound cavity. A bone that has been broken by a bullet is dangerous, as blood loss is usually quite severe and shards of bone often spread out from the impact site to do further damage to the flesh surrounding it.

When a bullet hits something hard like stone, metal, and some woods, it will deflect if it does not have enough energy to go through. When a bullet strikes at an angle, it is much more likely to deflect than to penetrate, and thin objects will stop a bullet from penetrating. The direction it takes from there is erratic, but the bullet will often follow along the surface. If it is a wall or some other long, flat surface, the bullet may skip along the wall. This is very dangerous to anyone along the wall.

If the bullet has enough energy to penetrate, it will continue moving, but it may still experience some deflection. Instead of continuing in a straight line, it will go in the same general direction,

but it is not predictable once the bullet hits. The same effect happens when shooting through glass. In addition, bullets can penetrate farther through solid objects than expected. Common handgun bullets can penetrate a quarter of an inch of steel, and rifle bullets even more. Concrete, stone, wood, and other materials can be penetrated even deeper than metal. Walls, cars, and even small trees will not stop a direct hit from many pistols and most rifles.

Sight Zero:

You will need to zero your pistol before you start shooting and after each time you take your pistol apart to clean it. Check your owner's manual for instructions on how to adjust the sights on your pistol, so that you get the correct procedures for your specific pistol. Once you know what you have to do and have the tools required, it is time for the shooting portion of the zeroing.

You will need: three targets; two magazines loaded with ten rounds each for autoloaders and carbine pistols, or twenty rounds for revolvers and muzzleloaders; a support for your pistol, such as a pillow or seat cushion; a marker; ear and eye protection. A data book is an optional item, but it is good to have so that you can record your shots and make notes of any successes or mistakes.

Set up the targets side by side at twenty-five meters, with a few inches between them. Lay down the cushion at the firing line and get down in the prone position. Once you are laying on the ground, load your pistol with the first magazine or with five rounds, and get in as stable a stance as you can. You can use the cushion to steady your hands while you shoot, so that you can concentrate on aiming.

Make sure to focus on your marksmanship fundamentals as you shoot.

Fire five shots at the center of the target on the left. Aim at the same spot each time you fire, until you have fired five rounds. Stand up, making sure to be careful with your pistol and mindful of where it is pointed as you do, and approach your target. You should see all five rounds in a group somewhere on the paper. Adjust your sights so that you can bring your next group closer to the center of the target.

Return back to the firing line and repeat the process, firing the next five rounds at the right target. Go and check, and adjust your sights again, so that you are closer to the center. If you were already on center, do not adjust your sights. Return to the firing line, and this time, fire the ten remaining rounds at the center target. From there, you should have all the shot data you need to make any final adjustments to your sights, and you should have a properly zeroed pistol.

If you have trouble shooting a group, then you are not ready for the drills. Keep practicing, keep reading, and keep shooting until you can group regularly. If you are at a range or know someone who is a good shot, ask him to help you. You have to be able to shoot properly before you can start learning anything else, or you will just end up wasting your time and money. Without accuracy, the skills you practice will be of no use.

Sometimes, the problem lies in your pistol and not your ability. Having someone you know is a good shot fire your pistol is a good way to locate the problem. If someone who shoots well has trouble keeping his shots tight, you may just have a bad pistol that needs to

be fixed. The parts could be loose, or you might have some unnoticed damage.

Physiology of Shooting

When you shoot someone, your goal is not to kill them. Your goal is to disable him, in order to prevent him from doing you any harm. If you shoot someone, and inflict a fatal injury, he may still have enough time before he dies to injure or kill you in return. In contrast, a crippling injury to your target may not kill him, but it will prevent him from continuing to attack you. As such, you must always choose your shots for the best chance to disable your targets.

The reason behind the distinction is the ability of the human body to minimize and survive an injury. Aside from a durability and adaptability that will keep a man in a fight longer than you might expect, even injuries that will be fatal can be kept under control by the body. This is done through a set of physical and chemical systems in the body. They interact to numb pain, slow blood loss, and minimize the damage inflicted to the body.

A shot to the heart is a fatal wound, and only immediate surgical intervention will prevent death. That being understood, the heart can continue to beat for minutes afterwards, and the target can be alert and mobile for over a minute. Even if the heart suffers so much damage that it ceases to beat, the rest of the body can continue to function for several seconds, which is a long time in a fight for your life.

Skin and muscle are very elastic, and will stretch when shot. The cavitation of a bullet will cause a large disruption, but the body will return to normal almost instantly, leaving a wound smaller than the size of the actual bullet. The blood vessels become constricted, which limits the amount flowing through them if they are cut open. A wound that would cause massive bleeding can be slowed down to a

trickle, and the permanent injury is minimized, so that time and energy spent healing is reduced.

The only way to reliably remove someone from a fight is to target the areas of the body that will prevent them from moving or acting. The best places to aim for are the central nervous system and the pelvic girdle. Either one of these will cause damage that cannot be ignored. Massive trauma is not optimal, but if enough damage is done it will suffice. Blood loss is the least effective, as it often takes minutes to bleed out, making incapacitation an uncertain prospect.

The central nervous system is made up of the brain and the spinal column. It connects to the peripheral nervous system, which is the network of nerves that reach every muscle, bone, and organ. All instructions for the body, from blinking to sprinting, start off in the brain. The spinal column transmits them to the nerves, which communicates between the body and the brain. Any damage to the central nervous system will disrupt the vital link between the brain and the rest of the body, and will likely result in death.

The best and most effective area of the central nervous system to shoot is the medulla oblongata. The medulla oblongata is responsible for the autonomic functions, or processes that do not require conscious thought. It is also the link between the rest of the brain and the spinal column. No matter what you do, the instructions have to pass through the medulla oblongata. These include breathing, the beating of your heart, and, most importantly, your reflexes.

A shot to the medulla oblongata will instantly kill the target. As soon as the bullet penetrates it, the body will go completely limp and

collapse. No reflexes will trigger, and all movement and brain function will cease, immediately. The medulla oblongata is the most basic level of the brain, and without its instructions and processes, nothing else can function.

Targeting the rest of the brain or the spinal column is also effective, as it does not require much damage to cause incapacitation. Once the rest of the body stops receiving instructions from the body, the target will be unable to harm you. An injury to the spinal column will incapacitate anything below the wounded area, and nothing can overcome that. Injury to the brain is even more serious, and is almost always fatal. Even if your target survives, he is likely to be knocked out by the impact.

The problem with targeting the central nervous system is its size. The brain and spine are small compared to the rest of the body, and are hard to hit on a moving target. The first instinct is to duck and lower the head, so you will have an even smaller target, and if you hit the head at an angle, then the skull can deflect the shot. The spine is also a hard target, as it is long and narrow, and surrounded by muscle and bone designed to protect the nerves within.

The pelvic girdle is a set of bones that together form the pelvis. They connect the legs to the rest of the skeleton and the muscles that connect to it support the body when it is upright and mobile. Several large blood vessels pass through the pelvic cavity, and it contains the bowels and reproductive organs.

A shot to the pelvic girdle will result in a loss of mobility in your target. Without the rigid support of the unbroken pelvis, the muscles cannot support the weight of the upper body and will collapse. The broken bones can damage the blood vessels, and the

bullet may tumble around the area after it hits the bone, doing even more damage. With the target collapsed, it is simple to follow up with shots to the central nervous system to finish him.

If you do not kill the target immediately after shooting him in the pelvis, the wounds will likely prove fatal, regardless. Blood loss is likely to be a concern, as well as infection caused by any injury that ruptures the bowels. The pelvis takes months to heal even if the wounds are survivable, so the target is not likely to threaten you again.

The pelvis is a large target, and is easy to shoot. It is fragile, so damaging it is not difficult, and any shots that strike the pelvis can easily do more damage to the surrounding tissues. However, it is not immediately fatal, and the target may recover enough to continue shooting at you. It is most useful in order to stop someone charging you, as they will collapse and will only be able to drag themselves if they have to move.

Sensory.

When you get into a fight for your life, your body is flooded with several chemicals that prepare you for violence. In addition to the physical effects mentioned earlier, you may experience unusual changes to your perception. These usually involve distortions or interference of vision, hearing, and fine motor skills, although others exist.

One of the more common phenomena is called tachypsychia, which means speed of the mind. This is believed to be related to the chemicals that are released in the brain during and after a fight. It is a perception that time is either moving very slowly or very quickly. If it happens to you, you will notice that everything seems to be moving

slowly, including yourself, but that you have more time to react mentally to whatever is going on.

The sensations are temporary, and will end once the fight does. However, the body undergoes a corresponding collapse after a fight, which results in physical and emotional fatigue, leaving you vulnerable. This is especially dangerous to you if the fight drew the attention of others in the area, as you will be an easy target in the state of exhaustion. Whenever you experience a threat, whether or not you actually had to fight, be careful about relaxing until you are sure you are safe.

Psychology of Shooting

Most people panic when confronted by violence. Any sort of threat will terrify them, and they will not be able to respond beyond fleeing the area or, even worse, just holding still, shocked into immobility. A few do not respond the same way, and are in some ways drawn to violence. By learning what happens to both groups, you can train yourself to remain calm and focused even when everyone else has lost control.

Other people do not shrink from violence. The kind of person that does not hesitate to kill to get what they want is a predator. They can tell whether or not you are prey by the way you stand, the way you move, the way you act, and the way you look. If you want to avoid the attention of a predator, you must stop acting like their prey. Learn the ways of the predator and they will avoid you.

This is important, because if you have decided that you want a pistol with which to defend yourself, you have to prepare for the fact that you may have to kill another person. If you are not willing and able to do that, then all you will be doing is arming the first person you come across that is. Without the willingness to kill, your pistol is more a danger to you than to those that would do you harm.

Few people are comfortable with killing another person. This is a reluctance that is wired deep into the brain, so that people do not go around killing each other. The few that do not have this block, or in whom it is lessened, are not obvious. Until the time comes, you cannot tell whether or not you have the block or not, and by that time, it may be too late. Training yourself to handle a fight is a better plan.

The training you need to ready yourself for a confrontation is mainly psychological. Using your pistol is more than simply pulling the trigger. It is a decision to kill another person, and that is not a decision that is made lightly. You are responsible for making that decision, and the consequences of it. It is better that you make the decision ahead of time, rather than when you are faced with a life or death situation. Once you have decided and trained for it, you can evaluate each situation as it comes up.

Visualization and desensitization, are conditioning methods used to teach military and law enforcement how to react to combat, and you will use them as well. You do not have to train to the extent that they do, but the principles are the same, whether you are training for elite special operations, police work, or simple selfdefense. It is all mental preparation for when the time comes to make the choice: fight, or die?

Visualization is a simple habit, and is very easy to add into your training. Simply put, it is imagining a situation, then deciding how you will react to that situation. When you step up to the firing line at the range, picture a scenario where you would have to shoot to kill. Go through the event in your head while you are shooting your course of fire, and it will build a response. If that ever happens, you will have a record of what to do.

The point of visualization is to create a memory. If you practice anything for long enough, you will eventually ingrain it into your unconscious memory. This is muscle memory, but it is actually a function of the brain, and not the muscles. You are training your mind to react a threat in a certain way, even though you have no actual experience. The visualizations will provide a workaround.

In order to overcome the block against violence, you need to desensitize yourself to it. Using the same principles as overcoming other extreme fears, you introduce it in smaller measures, then increase it over time. As you add more and more realism in your training, you will become accustomed to it, and it will not bother you in a real fight. Just like training to shoot, the more you train for combat, the more familiar you will be, and the less likely you are to panic like so many others do.

To begin, you should be using targets shaped like a human silhouette instead of the circular targets that are usually used. Eventually, you can move on to targets with printed images, and other even more realistic training aids. These will get you used to firing at real people, so that you do not freeze up when the time comes.

Mentally preparing yourself for a time when violence is your only option is just as important as training to shoot. Just as you cannot hit a target if you cannot aim, you cannot shoot if you cannot overcome your fear. Some fear is a normal thing, and it can be used to keep you aware and alive, but it must not rule you. You can control your fear, overcome your reluctance, and fight for your life.

Courses of Fire

The following courses of fire are training drills to teach you simple shooting skills. These are the skills that you are most likely to need in a selfdefense situation. Practice them as often as you can, so that you learn to shoot quickly and accurately.

You will be making four types of shots: single shots, rapid shots, controlled pairs, and hammer pairs. Single shots are made one at a time, with a chance to put the pistol down and rest your arms before the next shot. Rapid shots are made in sequence, reacquiring the target after each shot. Controlled pairs are two shots made in quick succession, aiming before each shot. Hammer pairs are two shots made almost instantly, aiming only before the first shot and keeping the pistol as steady as possible for the second.

Course of Fire #1: 25 Meter, Untimed

20 rounds, single shots from the 25-meter line.

20 rounds, controlled pairs from the 25-meter line.

This is work on basic marksmanship. Aim before each shot and remember the basics.

Course of Fire #2: 20-10 Meters, Untimed

10 rounds, controlled pairs from the 20-meter line.

10 rounds, controlled pairs from the 15-meter line.

10 rounds, hammer pairs from the 10-meter line

This is work on closer targets. Remember that speed is important for the hammer pairs.

Course of Fire #3: 25-10 Meters, Timed

5 rounds, single shots from the 25-meter line, in two minutes.

5 rounds, single shots from the 20-meter line, in two minutes.

10 rounds, controlled pairs from the 15-meter line, in two minutes.

10 rounds, hammer pairs from the 10-meter line, in two minutes.

This should be used as your test for basic marksmanship. Any shots left unfired after the time is up are counted as misses. Time begins once you have loaded your pistol, and once it ends, does not begin again until you have loaded for the next string of fire. You should hit at least 90% of your shots to pass.

Course of Fire #4: 15-5 Meters, Untimed

10 rounds, controlled pairs from the 15-meter line.

10 rounds, hammer pairs from the 10-meter line.

15 rounds, hammer pairs and single shots from the 5-meter line.

This is a drill based around stopping an attacker rushing you. If possible, you should set up three targets at the 15, 10, and 5 meter line, and fire one set of shots at each target, from back to front. The 5-meter shots are known as a failure to stop drill, with the hammer

pair fired into the torso, then the single shot at either the brain or pelvis, to immediately halt the attacker.

Course of Fire #5: 20 Meters, Untimed

10 rounds, single shots from the 20-meter line.

10 rounds, rapid shots from the 20-meter line.

10 rounds, rapid shots from the 20-meter line.

This is more marksmanship practice. This is more advanced, as you do not have a chance to rest in between each shot while you are making the rapid shots.

Course of Fire #6: 15-5 Meters, Untimed

10 rounds, controlled pairs from 15-meter line.

15 rounds, hammer pairs and single shots from the 10-meter line.

10 rounds, rapid shots from the 5-meter line.

This is to get you used to shooting at close distances. One thing to watch is the difference between point of aim and point of impact. If you zeroed your sights at 25 meters, then the impact may be slightly higher than your aim. The zero will include some bullet drop, so you may need to aim a little lower than usual to hit properly. Pay attention to the difference, so that you know what to expect.

As you train more, you can start adding movement, reloads, malfunction recovery, cover, and multiple targets at once. At the

beginning, these are unneeded complications when you need to focus on your marksmanship. Once you have some more experience with your pistol, you can add them in for the sake of realism. Eventually, they will become as much a part of your training as the shooting drills.

When to Shoot

For all the emphasis on shooting and fighting and killing, remember that some fights can only be won if you walk away. Having a pistol and the ability to use it well does not make you invincible. In fact, it can make you even more vulnerable, if you rely on it so much that you forget to stay alert or become overconfident.

A pistol makes a lot of noise each time it is fired, and the sound is distinctive. That sound is going to carry, and it will draw attention. After a collapse, a gunshot is going to be a call to all the worst kind of people. Shooting may draw more trouble than it solves.

Getting into a fight is a risk, especially after the collapse. Even when everything is normal, it is dangerous, but it gets much worse if you have no access to medical care. Even a minor injury carries the threat of infection, and major injuries will almost inevitably prove fatal without modern surgery and drugs. If you get hurt, no one is coming for you, except for the ones that hurt you in the first place. Consider that when you are faced with a threat.

In the end, it comes down to your judgment. Every fight is a chance that you might not walk away. On the other hand, shooting when you did not need is less likely to result in your death than not shooting when you should have. The decision, and the consequences, are all on you.

Conclusions

Choosing to arm yourself is a major decision, with implications both now and after any major survival event. Having a weapon, and knowing when and how to use it, could very well be the difference between life and death for you and your family. Of course, as we have seen, it can also be extremely useful for providing food and sustenance now and in a survival situation for you and your family by means of hunting. Those who have a firearm and are well stocked with ammunition will be prepared on an entirely higher level than the general population.

As we've seen, it's extremely important to choose the right firearm for your personal situation. Not everyone will benefit from the same type of firearm so it's important to research which one is best for you before purchasing.

We've also seen that maintenance of your firearm is vital. It's not going to do you any good in a survival situation to have a firearm that you haven't taken care of. It will be of no use to you and your family if you don't properly clean, repair, and maintain the weapon before your life may depend on it. Taking these little steps now will ensure you'll be able to rely on the weapon in the future.

Keeping these things in mind, and learning to use your firearm properly through training exercises and further readings, will put you at an enormous advantage when the you-know-what hits the fan. If you can prepare now, you'll be much better off in the future. And, after all, isn't that what prepping is all about?

Best of luck!

The Frugal Prepper: Survival on a Budget

Prepping is a hobby for some, a lifestyle for many, and a way to make sure that our families are protected should anything happen. “So, what exactly *could* happen?” many people ask. Well, in reality, anything could happen - preppers come from all walks of life and are preparing for vastly different things. Some are simply concerned that a natural disaster might strike where they live and they would not be prepared. Take Hurricane Katrina or the Moore, Oklahoma tornado, for example. Those instances reinforce the fact that natural disasters do happen and, for those that were prepared, they were able to access food and water while FEMA and other rescuers worked on restoring power. For those that were unprepared, well, we saw the worst possible outcomes. You don't want to be one of the ones left behind.

For other people, they are prepping for the end. The Big End. You know who you are. These preppers are serious about doing everything possible to prepare for the worst-case scenario. They may live off the grid, or at least know *how* to, should the need arise, and they teach their entire families to live that way as well. They are the ones that live in more rural areas, where land is cheaper and survival skills are necessary just for their day-to-day lives. Natural disasters happen, doomsday can easily happen and perhaps an economic apocalypse could happen as well. There are many different scenarios that could require us to have prepping and survival skills, so it makes sense to start gathering those skills now, no matter which scenario we think is the most likely.

Today there are millions of individuals and families working feverishly to get prepared for their worst fears or for those events that we all know are coming, sooner or later. They are working hard, and doing very well at it. Prepping is something that, for many people, has become a secret lifestyle. But, regardless of how or why you prep, one of the most common misconceptions about prepping is that it takes a lot of money. Sure, you could spend hundreds of thousands of dollars buying every fancy toy and gadget that claims it will save you and your loved ones. Most of that is just marketing lies. But prepping doesn't have to be that way. Some people become extreme preppers, able to live on very little every month, while others are just accustomed to living frugally. There is a family in Pasadena, California living off 6,000 pounds of produce a year, which all comes from their property. They grow more food than they need and sell the excess to restaurants. Of course, we can't all do that in our situations, but there are always concrete steps that we can take to prep smarter and more cheaply to save money for other purposes.

What is Prepping?

Prepping is simply the action or process of preparing something for use later or preparing *for* something (an event) that may come in the future. Sure, there are those preppers that live on the fringe of society with their thirty-year food pantries, bunkers, and arsenal of mines, bombs, booby traps, grenades, guns, rifles and the like. That's great, if your lifestyle supports that. But for the rest of us, prepping takes time and time is money. What if you need to prep on a budget?

Running to the store last minute to stock up is not an option if you have to collect your family or fortify your home when disaster strikes. Never mind the fact that the rest of city has the same idea. You would be lucky to even make it to the store. The roads would be cluttered, backed up with stop and go traffic. Or worse, they would be blocked off or not usable at all. And even if you make it to the store, the shelves would be cleaned out at best and, at worse, rioting would have already broken out so you wouldn't be able to get the things you need anyways. No, you need a better plan.

Prepping is the best way to give you and your family a good chance to survive any catastrophe. First, you need to know what you are preparing for or against. There are five main factors that lead to death in a survival situation. These are dehydration, starvation, weather, natural situations, and sanitation. To combat these, you'll want to create an emergency pantry composed of water, food, clothes (shoes and blankets too), security (home defense and personal defense), as healthy and clean a living environment as can be provided, and knowledge of various situations and how to best handle those situations. 'Situations' is an all-inclusive term, but could be anything from a spider bite to an angry mob at your front door. 'Situations' can also include mold, illnesses, infections, and depletion of your emergency pantry due to negligence, theft or disaster.

I know what you're thinking: "There are way too many things to possibly be able to plan for!" It can seem overwhelming, certainly, but that's just the start of things. Planning what you want to stock and how you plan to store it is only a third of the battle. Another third of the battle is acquiring knowledge, the proper mindset, and the right skills to succeed in your endeavors. The rest is actually getting

the supplies that you need and checking them off of your list to ensure you have everything you need.

Before you start buying up everything in sight, or decide your goal is unobtainable and simply give up, do not get discouraged by the work that lies ahead. Start gradually and aim small. Make a list of the most basic things that you think your family will need to survive. Do some research on this. High profile freeze-dried foods store well and are tasty but they are also very expensive for the average family. And there is no need to buy food that you and your family normally do not consume. The same thing goes for every other category of supply you'll need. But you have to start somewhere, so start with a list of everything you think you'll need. Be as broad as possible, because it's far easier to take things off of the list later, then to try and remember things you have forgotten to add to the list in the first place.

Prepping on a budget is certainly a different way of preparing, because until anything happens at all, the bills keep coming and life goes on. Building a bunker or camping in the wilderness does not provide a steady income like your job does, unfortunately. Finding the time to dedicate to prepping is a challenge because time is money. However, prepping is not just a hobby to do in leisure time. It is a lifestyle, and one that you and your family can adopt without breaking the bank.

Another challenge to prepping on a budget is diligence. Not sticking to your budget with the intent to make it up next week is an example of a common slip up. When you slack in your preparations, it gets easier *to continue to* slack in your preparations. No one is going to sit you down with an intervention when nothing has even

happened yet. Rest assured that pointing fingers and the blame game creates enough stress to have you hesitating and second-guessing yourself. Hesitation in a hostile situation could be fatal. Prepping keeps your body, mind, and spirit sharp and fit. For when disaster strikes, it will be too late to “get into shape”.

Prepping on a budget takes time and your efforts may seem trivial when you focus on the small, day-to-day items. Yes, it may seem like you are counting pennies, cutting coupons in your free time, and your emergency pantry doesn't look like much. It is easy to give up the plan when nothing appears to have happened. But the little things add up. Before you know it, you'll have more supplies than you realized. And if anything does happen, you and your family will be better fit to survive than if you had done nothing at all.

Prepping on a budget gives you time for trial and error. Learning what foods store well and which ones don't is a part of the process and figuring it out after a disaster usually does not bode well. Prepping on a budget hones your negotiation skills, if you go to flea markets or garage sales for some of your supplies. Other benefits include sharpening your mind and strengthening your resolve. If you have emergency food supplies for 6 months but have no concept of rationing, healthy vs. meager portions, or the self-discipline to stick to the meal rations, then your level of preparedness is not going to be that great. Sticking to a budget will train you to focus on the things that are most important, and this knowledge and way of thinking will seep over into other parts of your life as well, creating even more benefits.

Prepping on a budget usually leads to better budgeting choices in general. You and your family will benefit from prepping on a budget.

And it can be a fun experience for a family to do together that doubles as a lifeline. The gradual change is best when including your family and is a preferred method to the culture shock of simply telling or demanding that your family do things a certain way one day, with no reasoning in the build up. Now that you know some challenges and benefits to prepping on a budget, let's look at what you should actually start to prep.

In order to become more independent and build up a self-sustaining prepping habit, there are a few “big picture” things you can start to think of and begin to do to get started, including:

- Become less dependent on your job
- Get out of debt
- Reduce monthly expenses
- Buy some land
- Learn to grow your own food
- Find a reliable source of water nearby or learn how to sterilize water
- Explore alternative energy sources

When you are about to begin your prepping lifestyle, it's important to remember that you should never have to go into debt just because you are prepping. Prepping is about being responsible and that includes paying close attention to your finances. Now is not the time to go into a bunch of debt, simply because you want to have every latest gadget and survival toy. The basics of prepping can be started with little or no money, and these money-saving principles will come back to help you all along your survival way.

To begin your prepping journey, you should always ask yourself: what you are doing this for? What scenarios can you envision happening? And if those happen, what will you need? What is the minimum amount of money or goods that you and your family can survive on? Your family needs to be able to survive, of course, but you don't need to be in debt to prepare for it. Prepping for an unknown future economic reality or otherwise is important. So important that everyone should be able to do it, regardless of their current financial situation.

Once you begin to understand what it is you need to have on hand, it can then become something that you work on to keep you focused and, of course, up to date with your prepping needs. What do you need to have on hand to begin with? It's easy to start. First, understand that you can pick up a few things to begin with as you start your journey to prepperhood. As the months go by, you will begin to notice that your collection will grow, continuously. The more you pick up and store, the longer you'll be able to survive, of course. But it will be fulfilling to see your survival collection grow over the months as you pick up various items when and where it makes most sense to do so.

Prioritizing different areas of your life to become a prepper or survivalist can be wildly successful *if* you stick to a budget and work from it. Chances are, if you have watched any prepping shows, or read any survival blogs, you have seen the massive amounts of items that some people have in their storage areas in case of an emergency. You don't necessarily need to compare yourself to these people. You are not going to need every single thing that they have and the sooner you start tailoring your prepping habits to your family

and your specific needs and goals, the easier it will become. You and your family are unique. You have different needs, desires, and abilities than every other family out there. Shouldn't your prepping lifestyle reflect that?

Consider your budget and your family's necessary needs and cut back on items that you obviously don't need. Do you need to dine out every week? Certainly not, and that \$30-40 or more could go to your prepping budget. Cable, movies, and other forms of entertainment can be cut back and cut down to allow for more money in your prepping arsenal. You can at least scrounge between \$300-400 a month extra for prepping in this manner. Then, after you have worked on your budget and have started to save money, you can start actually buying what you need!

What to Prep

In the interest of gradually transitioning to a prepper lifestyle, it's best to start out with an Every Day Carry (EDC). An EDC refers to those items that you carry on you throughout the day. Of course you will have your phone, car keys, and wallet, but, in terms of prepping, decide which other items would benefit you in any situation. In addition to what you already carry, here is a good place to start:

- Pocket Knife, Multitool, or Swiss Army Knife
- Paracord Survival Bracelet
- A lighter (Windproof is better)
- Watch

These items are lightweight and can even be carried in a cigarette case or aluminum wallet for consolidation. The idea is to help you

help yourself. It's not a rescue mission, but these items can help you get yourself into a better position for a rescue mission. Another important point to note is that these items should stay on your person at all times. They do not stay in your car, on your desk, in the jacket pocket of the coat you just hung up, or in your purse. If you're going to be able to use them, they need to be with you, so get in the habit of keeping your EDC on you at all times.

The next step in prepping that you will want to consider is creating a Bug Out Bag (BOB). A BOB is designed to aid you in getting out of the way of danger as quickly and efficiently as possible. If a tornado touches down nearby while you're driving, outrunning it may not be an option. You may have to leave the car and head for safety. You may be close to home or you may be nowhere near your home. But, with a bug out bag, you will have food, water, and other items to aid you in toughing out the storm, or any other survival situation you may find yourself in. So, what goes in your Bug Out Bag, exactly? Well, first off, you will want to start with a large backpack to put it all in. One that fits well, is comfy and easy to carry, but with enough storage to fit all the items you want to carry. Here are some items for you and your family to include:

Nutrition:

- Meal Replacement Bars for 24 hours to 72 hours. That's 3-10 bars per person, roughly.
- Bottle of Water for each meal (3-10 bottles, per person)

Supplies:

- Pocketknife, Combat Knife or Multitool
- Waterproof Matches, Lighter, and maybe Cottons Ball soaked in Petroleum Jelly (highly flammable)
- First Aid Kit, Sewing Kit, Flashlight, Batteries
- Toilet Paper, Sunscreen, Bug Spray
- Spare personal medicine or prescription glasses (if you wear glasses)

Defense:

- Stun Gun, Baton, Pepper Spray

General:

- Spare Change of Clothes Including socks and underwear
- Toothbrush/Baking Soda
- Tarp, Paracord Bracelet, Sleeping Bag, Blankets, Handwarmers

These items will meet your basic needs for one to three days (depending on how many days you prepare for). They will also aid in giving you more time to find help or get yourself in a better position as far as nutrition, shelter and situations go. Keep bug out bags for all members of your family, as creating one is a great way to get your kids involved and invested in their future as well.

Bug Out Bags can also be kept in your home in addition to in your vehicle. Even if you fortify your home, you may still find yourself in a compromising position where leaving your home is a wiser decision than staying. Repeat the BOB process and create one for your vehicle as well as your home. That way, no matter if you stay or go, you'll have access to your BOB and a few extra days of survival.

Again, ensure that each member in your party has a bug out bag prepared.

Ways to Cut Costs

Food and water is a huge part of survival, obviously. Without it, we don't even stand a chance. Acquiring what you need can be broken down into three questions: 1) How many months do you want your emergency pantry to last? 2) What is the minimum amount that you and your family need? 3) How much is your family's budget?

The important thing to remember about prepping on a budget is to simply take the next step. Don't get caught up in the huge end picture all of the time. Focus on what you can do today, you're your first step will be, and work to achieve that. Even if you start out with buying just one extra can of food a week, it is one extra can in your emergency pantry. If that is all that you can manage for the next year, by the end of that year, you will have 52 cans in your emergency pantry. Not bad at all.

One way to save money while building your emergency pantry is to cut coupons for the items that are on your list. This is something that your family can participate in. Another way to save money is to become a rewards customer. Many major and minor grocery stores have a rewards cards or clubs that reward shoppers with gift cards, savings in fuel, or special club discounts. You can couple your club discounts with your coupons and get near double the savings. Do some research on which stores carry the products that you need and find coupons for those items. Some grocery stores even have online coupons that you can access in the store or you can have them emailed to you. Thrift stores are another way to build up your emergency pantry. Many thrift stores have 1/2 off sales pretty

regularly. That's the time to shop. Again, remember your list and your budget and stick to it. Visit different thrift stores for what you need.

Buying supplies in bulk can create huge savings. If you purchase a case of canned goods and that total equals your prepping budget for the month, you might think it's a bad idea at first. But, remember, you won't need to purchase any more canned goods after that month, and can focus on other items from your list. Use your time and money wisely. Research the other items on your list and get your coupons ready. See what's on sale this week or this month and focusing on knocking those items off of your list.

Networking with other people in your mindset can provide information and tips to help you and your family in your task.

Last but not least, learn to fix, patch, reuse and re-task. Patching up clothes and fixing tools or equipment is an invaluable skill that will more than come in handy should you have to delve into your survival pantry. And, when you cannot fix or patch an item, re-task it. Just about anything can be multipurpose. It's a good idea to do some research and get hands-on experience with building and repairing. You can even visit some workshops or free seminars on this subject. You don't have to be an expert in everything and anything, but it helps to have some idea of where to begin.

Building a Survival Food Pantry on a Budget

Prices of everything are going up, and our earnings are drastically down across most every industry. For some of us, this means that we are living on the edge of poverty, striving to pay our bills and get through each week, living paycheck to paycheck. Food and supplies are the first thing we need to survive. The shelves in any store are stocked, but in an instant, when a natural disaster or

another emergency strikes, those shelves will be emptied. Losing your job, having a personal crisis, or a national tragedy can affect your ability to feed your family and yourself. Grocery stores have stocks of food right now, but that can change as well. They used to have larger warehouse areas that had the ability to keep restocking, but most stores these days are limited to a 3-day supply of goods. That's including the stock that they have in the back. If anything happened to the trucks or the ships coming with food, then the grocery stores will run out. That's if there is not already a huge surge in people buying before a crisis, which we have seen in past disasters is almost always the case.

What would happen today if you could not leave your home? Would you have enough food to last a week? What about a month? If the answer is yes, then congratulations - you are doing a great prepping job. You are also one of the few prepared ones. But, if the answer is no, then you are not living off-grid or prepping at all. You need to do this, for you and your family, and you need to make sure that you have the food in the pantry starting this week. If you have extra food, it should be enough for at least two weeks minimum, but you don't need to go overboard and stock a year's worth of food right away. This will ensure you will not have to choose between buying food and paying a mortgage.

Decide first - how much money can you spend? And if you do not have a budget for food prepping, then start looking at where your money goes. Stretch your earnings, and look at what you are spending your money on. For instance, do you really, really need that \$4.00 cup of joe from the local high-priced coffee shop? No, I think not. Do you need the junk food? No, you don't. Can you cook

from scratch and save money? Yes, though it may not save time, it will most certainly save you money in the long run.

When building your pantry, you will want enough food for you and your family to eat everyday for at least 6 to 12 months. There are emergency pantry calculators online that help you calculate your family's minimum food storage needs. For a family of 4, a 6-month emergency pantry is usually suggested as follows:

600 lbs. of Grain – This includes rice, oats, corn meal, wheat, and flour.

26 lbs. of Fats – These come in the form of cooking oils, shortening, and peanut butter

120 lbs. of Beans & Peas – This includes Pinto, Lima, and Soy beans. It also includes, peas, dry soup mix, and legumes.

300 lbs. of Cooking Essentials – Essentials means honey, sugar, jams, dehydrated milk, evaporated milk, baking soda, baking powder, salt, vinegar, and water.

The emergency pantry calculator can be a starting point for your pantry and help guide you and your family towards storing enough food for 6 months. When beginning an emergency pantry, keep in mind that the numbers used to calculate the pounds of food for storage are based on the average minimum amount of 1200-calorie consumption daily. It's not a hard rule but there are side effects to meager meals. Starvation leaves the person sluggish with little energy. The muscles begin to atrophy without protein to keep them strong. Fatigue and weight loss of lean muscle are major effects of not eating enough and are detrimental to survival of any situation. The goal is to stay as healthy as possible while rationing

your pantry, so you may want to up those baseline amounts if you plan on eating over 1200 calories per person, per day.

When building an emergency pantry, remember to also store water. Easy to forget, but a deadly mistake if you do. Most food expands in the stomach when coupled with water. This helps to digest the food and gives a feeling of fullness. The foods that you prepare may also require water, of course, yet this is one area that preppers often overlook. You can purchase 5 gallon jugs, 1 liter bottles, cases of water or create your own water storage system, just so long as you have what you and your family needs. You will need it to cook, to drink, to wash your clothes, and to wash yourself. Keep this in mind as you begin your emergency food pantry.

The foods that you want to stockpile the most are the ones that are protein rich and provide the most nutritional bang for their buck. Unopened boxes or bags of cereal are safe to consume for up to 8 months and make for a quick light breakfast. Foods high in energy and protein such as peanut butter, nuts and granola bars are a great addition to any emergency pantry. Dehydrated fruits are also protein rich and last anywhere from 6 months to 1 year. Below are a few ideas of the main types of foods you will want to start stocking:

Canned Soups – Ready-to-eat soups can often be eaten without heating. Pour some water in and you're ready to go. Sure, we're used to them hot, but the same nutrients are there, regardless of the temperature. There are many varieties such as vegetable, beef, chicken, tomato and more. Many ready-to-eat canned soups are also manufactured with an easy quick-pop lid that doesn't require a can

opener. This includes canned chili. Look for those and you'll be good.

Canned fruits and vegetables – Stock up on canned pasta sauce, green beans, peas, carrots, corn, grapefruit, oranges, and any other of your preferred fruits and vegetables. These canned vegetables have a shelf life of up to 3 years and still remain nutritious with protein, vitamins, and antioxidants.

Canned meats – These include tuna, chicken, spam, and salmon. Meat will be in short supply either because the grocery markets have been ransacked or because there's no longer any meat production. Meat is a source of iron and protein. Buy in bulk and buy on sale. Typically have a very long shelf life so you can feel safe buying in bulk to store.

Pasta – Pasta has little water content and stores for up to 2 years in a cool, dark space in an airtight container. Pasta provides for a quick meal. You can improvise by adding canned meat and vegetables to get a nutritious and filling dinner. Avoid stockpiling pastas with egg because this type of pasta has a small amount of fat in it that can break down over time and begin to smell and spoil.

Dehydrated Potatoes – These have a shelf life of a couple years. Be aware of the fact that some instant mashed potatoes mixes add butter and dry milk for flavor, resulting in a reduced shelf life.

Packaged meals – Ramen noodles, macaroni and cheese, and dinner pasta mixes are a good way to mix up the meals so that you and your family aren't eating the same drab meal night after night. Add variety with your canned meats and vegetables.

One thing you don't want to forget in your emergency pantry is cooking spices and ingredients such as vinegar, baking powder, or baking soda. You can even include chicken, beef, and vegetable bouillon cubes. They don't take up a lot of room and help create soups and stews. For your cooking oils, you will want to store vegetable-based oils. These are oils such as olive oil, coconut oil, and vegetable oil. They won't spoil for years, unlike some animal-based oils. An emergency pantry isn't about eating excruciatingly obnoxious survival food, astronaut food, or any other kind of food, except for what you and your family normally eat. When you are deciding which food to buy in bulk, consider its shelf life as well. The following foods store the longest and are a cost-efficient addition to any emergency pantry:

Corn Meal – 12-month shelf life.

Peppercorns – 1-3 years shelf life.

Powdered Milk – 2 years normally, but if kept at a cool 40 degrees Fahrenheit will last up to 10 years.

Regular Sugar-Free 1 Minute or 5 Minute Oatmeal – 2-3 years

Dried Split Peas – 4-5 years (will last indefinitely with O₂

Absorbers in an airtight container – more on those below)

Vitamins – 4-5 years shelf life.

1200 to 3600 Calorie Food Bars - 5 years

These food bars are relatively inexpensive calorie ration food bars that are packed with nutrition and are great for your pantry or Bug Out Bags. The trick to getting the savings is to buy in bulk. A 72-hour supply is usually ten dollars at the most. But a 20-day supply is sold for up to 33% off in savings.

Rolled Oats – Up to 28 years when stored oxygen free. Portion your oats into airtight plastic containers with oxygen absorbers to allow for maximum shelf life, easier usage, and rotation.

White Rice – 4-5 years. Oxygen free white rice will last 25-30 years. Again, portion your rice into airtight plastic containers with oxygen absorbers to allow for maximum shelf life, easier usage, and rotation.

Dried Pinto Beans and Lentils– Indefinite. They are a great source of high protein, vitamins, and fiber while being low maintenance, low fat and low cost.

Honey – Indefinite. Honey also has medicinal application because of its antibacterial activity.

Sugar – Indefinite

Salt – Indefinite

While they aren't necessary for your pantry, oxygen absorbers are most definitely prudent and can significantly extend the shelf life of your stored foods. Oxygen absorbers can mean a difference of decades in terms of shelf life. Oxygen can cause mold, spoilage, nutritional oxidation, condensation, and attract bugs. It's not enough to quickly store food; even in an already airtight container, oxygen is already in there. The solution is to invest in oxygen absorbers.

Oxygen absorbers are little pouches of iron oxide. They aren't edible but they are safe to use around your food, don't leak toxins, and don't alter your food in any way. The oxygen absorbers are measured in “CC” or “cubic centimeters”. So, a 2000cc oxygen absorber will absorb 2000 cubic centimeters of oxygen. The general rule is to use 2000cc of oxygen absorbers per 5-gallon bucket.

Oxygen makes up about 21% of air and the right amount of oxygen absorbers can take that percentage down to .01%.

Some preppers will even store rice and beans in 2 liter beverage bottles. They are food safe and colored plastics can help protect against light exposure, which also break down stored foods. Just add an oxygen absorber or two and tighten the lid.

5-gallon food grade buckets can be purchased in sets of 3-5 buckets for \$20 to \$25 online. You can get 10 Mylar Bags for 5-gallon buckets and a quantity of 10 Oxygen Absorbers at 2000cc a piece for \$20 to \$30 online. Just be sure to check the bags for leaks before filling them. A good way to do this is to shine a flashlight in the bags, in a dark room.

Oxygen absorbers are packaged in an airtight plastic. Once broken, the absorbers will start to absorb. So, it is practical to have your buckets or 2-liters or storage container already filled with food before opening the oxygen absorbers. Never leave oxygen absorbers out for more than 30 minutes or they will expire. Insert them into the food and close the container airtight. The remaining absorbers can be kept in another airtight container, such as a Mason jar. Fill it up with rice to reduce the amount of oxygen in the jar.

Back to acquiring your emergency pantry foods: gardening can be a fun, family affair and it's a good way to get your family involved in preparedness. Growing your own food is a useful skill that puts you and your family one step closer to your goal and far ahead of the average family these days. One thing to consider when gardening is to only grow foods that your family actually eats. Another thing to consider is that you want to grow foods that produce more than one vegetable or fruit per plant or produces more than one harvest.

Here are a few vegetables that are easy to grow and some tips to help you along the way:

Carrots are easy to plant. They grow underground and don't require a bunch of fuss. You can even grow them in pots; just make sure the pot is deep enough. When the carrot tops come through the soil, they are ready to harvest.

Lettuce and Spinach have many different varieties to choose from and are easy to maintain. Lettuce is partial to cooler weather so planting in the spring or fall is adequate. Sow new seeds every 2 to 3 weeks to spread out your harvest.

Tomato plants only need a bit of water and lots of sun. They will grow all summer long and continue to produce fruit as well.

Sweet potatoes are very resilient. They can be grown in imperfect soil and hot weather. Wait about one month after the last freeze to give the ground time to warm up.

Bush beans are another great and easy to plant vegetable for your garden. Some well-drained soil and a lot of sun make for the perfect bed for sowing. Once again, continue to sow seeds every 2-3 weeks to keep a continuous harvest going.

Seeds are inexpensive to buy and these easy-to-grow foods don't require hours of care or any special type of fertilizer. When considering storage options, vegetables and meats can be canned at home using a pressure canner. Pressure canning is method used to preserve food low in acid. This includes meats, poultry, fish, chili, and vegetables. It's similar to regular canning with the added

element of pressure that depends on your altitude. The pressure is very important to processing low-acidic or alkaline foods at a higher temperature. The bacteria botulism dies at the boiling water temperature, but its spores may survive. So, the extra added pressure heats the water to a higher temperature. It is for this reason, when canning vegetables, meats, and fish, that a pressure canner, which is different from a pressure cooker, is used and used right.

Pressure cookers cost \$100 and upwards and may be out of your budget range now and in the foreseeable future. Another option for your vegetable harvests is that you and your family can sell leftover produce from your garden and put the money saved towards your emergency pantry.

Canning with fruits and tomatoes or tomatoes sauce (which is actually a fruit) may be a more cost effective canning option for your budget. Ball Regular-Mouth Mason jars with lids and bands can be purchased in cases of 12 anywhere from \$10 and upwards. The canned goods can be stored safely in your pantry for at least 1 year, so long as they are used before 2 years.

Waterbath canning is a time-tested process that has been used for ages. This method can be used to can fruits, jams, jellies, applesauce, salsa, and tomatoes. This process requires a large stockpot, at least 7 1/2 inches in height and 9 1/2 wide. Fill it with enough water to cover the mason jars by an inch and boil. Wash your mason jars, lids and bands. Warming up the jars in hot dishwater eliminates the chance of breakage when they are filled with hot foods.

The recipes used for preparing your fruits, jams, jellies or pickles range from varieties that include Pectin (a gelling agent) to those that don't include Pectin or any other agents. As long as the concoction remains acidic, you can use the waterbath process while being creative. Once your food is prepared, add it to the Mason jars, leaving about an inch of headspace. Stir and smash the food to each side of the Mason jar to remove bubbles. After you wipe the rims of the jars, center the lid on the top of the Mason jar and apply the band until it is fingertip tight. This allows ample room for air bubbles to escape during the waterbath. Insert the filled and topped mason jars into the stockpot and keep the water at least an inch above the Mason jar. Put the stockpot lid back on the pot. Your recipe will have an amount of time to let the jars boil. Remember to take into account your altitude. Basically, add 5 minutes for every 3,000 feet that you are above sea level.

After boiling the jars for the appropriate amount of time, remove from heat and let the jars stand 5 minutes. Then remove the jars, keeping them upright, and place them on a rack or kitchen towel and counter to cool. You want the jars to cool for 8 to 12 hours to complete the process and complete the seal. After 8 to 12 hours, test the seal by pushing it with your finger. If it rebounds, then the jar isn't sealed properly. Another way to test the seal is to tap the bottom of the jar with a teaspoon. If the sound is dull, the jar may not be sealed properly. What you're listening for is a high-pitched ring. The last way to test the seal is to view the seal at eye level. If it isn't concave (caved in), but it is flat or bulging, then the jar may not be sealed properly. If an improper seal is the case, the canned goods can still

be refrigerated and used by you and your family, but should not be stored for extended periods of time.

You may experience variations in color or consistency in your home canned products. That doesn't mean that the products are dangerous for consumption. Know what normal home canning variations look like. A brown color or darker color is typically caused by oxidation or a breakdown in the color of the food, as in the case of apples or guacamole. Soft texture in food is caused by a breakdown in food or plant tissue due to heat. Crystals in canned fish is a result of pressure canning Magnesium Ammonium Phosphate, which is in fish. Crystals in fruits are caused by a high acidic salt compound but they are still safe to consume. Metal cans (some people still home-can goods with actual cans) may leave bits of metal or a metallic taste on the food. And, when the food is above the juice line in the jar, it is still safe for consumptions as long as the seal remains intact.

Signs of bad jars or cans are if it's badly dented, leaking or rusting. If the jar or can has a broken seal or it spurts upon opening, then the food inside has been compromised. As a general rule of common sense, always inspect the jar or can with your eyes and nose. If there is a strange odor or appearance, then discard it – it's not worth the risk to the health of you and your family.

When building your emergency pantry, you will also want to consider vitamin-infused powder, purchased in bulk when possible. Seeds are another item that you may want to keep in supply. It would be handy should your emergency pantry deplete before your situation resolves.

Trade and bartering may come in handy in a world where supermarkets no longer exist. Letting your family try their bartering

skills at a flea market is one way to get them involved in preparedness. Another way to get your family involved is to have them cut coupons for fruits (to can) when they are on sale and getting them involved in a relatively inexpensive (\$30 or less) canning process. When storing your successfully canned goods, remember to label them with the date made, the ingredients, and the expiration date.

How the food is stored is an important part of maintaining your emergency pantry. You will want an easy-to-understand inventory system that allows for easy rotation of foods. You can achieve this. Label all cans, jars, buckets, and bags with the date acquired or date manufactured, and the expiration date, and ingredients. You want your emergency pantry to remain at cool consistent temperature and a dark, dry space. Teach your family the labeling system so that everyone can easily know how to read the labels and determine what is safe to eat.

Water

As mentioned before, five common factors of death in a survival situation are dehydration, starvation, weather, situations, and sanitation. Dehydration is when the body needs water and doesn't have it. It is one of the quickest forms of death in a survival situation, and one of the most easily avoidable. Some symptoms are:

- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and swollen tongue
- Inability to sweat, decreased or concentrated urine output
- Weakness, dizziness, fatigue and fainting
- Diarrhea, fever, headaches, and seizures

When storing emergency water, allot each person in your plan one gallon per day. So for a family of 4, you would need four gallons of water for each day you plan for. For 6 months, that amounts to 745 gallons of water. And, that's just for consumption, not even taking into account the water you need for cooking, bathing, and cleaning.

How does one go about collecting 750 gallons of water? One idea is to collect rainwater. Rainwater collection has been around for centuries. It is used even by states that are known to have deserts and those that experience severe droughts. One square foot of rain on the average roof in certain climates can amount to 600 gallons of water per year, if collected properly. If you have gutters, you can divert the water already collected on your roof into your water storage barrels via your gutters. Invest in a gutter filter to prevent leaves, sticks, and other debris from clogging up your system. You will want 2-4 food grade water barrels connected via hose adapters and a hose. The extra water barrels serve as an overflow system once the first barrel is full. Some people even add an extra hose to the last barrel in the chain and position the hose downhill and away from their home. This ensures that any extra overflow diverts downhill and doesn't collect in the basement of their home.

When collecting rainwater, understand that it may still need filtering and purification before being fit to drink. Another thing to consider when collecting rainwater is that you may need a permit in some counties and states, or it may be illegal altogether (crazy, I know!). Do your research and know your facts and the law to avoid being caught up in the system. That's valuable time that you could be investing towards you and your family's survival plan.

The barrels used for water storage should be food grade. Yes, this was already mentioned, but it is vitally important, so I'm mentioning it again. The barrels specifically manufactured for water storage come with a spout, leaf filter, and overflow valve and can be purchased at your local hardware store, online, and at gardening supply stores. Water barrels range from 55 gallons to 75 gallons and cost anywhere from \$80 to \$200. You can buy them with the spigot or without. The barrels without spigots can be converted using a few tools and parts. You can also negotiate with food manufacturers and large restaurants for their used 55-gallon food grade barrels. Make sure that you clean them well. If the barrel was used for storing oil or any type of chemical, pass on it. It'll be really tough to clean thoroughly and you don't want to gamble with you or your family's safety.

Another method for collecting water for storage is to invest in tub bladders. These cost as low as \$20 and are great in case of an emergency. It's as simple as placing the heavy-duty plastic bladder in the tub, connecting it to the spout, and turning on the water. The tub contains the bladder and the bladder fills up within a few minutes. The bladder keeps the water clean and holds up to 100 gallons drinking water. The bladder is even fitted with a siphon pump for when you need to use the water. You can even get creative with placing these tub bladders in a 55-gallon drum or tub-like homemade structure and running a hose from your tub to the bladder. It's effectively stored in a food grade container and provides clean drinking water at your disposal. It's inexpensive. It would keep your tub clear and it wouldn't require you to move 100 gallons of water. The cost would be the price of the bag, the cost of the container or bladder-holding structure and the normal cost of taking a bath. The

water stored in tub bladders will be useable for up to 4 weeks. Utilizing an air compressor, you can flush the pump, nozzle and bladder in a light bleach solution that will keep the bladder cleaner and ready for re-use. Many tub bladders are expected to be single use. So if you find an air compressor on sale, make the investment and save some money.

Some common challenges to water storage are algae, mosquitoes, and clogged spigots. Algae grow as a response to light warming up the water. You can avoid this by adding 1/8 teaspoon to 1/4 teaspoon of unscented regular household bleach per gallon to your water storage. Store the water in a cool, dark place, and keep it covered. Most food grade water barrels are designed to keep out light.

Mosquitoes like to lay eggs in stagnant water. Keeping your water covered is your best defense against mosquitoes and their larvae. Other ways to combat mosquito larvae is to cover the intake with nylon pantyhose. You will need to check the filter often to ensure that the pantyhose don't have any holes at all and isn't deteriorating. The nylon pantyhose is fine enough a filter to keep out mosquitoes seeking to lay eggs but will still allow water to pass through. However, the pantyhose require diligence because the smallest hole will allow mosquitoes.

Another way to combat mosquito larvae is to use Mosquito Dunks. Mosquito Dunks are small ringed products containing the bacteria BTI. It's only toxic to mosquito larvae, lasts 30 days, and treats 100 square feet of water. These rings have an indefinite shelf life so long as they remain dry and unused. You can purchase a 6 pack of

Mosquito Dunks for a little as \$10. And, Mosquito Dunks can be halved and quartered for use in smaller areas.

The third common problem with water storage is clogged spigots and low water pressure. Here's a simple fix for that. Remove the top of the spigot with a pair of pliers. Water should squirt out due to the pressure release. If this doesn't happen, then use a twig, stick or pipe cleaner to clear the flow path until the water squirts out, clearing the rest of the way. If a clogged filter is also resulting in low pressure, this will rectify that situation. Sometimes low water pressure is caused by low water levels in your storage unit. When you have more water in your water storage unit, you will have better water pressure because the water is creating the pressure. But, the less water you have in your storage unit, the less pressure you will have.

Knowledge of whether water can be made into potable drinking water is important because you don't want to waste your resources on a lost cause. There are ways to filter and purify water for these purposes. A few common ways are boiling, bleach, potable water purification tabs and filters.

Boiling is a great way to remove dangerous bacteria from your water, as is 1/8 teaspoon to 1/4 teaspoon of regular unscented household liquid bleach. In water purification tablets (50 tablets cost about \$10), the active ingredient is usually chlorine or iodine and the tablets are another great way to deactivate bacteria, viruses, and parasites. However, water purification tablets do not remove chemicals or sediment from the water nor does it kill *Cryptosporidium*, which can cause diarrhea. It would be a last step after filtering your water. Filters can be purchased for your water

storage or for emergency use in your bug out bag or you can make your own filter.

When you begin making your filter, you will want coffee filters, activated charcoal (2 bottles cost about \$10 to \$12), rinsed sand, and rinsed gravel (small pebbles or stones). You can use two 5-gallon buckets, or a 2-liter soda bottle for this purpose. Some people even create a larger filtering system using a 5-gallon bucket per ingredient and connecting them through plastic plumbing fittings.

Poke or cut holes in the bottom of the container that will be the actual filter. More small holes as opposed to few large holes are preferable. Insert the coffee filters in the bottom of the container. On top of the coffee filter, place a layer of activated charcoal. Follow that with a layer of sand and another layer of activated charcoal. For your next layer, add another layer of sand and follow that layer with a layer of gravel. Your filter is now complete.

After you pour your water through the filter, check the water for sediment or cloudiness. You may have to pour it through a second time. Next, aerate (put air back into your water) the water by pouring it back and forth from each pitcher or bucket.

The first layer of gravel removes large debris like pebbles, sticks, leaves, bugs, and the like. The sand filters out finer particles too small to be caught by the gravel layer. The layer of activated carbon removes, by absorption, bacteria and some chemicals. This bio-filter can be made quickly and on a smaller scale when you are on the move. Or you can make a larger filter for your water reserve as you use it.

Your family can be involved by calling food manufacturers and large restaurants for 55 gallon food grade barrels. You can have

younger children collect pebbles or sand for the filter and rinse them. Your family also can help you by building rain catchers or tub bladder units if they are old enough.

When you are prepping on a budget, food and water are very important sections of your emergency pantry but there's more. You'll want to make a list of tools and supplies you will need such as clothing, sanitation supplies, light, fire, or electricity, and tools to help you get the job done and defend your shelter. More on those below...

Clothing

When building an emergency pantry, one very important factor that you need to prep for is different types of weather. You don't want you and your family to find yourselves with a 6-month supply of food and water and no spare clothing. You will want to stock a quality pair of waterproof work boots per member in your party, perhaps an extra pair in a larger size if you still have growing children.

A plethora of cheap, comfortable socks and underwear will keep you and your family with fresh dry undergarments. It might seem like a small thing, but believe me, when you are wet and trying to survive day-to-day, clean, dry undergarments can mean the difference between sanity and losing your mind! If you keep wet clothes and shoes on, you can catch any number of diseases. Of course, the common cold, pneumonia, and the like. One not-so-known problem is trench feet. Trench feet is a condition caused by overexposure to damp, cold, wet, unsanitary conditions, poor circulation, and not allowing your feet to dry. People who have had it in the past are mostly likely to encounter it again. Characteristics of trench feet may be swelling, turning red or blue, or a putrid odor, like decay. More

advanced symptoms include open sores, blisters, and fungal infections. If left untreated, gangrene can develop. Wouldn't it be easier to avoid all of that and just pack an extra pair of dry socks?

Yes!

As with socks and underwear, you will want to stock shirts and pants. Some opt for quantity over quality, if they have extra room. Some prefer to shell out a bit more money upfront for one or two really well-made items, in hopes they will last longer. The choice is up to you. Cotton-blend is always a good choice. They are comfortable and retain a decent look and feel over multiple periods of wearing. You will also want to invest in some rain gear for you and your family. This time you want to stick with quality over quantity. You don't want a water resistant anything. You want a durable waterproof nylon jacket with treated rip-proof seams and a hood. You want the same quality in rain pants that can be worn over clothing, boots and all for each member in your party, particularly if you're in a climate zone with frequent rainfall.

Make sure to include thermal undershirts and underpants for warmth and shorts and short sleeve t-shirts for hot days. Heat stroke is very common and can be a reoccurring nuisance. Only store clean clothes and label the storage unit or box for each member in your party for some organization. Don't forget to stock up on diapers if you have small children, but wait till they graduate to a new diaper size. This gives you a greater chance of having the right size diaper should disaster strike.

One way that you and your family can save money in this area is utilizing thrift shops on their 1/2 off sale days. At thrift stores, you can find gently used work books, jumpsuits, and more. Learning to repair

fabric and materials will be a key factor in making your clothing and materials last. You and your family can even repair your current clothing when it tears and add it to your emergency pantry. You can often find items in thrift stores that people got rid of simply because they didn't want to bother making a few stitches or hems. If you can learn to do some simple repairs, you'll save yourself a ton of money in the long run.

If you are going to repair clothing, you need to stock up on materials to repair with. Sewing kits, zipper repairs, needles, thread, and yarn is a good starting point. For repairing shoes, you'll want to invest in shoe repair kits, heel savers, and sewing awls (for heavy duty fabrics). In the event that the emergency situation isn't resolved within 6 months, investing in yourself by learning to make clothes with a sewing machine, knitting, or crochet is a vital skill that you can barter with.

Now, what about doing laundry? If you do decide on a power generator for your home, you might be tempted with a washer and dryer, and while that method is a faster way to do laundry, it guzzles water, energy, and breaks down clothing faster. Some ways to keep clothing lasting longer is to line dry clothes. Treat stains right away with a stain removing solution. Store only clean clothes and avoid storing clothes in moisture or mildew. Stains and body oils and fluids (like sweat) attract moths and bugs and moisture and mildew break down clothing. Storing clothes with baking soda can help reduce moisture and mildew.

Sanitation and First Aid

Besides starvation and dehydration, sanitation will be one of the leading killers in a disaster. There are some supplies you can

acquire that will lessen you and your family's chance of falling victim to disease. First things first: pay attention to scrapes, cuts, bumps, and bruises, and take care of them before they go any further. Isopropyl alcohol and hydrogen peroxide are must have items as an antiseptic. Chances are that any first aid kit will contain antiseptic wipes but, for the long haul, you will want to stock several bottles of each.

If anyone in your party needs special medications or inhalers, you will want to acquire extra beforehand. This can be a difficult task considering the regulations on medication and you may have to speak with your doctor about your options. Other items in this category include hearing aids and extra batteries, or prescription glasses. Most people will overlook having extra of these items in case of emergency; don't be one of those people!

In your first aid kit, whether you buy a prepackaged one or custom make your own, you will want at least a few of these items, if not all of them:

Rolls of gauze with the fasteners: these are useful for sprains, and covering bandaging

Tweezers: Useful for splinters, ticks, and more

Medical scissors (pointed & sharp): Used for removing stitches

Medical scissors (blunt): Used for removing bandages without damaging surrounding skin.

Skin glue: Closing up surface wounds and acts as a liquid Band-Aid

Cotton swabs and cotton balls: Used for cleaning wounds and applying antiseptics, cream, or ointments

Eye drops: Used for lubricating eyeball

Aspirin is important medicine to stock in your emergency pantry. Aspirin can halt a heart attack because it dilutes the blood and allows for easier passage through the heart. But it doesn't take the place of a doctor so if you can reach a doctor, that would be your best bet. Aspirin also reduces swelling because it's an anti-inflammatory drug in addition to reducing fevers and minor aches and pains.

Of course, for ointments and creams, you want antibiotic ointment to stave off infection and hydrocortisone cream for bug bites, rashes, and run-ins with poison ivy and poison oak. Last but not least, hand sanitizer will come in handy should you have to patch up yourself or others.

For the sake of cleanliness, here are a few items that you and your family should stock and will definitely benefit from:

Cat Litter: I know, I know. You don't have a cat so why in the world would you want to stock cat litter? Well, it's a really useful tool! Soaks like a sponge and it's useful for human waste or biofluids gone awry. It can help reduce mold or moisture from water and soak up any other type of liquid spill.

Bleach: Useful for purifying water and cleaning. Bleach expires and is poisonous in large doses. Use caution in storage & rotation in your pantry and always adhere to directions for usage.

Baking Soda: Use as a toothpaste, deodorizer, cleaning agent and fire extinguisher.

Vinegar: Use as cleaner & deodorizer. Vinegar effectively eliminates cat urine and skunk sprays.

Three 5-Gallon Buckets or Dishpans for cleaning dishes: Use a bucket each to scrape food into, wash dishes, and sanitize dishes.

Body soap, dishwashing soap, sponge, and towels: Soap to clean yourself and your dishes. Use separate towels for dishes and bodies and each member in your party should have their own towel

Facial tissues, toilet paper, washable handkerchiefs, and paper-towels: These help reduce the spread of germs as long as they are properly stored.

Sanitary Napkins: They can also double as a sterile medical pad for a wound.

Electricity, Light, and Fire

You're going to need some electricity and light in a survival situation; that much is a given. How willing are you to rely on your local grid staying online? How comfortable are you without electricity? Some light sources that you'll want to consider are batteries, lamps and oil, and creating your own electricity. Batteries will store for about 2 years in an extremely humid environment but in a dry environment, they will last anywhere from 4 to 6 years.

Refrigerated batteries stored in an airtight zip lock bag will last from 6 to 9 years and batteries stored in a freezer will last for 10 years or more. These numbers vary upon the humidity and the temperature, and the quality of battery used. Rechargeable batteries, however, work best at room temperature. Batteries are a prudent investment for emergencies and from the initial emergency till you have time to get situated.

Oil lamps, while they can start fires if dropped, are still a better alternative to candles. With candles, the open flame can start fires with curtains or anything else that gets in its way. The candle can blow out when you need it the most and candles don't actually provide that much light. Oil lamps are brighter than candles and they

can be purchased with a light reflector to amplify the light as well. Most oil lamps have a wind guard to protect the flame from going out and they are easier to maneuver due to their sturdy base and handle.

For electricity, your options will be limited to your budget or do-it-yourself skill set. Generators start from \$630 for a propane-powered generator or \$650 for an oil-powered generator and go way, way higher from there. There are, of course, do-it-yourself resources available for building your own power generators from solar, wind, and water and if you have any handyman skills, these could be a very useful, economical alternative. When considering whether or not to invest in a generator, consider what you will be using it for. You and your family's energy consumption will be significantly reduced in the case of a hunker-down emergency. Nevertheless, electricity may be another component of your preparation that you may want to focus on after your more important and basic supplies are gathered. You might consider low payment layaway plans for purchasing a generator, if you decide that having a steady supply of electricity is essential for your family's plans.

If you plan to make fire, then you need to stock up on items like charcoal, firewood, lighter fluid and tinder. For your lamps, you'll need lamp oil, wicks and the lamps. You can store two lamps to use and have 2 backup or emergency lamps. You may need more lamps for a larger family, of course. Cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly make for a quick, inexpensive fire starter as well. While candles are not ideal, some light is better than none at all, so add candles and candle holders to your pantry, as a type of backup to your backup plan. The non-scented candles will attract less attention from bugs

and people. As for the fire itself, you will want different ways to create fire, of course. Learn fire-starting techniques if you don't know any already. Teach your spouse, children, and anyone else that will be surviving with you. Stock up on matches, lighters, magnesium and flint starters, waterproof matches and windproof lighters.

Fire can completely change a situation from being cold, wet and unbearable to dry, warm, and manageable. It's important to be smart and safe with your fire, of course. Fires can be seen at night and the smoke can be seen during the day. If you and your family find yourselves in a dangerous situation where your presence is best left unknown, don't advertise your whereabouts via a campfire. If you're bunking in at home and are not in danger from neighbors or predators, a constant fire can be a great mood-booster, not to mention all of its practical uses as well.

General Supplies and Uses

In the area of general supplies, anything that you think you or your family might benefit from can be on this list. I know, that seems a bit too wide open. But really this is your catchall category. These items are not essential to your survival, but they can help. You'll want items such as can openers, reusable plastic dishes, and eating utensils. Toys or books for the kids. Hand-crank radio. Things of that nature.

If you've stocked up seeds for gardening, then it makes sense that you'll want some gardening supplies. A hoe, rake and shovel are a good place to start. And they have multiple uses such as building traps, or using as a weapon against a would-be intruder. A broom and dustpan are also two tools that can help keep your living area cleaner and free of debris. In the event that garbage pick up is

suspended, investing in a metal burn barrel is one way idea to eliminate waste.

With you and your family potentially living in an enclosed area, trash is sure to build up and attract bugs, flies, and animals. Include all kinds of bags in your emergency pantry. Garbage bags and grocery bags can be used for trash and freezer bags can be used to help ration food or even keep each family member's personal items separate.

Bug spray, sunscreen, petroleum jelly, lotions, and creams can help protect you from bugs, the sun, and dry skin. Any one of these factors can turn into a rash that can get infected. The idea is to prevent cuts, scrapes, and rashes to prevent infection but some situations cannot be avoided. If that is the case, you will be glad that you will diligent in your medical supplies.

Other items of interest include duct tape, super glue and zip ties. These items are versatile and have multiple functions around the house. Duct tape can aid in sealing up windows and doors. Super glue can help to make repairs to clothes or light items. Zip ties can be used to consolidating equipment or restraining intruders.

Paracord has many uses from hammocks and tents to creating traps for wildlife or a trip wire to alert you of intruders. Paracord can even be intertwined with another rope of paracord to make it stronger and more durable. Many times, the trouble is not with the rope used but with the knot used. Knowing what knot to use and when could save the day. Increase your skill set and knowledge. Pass on the knowledge to your spouse and children. Learn together and grow together.

Lastly, here are a few items that are useful to keep on hand that may be overlooked in your initial planning. Maps of the local area and surrounding larger areas are useful in case you do have to leave your shelter. Writing instruments, pens, pencil, pencil sharpeners, paper, and sharpies can be used to keep young children out of your hair or for writing down your thoughts. Sharpies are always useful for labeling foods, boxes, and cans. Aluminum foil seems to always have a use, even if it's just cooking by campfire. A spare cell phone that runs on prepaid minutes could be the deciding factor in your situation if you and your family are barricaded in a dangerous zone. If you have any pets, you will want to include extra pet food and extra water for them. Keeping them alive and with you will be an enormous morale booster, so don't forget to plan for Fido. Any comfort foods or sweets that are nonperishable can be included in your pantry. A small treat from time to time can also aid in boosting morale and motivation.

Defense and Security

So, you've built up your pantry and have a whole host of supplies. Excellent. Now comes another problem to address. How do you defend yourself, your family, and your emergency pantry? It is no secret that many people don't really plan for emergency situations beyond a credit card and rushing to the grocery store. Looting and rioting is a real and present danger. The local law enforcement may be so overwhelmed that you are on your own until they arrive. An even scarier situation is that local law enforcement may never arrive. What will you do in that situation?

Some people believe that if they keep to themselves and keep their head down that they will remain unscathed. This is not usually

true, as we have seen in the case of a terrorist act (September 11th attacks) or a natural disaster (Hurricane Katrina). People are caught in the crossfire of war and natural disaster everyday. When the aftermath of these events are disorder, people will act as though everyone and everything is fair game. People revert to a more vicious, barbaric state of being when their survival is threatened. Fighting in the grocery stores, fighting in the streets, and people whose goal is to take what you have prepared is a situation that you need to prepare for and it can be deadly for you and your family if you don't.

Some challenges to defense and security are the law and your own code of ethics. The federal law states that defending oneself or others using reasonable force is legal. As a response to an unquestionably unlawful act with reasonable belief that the act will result in fighting with injurious or fatal consequences, defense up to and including deadly force may be used. Some states have a "duty to retreat" clause, with the exceptions that only if the person is unable to safely retreat or they are already in their own home, deadly force may be used. If law enforcement is active when you are presented with a situation or if law and order gets reestablished after your situation is resolved, you may still have to contend with legal fallout. Of course, this will be less important if society has well and truly broken down. In that scenario, it won't matter what the laws and regulations are: you will need to protect your family at all cost.

There are some people who will avoid violence to the extent that it may cost them their life. There are people that believe that negotiating with their attackers can resolve the situation. You have to decide to what extent you are willing to defend yourself, your family,

and your preparations. If you perish, will your family be safe? Or will they fall victim to the attackers as well? Most intruders don't stop at "just what they need". If you are willing to do what is necessary to protect and defend you and yours, then you need to prepare your mind and your body. It's not an easy thing to approach, but if you are truly going to be prepared for any situation, it's a vital step along the way.

First things first: raise your awareness. All the guns and selfdefense training in the world are useless to you if you are caught unaware. Should you find yourself in a disaster-type situation, you may have to do tasks that require you to pay attention. And it's easy to get so caught up in completing a task that you forget to look around. A way to train yourself to look around is set an alarm every ten minutes. As you do tasks around the house, when your watch or phone goes off, look up and look around. Eventually, as you're working, you'll find yourself looking periodically and you will notice when time has passed and you haven't looked around. You'll become more aware of your surroundings. You'll notice when something doesn't seem quite right. This can be the difference between survival or not one day, so take the time to practice these skills now.

One way to involve your family, if they are old enough, is to have them take turns as watchers. Teach them what to be aware of such as sounds of movement, moving bushes, concealed people, people who are trying to conceal themselves, suspicious behavior or activity, and groups of people. No matter how trivial, train yourself and your family to watch with their eyes and their ears. At the end of the task or activity, ask what they have seen and why it caught their attention.

Some ways to prepare for to defend yourself and you family is increasing your knowledge in both unarmed selfdefense and armed selfdefense. You will want to explore non-lethal and lethal methods of defense. Above all, the mindset to take action is important. Know what danger looks like and take action.

Next, look at your defense options. You can increase your knowledge by taking selfdefense classes. A few well-learned basic moves trump a bunch of over-elegant half-learned moves. And, anything can be a defense weapon in a survival situation, like a golf club, sturdy walking stick, baseball bat, rock, cane, flashlight, or even a pen.

Non-lethal defense weapons can be weapons such as these:

Batons (\$16 online): Batons can give you the advantage of reach.

Stun Guns (\$11 online): It temporarily disables your assailant in close encounters due to an electrical shock.

Expandable Stun Baton (\$40 online): Gives you the advantage of reach plus the whole baton (minus the handle) stuns. If your assailant tries to grab the baton, they get stunned.

Pepper Spray (\$16 online): It temporarily disables your assailant with blinding liquid, pain causing pepper spray.

Pepper Gun (\$55 online): Trigger-activated and shoots accurate and continuous stream of pepper spray up to 25 ft.

Any one of these weapons can be kept in your home for close encounters. For lethal weapons, you might consider investing in a gun. There are several types of guns and if you are considering a gun as a measure of defense or otherwise, there are a few things you need to know. The most common types of guns owned by civilians are pistols, revolvers, shotguns, and rifles.

Pistols are loaded with clips and the clips are loaded with bullets. Revolvers differ from pistols in that the bullets are slid directly into the individual bullet chambers and not slid into a clip, which is then inserted into a gun. An advantage of pistols is that clips hold more bullets than a revolver and you can carry spare clips. An advantage of revolvers is that you don't need a clip to load the gun. You can carry the spare ammo on your person and reload as need. Pistols and revolvers are accurate in long distances (up to a certain range) or close encounters.

A shotgun is smoothbore, meaning that the inside of the barrel has no grooves and is either single-barreled or double-barreled. A single-barrel dispenses one shotgun shell; a double barrel dispenses two shotgun shells, one from each barrel. Shotguns are more accurate in close encounters and not very accurate in long range. They do a considerable amount more damage than a standard pistol or revolver, however.

Rifles have a barrel 16 inches or longer and the inside of the barrel has spiraled, parallel grooves (hence the term, rifle) that spin the bullet as it moves out the barrel upon discharge. This allows for a longer range of accuracy. Rifles can be used for hunting or by a watcher, as can a shotgun. A pistol or revolver can be carried on your person and concealed so as not to draw attention.

Owning a gun in your home can give you and your family a real sense of security. It is a deterrent to would-be intruders and can induce instant compliance. Rifles can be used to hunt wildlife and provide dinner should your disaster situation last longer than your emergency pantry. Guns can be the factor that increases your advantage in a confrontation.

The other side of the coin is that a gun in the home increases the risks of accidents. Even when the gun is securely locked, the possibility that your children will gain access somehow is present. Guns at home are frequently used in suicides and accidental shootings of a family members, neighbors, and friends. Even when you take every precaution imaginable, the unimaginable can happen. This is something you need to discuss with your family and take the proper steps, such as gun safety training, hunting lessons, and proper gun ownership courses.

Other challenges to gun ownership are presented by the law. The federal law prohibits certain people from owning guns such as people with felonies, misdemeanors, or dishonorable discharge from the military. Fugitives, illegal aliens, people diagnosed with mental illness, people who have renounced their U.S. Citizenship, people convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor, and people subject to particular restraining orders are also on the list prohibiting gun ownership. States may require registration, licenses or permits to own, open carry, conceal carry, or transport. Most all states require background checks for firearm purchases. Some states recognize others states laws and some do not. If you decide that having a gun present is necessary for you and your family, do research on what options meets your and your family's needs. From there, create a safety plan with your family to help lower the risk of a gun-related accident.

You can never plan for every scenario that could happen or go wrong. Should you find yourselves in a survival situation, there are some safety precautions you and your family can take. If you have to go anywhere, don't go ill prepared and never go alone. Have a

weapon to defend yourself and someone by your side to double your chances of success. If your family consists of two adults and small children, your decisions are more delicate. Perhaps you can have checkpoints and the other adult can act as a watcher, scanning the area for what you cannot see. At night, don't use any light, candles, or fire. A single candle can be distinguished up to 30 miles away by the human eye. If light is absolutely necessary, keep your curtains closed and your windows boarded up.

By having the knowledge and mindset to defend yourself and your family at any cost, you will have increased your chances of survival but there is one more *very* important concept to understand. That is that you should always try to avoid avoidable situations. You may be armed to the teeth to defend and protect, but each encounter slurps up resources and presents a possibility of injury and infection. If you can achieve your goal without a confrontation, do it. Make the smarter choice and increase your chances of long-term survival.

Securing Your Shelter

Another step in preparing yourself and your family is fortifying your home, also known as your ShelterIn-Place. Outside your home you will want objects that alert you to an outsider's presence. One way to achieve this is to have floodlights or motion sensor strobe lights outside your home. Another way to alert you and your family is to have watchers or a guard dog. Or, you can collect cans, put a few marbles or noisemakers inside and string them low to the ground. You can even have rope pulled taut on the ground tied to the cans in the trees, so when the rope is stepped on, the cans in the trees make noise. If you need to, you can even create pit traps. None of these need to cost much money.

Any easy trap is to dig a deep hole at least 12 feet deep. Cover the hole with a light grid of twigs that will easily snap under pressure. Then, cover the grid with leaves. Of course, you don't want your family or the mailman wandering through that area. It may be better to dig the hole after the disaster strikes.

From inside the house, what you need to focus on securing are the entrances, exits, windows, and vents. While some people go all the way with bars on the windows, some people don't like the idea of getting trapped in their own homes should an intruder get the best of them. A compromise is to have a way to quickly fortify your home at a moment's notice.

For boarding up your windows and doors, you'll want to have enough wood to block all your windows and doors. Cut the wood to fit your windows and doors. Invest in an electric drill (as low as \$25); keep it fully charged and next to your pre-cut wood. Screws are favored over nails in this case, should you have to remove the panels and make a getaway. When you install the wood panels, do it on the inside of the house and behind the curtains. There's no need to advertise your presence. Store the wood in the room. Make sure that it's easily accessible.

In case of a biological airborne attack, you'll want to secure every door, window, vent, crack and crevice that could let air from the outside flow inside. To do this, get plastic sheeting (\$5 per 10 ft. x 10 ft. online). You'll want plastic thicker than plastic food wrap. Pre-cut the sheeting to fit all your windows and doors in each room because you never know what room you will be in. Pre-cut sheeting for every vent and outlet, and don't forget the vent over your stove. The official rule for breathable air is 10ft x 10ft of space per person to prevent

carbon dioxide build up. This is for up to 5 hours. To secure your room, securely duct tape the sheeting over the windows, doors, vents, and outlets and duct tape any cracks. The goal is to prevent any outside air from entering the room. To store your supplies, have a storage unit marked (Shelter-in-place sheeting) and easily accessible. Store your pre-cut plastic sheeting and a couple rolls of duct tape in each room.

Indoors defenses could include keeping a club, walking stick, baseball bat, knife or any object that can be used for defense in each room in an easily accessible spot that does not change. A note of interest is operational security. You don't want your preparations and defenses to be public knowledge. Your nice neighbors may have a nastier side in a disaster scenario. Communicating to your family the importance of silence is imperative for the sake of survival. Also, suppose stragglers wander by, posing no threat, seeking a meal and some water. Will you deny them? Will you feed them? There's no way to know if they won't return with a mob to take your food. You have to decide what you can spare, if anything at all. If your emergency pantry is strict in rations, then you have nothing to spare. Not sticking to your preparedness plan is like not having a plan at all.

Plan B

Plan B is to Bug Out. Bugging out means leaving your home or shelter and heading to another home or shelter. This bug out location should be safe, secure, and stocked with a few days worth of food for you and your family until you can get situated. This might be a cousin's house on a farm, your parents' house if they have a basement, or a friend in your prepper network. If you have been

building an emergency pantry at your home, the idea of leaving your preparations behind might not be resonating with you at all.

There are a few reasons that might lead you to move into Plan B. If your emergency food pantry has depleted, it's time act. You might think to check abandoned houses or start hunting for food. But what if the houses have already been sacked, are still occupied, and the animals are gone? Other reasons that would lead to bugging out are hostility and environmental danger. Even with the best fortified shelters, it only takes time and consistency to eventually become overwhelmed by attackers. And a top of the line, fortified shelter isn't going to stop a flood, wildfire, hurricane, or another natural disaster. It might withstand one, but only for so long. Obviously, bugging out is not going to be your first action, but if it's going to an action at all, it needs to be planned.

Decide on where your bug out location is going to be. If it's a friend or family member's property, you may want to keep them informed of your possible arrival pending a catastrophe. You and your family might be at different locations when disaster strikes and if none of you can make it to your shelter-in-place due to hazard and road conditions, how do you reconnect? Can your important documents be recovered? Who is going to pick up the kids from school? Before you ever reach that scenario, you need to have predetermined checkpoints and a plan of action in place. Everyone in the family should know their checkpoint and know where they are headed if disaster strikes. You could perhaps station one checkpoint for each side of your town or city. Or you could have different checkpoints for different days of the week. Such as, Mondays and Wednesdays and

Fridays are checkpoint 1 and Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays are checkpoint 2.

Now, bugging out is only as good as your route. If your normal exit route takes you and your family back into the fray, then your escape route is compromised. One way to avoid a compromised escape route is to have Alternate Escape Routes.

Alternate escape routes are routes that are basically another way to get where you're going. It helps if they are less commonly used, traffic-jam free and lead out towards your destination. Many times when cities are evacuated, the main roads and normal routes are cluttered with cars and people. Your alternate escape routes will allow you to exit the city and avoid being stuck out in the open, in a crowd of scared, angry citizens, with your family.

If you can, recover your safe box with all your important documents in it. These include birth certificates, driver' licenses, marriage license, gun permits or registrations (if you have one), social security cards and anything else that is important. You may even want to include a few photos for a taste of home.

Involving Your Family

Family can be a hard thing to motivate when it comes to prepping. Transitioning to a lifestyle of preparedness means getting vigilant and prudent and *staying* vigilant and prudent. The change is not always welcome. Some ways to involve your family is to communicate that “the phase” will not pass. Talk with them about the benefits of a preparedness lifestyle. Explore techniques and put them to the test, such as a your gear, skills, and awareness. Make sure they know how to use waterproof matches or magnesium and flint and how to safely build a fire. As you learn, teach them also.

Teach them different knots and paracord uses and how to build traps and tarp lean-tos, and how to hunt and garden. Camping is as good a time as any to test your skills. Make it a fun family event to go camping once a month or so. This will help everyone in your family become used to the outdoor, survival lifestyle. After all, you want to know what techniques and gear work well and which ones don't. Waiting until disaster strikes to find out what works is an ill-advised plan.

If you have made a list for the items in your emergency pantry, perhaps let your family loose in the thrift store or flea market. Set them on a hunt for the lowest priced pantry items. One way to really get your family involved is by having them build their own bug out bags. It can be a really fun exercise for children, and it helps them feel invested and responsible for something.

Having your family involved in the evacuation plans, alternate escape routes and checkpoints is another way to have them involved. The more invested they are in the plan from the beginning, the more likely they are to remember the plan because they were a part of building it rather than merely being told what the plan is.

Your family can also be involved in the maintenance of your emergency pantry. As you acquire supplies and food on your list, you will want to check it off the list. You can have someone label the food with the date acquired, the expiration date and the ingredients the day it's brought home. Next, create a separate inventory list of what you have acquired so far. A subject notebook will do. In this notebook will be a Column 1 with the name of the food or supplies. Column 2 will have the date acquired. Column 3 will have the Expiration date.

Write down your entire emergency pantry as you acquire it. This is also a task that a family member can do. For rotation, you can have a family member check the dates in the inventory book weekly and pull all foods or supplies that expire in 1 or 2 months time. You can use these items by rotating them out. As you repurchase these items, rotate them back into your budget and emergency pantry. Label the items and record them in your inventory book. This ensures that your pantry is up-to-date with useable goods and your family isn't wasting any food or money by letting items go bad.

Labeling cans and writing an inventory can get tedious, so mix things up by rotating weekly shifts. These shifts will add responsibility and keep the preparedness lifestyle at the forefront of your family's mind. Continue to stress that scared people are angry people and can become dangerous people. The need for concealing your plans and preparations is imperative as is avoiding avoidable situations.

Prepping on a budget has its challenges, but you and your family can't afford to *not* prepare. Prepping may seem like a lot of work for a never-ending job. Don't let yourself get discouraged before you ever begin. Any preparation, no matter how small is one more advantage you and your family will have. Even when you are ever so slowly moving forward, it is better than standing still, and you and your family will benefit from it. Go steady but go forward.

Closing Thoughts

Once you have prepared for natural disasters and assessed how well your home is protected, then it's time to make sure that you and your family are ready to get where you need to be. Prepping is a lifestyle and a choice that you can make today. It can seem

intimidating at first, but the sooner you start, the better off you will be. It doesn't have to break the bank and, if done correctly, it will even help you save a lot of money in the long run. From buying food in bulk, to using coupons, to starting early and saving often, there are many ways to make prepping more affordable and more achievable for any person or family.

You don't need to spend money on every latest gadget and toy, every item marketed as a "must-have" or a "lifesaver". There are now entire businesses set up just to try to convince people that they *need* to buy a certain item to survive, or they *just must* subscribe to a monthly service and receive a new survival item every month. Simply not true! People have been prepping for generations without any of those things, and those same prepping principles are still more than useful today.

At its core, prepping is about securing the future of you and your family. So it makes sense that a big part of this equation is to do it all without incurring huge amounts of debts and making yourself beholden to some big bank or credit card company. We need to be prepared not only physically, but mentally and financially as well. We have no way of knowing what events will be coming our way, but it only makes sense to prepare the same, whether it's a natural disaster, a society disaster, or a global financial collapse. If you follow the principles of prepping on a budget, you'll be in the best possible position to deal with whatever comes our way. And really, that's what this is all about!

The Urban Prepper: A City Survival Guide

Prepping. We've all heard of it, but have you ever really thought about what it means? In the broadest sense, prepping is a term that refers primarily to the practice of survivalism in its modern context. While the general idea has been around for centuries, it has not had the same connotation in previous time periods as it does in our modern era. The age of consumerism and relative comfort in which we live has caused many of the survival skills and our general level of preparedness to dwindle down to near nothing, particularly in urban areas. The reasoning for this is simple: with everything either immediately available or just a short email or phone call away, many people believe that there is little or no need to maintain any sort of preparatory inventory or plan in case of disaster. The hard truth of it is, most people just believe that everything will work out regardless of their circumstances and, thus, believe that preparation is not necessary. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Survivalism is a method of ensuring survival and remaining self-sufficient during times following a catastrophe, disaster, national or international emergency, or political and/or social upheaval. One particular area of interest, which has important implications for millions of city dwellers today, is the art of urban prepping. Urban prepping is different from traditional prepping in a number of key ways and, given the growing number of people residing in urban environments, is of particular importance to even greater numbers of

people these days. Without the presence of a large amount of land or the ability to store emergency supplies in a cellar or a similar storage space, there can be some difficulty in urban prepping. These challenges can be overcome, but they require particular attention to detail.

Urban environments are generally defined by two primary characteristics: a higher human population density and a much higher level of human development than the areas that surround it. Urban areas can include towns, cities, and a number of other types of human settlements. The term does not, however, include small human settlements such as villages or hamlets. The areas that surround dense urban environments can quickly become something called “urban sprawl” through a process known as urbanization. Urban sprawl can sometimes include suburban areas. They are typically not as developed as cities, but they do have a relatively high human population and all of the services that come along with that. In the United States, there are two terms that are used to describe urban environments: urbanized areas and urban clusters. Places with a human population of fifty thousand or more are urbanized areas. Urban clusters are urban areas with a population of less than fifty thousand.

Some of the most important aspects of urban prepping are also the factors that differentiate it from traditional prepping. One of these aspects is the creation of a bug-out bag and an evacuation plan. During times of disaster, cities are likely going to become one of the

most dangerous environments for people to try and survive in. This is primarily because of the high population, the close quarters, and the lack of natural resources. Should the electricity and/or water utilities disappear, cities would quickly become very dangerous. It is, therefore, pertinent to have a plan, the skills, and the basic equipment on hand at all times in order to move away from these areas in the event of a true survival or disaster situation. The amount of space you have to prepare in an urban setting is far less than you would have if you were residing in even a suburb or out in a rural area. Thus, it is very important to prioritize your preparation.

Preparedness Checklist in Order of Importance

1. Water
2. Emergency Kits
3. Food
4. Other supplies

The Essential First Step: A Bug-Out Bag

A bug out bag is a kit that is portable and easy to carry. It should contain everything that a person would need in order to survive for around seventy-two hours in the event of a disaster or a catastrophe. A good bug out bag will include items that are necessary for three possible scenarios.

Scenario 1 – Evacuation within the city

Evacuation within the city would refer to any evacuation that may take place during which a person must move from their home within the city to another location within the city. This could include things

such as moving to a bomb shelter or moving to higher ground in case of flooding.

Scenario 2 – Evacuation outside the city

This type of survival situation will require a person to leave the entire city during an evacuation. This may include nuclear or terrorist attacks, invasions, or large-scale natural disasters such as hurricanes. These kinds of evacuations are relatively uncommon in most cities, but they should be prepared for nonetheless.

Scenario 3 – Search and rescue

Even if a person is not personally wounded or directly affected by a survival situation, it is good to have tools in their bug-out bag in the event that someone else is. This will help in being found and rescued when the time comes.

Urban environments, in particular, present certain challenges that are not present in wilderness environments. With that idea in mind, it is important to remember that the bug-out bag for each of these two types of situations will also be different. The bug-out bag for use in an urban situation is very different from a bug-out bag that may be used in a wilderness situation. The high population and low density of vegetation and wildlife in urban areas can lead to problems that people in rural areas may not encounter. One example of this is a large number of wounded and/or dead such as those found during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans or during some of the mudslides or tsunami affected areas in Asia.

There are many eventualities that could occur in a survival situation that need to be taken into account when creating a bug-out bag. Dealing with the debris of buildings and glass is an important thing to consider, especially in an urban survival situation. Another thing to consider is the presence of buildings in urban areas. Buildings mean shelter and, thus, it is not as important to consider shelter when building an urban bug-out bag. The chances of encountering other people are high in urban areas and should also be taken into account. You will need to tailor your bug-out bag depending on your specific location and climate.

Essentials of an Urban Bug-Out Bag, apart from Water and Food, which are Critical!

Crowbar – A crowbar is so useful in an urban setting it almost needs no explanation. This can help pry open doors or to move stuck objects. It can be used to smash through problem areas if they are encountered and it also doubles as a melee weapon. If you are preparing bug-out bags for your entire family, one crowbar should be sufficient.

Hydrant/Gas Main Tool – Fire hydrants may be able to provide a source of fresh water if no other water can be found, particularly in urban environments. Gas mains in houses will often need to be shut off in the event a fire must be made or simply for safety reasons. A

tool that can be used to open and close both should be included in the bag.

Multitool – There are almost too many uses for a multitool to name. This is an essential addition to any bug-out bag. You'll find it coming in handy in a variety of situations and it's one of those simple items that most people will simply forget to have on hand, so if you pack one in your bug-out bag, you'll be ahead of the curve already.

Map and Compass – Knowing the surrounding area and how to navigate it is essential in a survival situation. Particularly in urban areas, where it can be easy to get lost. Coupled with a good route that has been preplanned and that every individual in your family knows, this can provide an easy way to safety. Maps should be carried at all times and should be distributed to any immediate members of the family. There are a few different routes that need to be planned out on a map for maximum effectiveness:

Highway route – This should be your best option. Also, the first option that will likely be unusable in the event of a disaster or an emergency.

Back-road route – Should the highways be unavailable, side and back roads are the next best option.

Off-road route – Should all of the other possible routes be inaccessible, an off-road route outside of the city may be the only choice.

Routes to important people – extended family, close family, *etc.* It is important to have these people on a survival map in order to find them without the need of GPS or other electronic services. They can be important resources in a survival situation.

Rendezvous points – For anyone who may get lost. This is going to be the primary method by which people can meet up in the event that they are separated.

Additional Items to include in your Bug-Out Bag:

Work Gloves – In urban environments, there are many hazards one may have to cross in order to reach safety or even to simply move around. A pair of sturdy work gloves can prevent the hands from being damaged or cut by broken glass, metal, or building materials that may have fallen. This is a simple thing that most people will forget, so having a good pair of work gloves will give you an immediate advantage.

Writing Tool (Chalk, Permanent Marker) – This is being listed as an essential because it is both useful and it is lightweight and compact. A writing tool can be used to leave messages for other

survivors or to mark certain areas as dangerous. Good communication has a myriad of benefits, all of which can be attained simply by using a good writing tool.

Can Opener – self-explanatory. A city provides many opportunities to find canned food and canned food is next to useless without a can opener. Having a working can opener can save a person the frustration and potential danger of trying to open a can with another tool (such as a knife).

Mask – In urban areas, the high number of buildings increases the potential for dust and airborne particulates. The high building density also increases the risk of fire. A good mask can prevent the inhalation of particulate matter and can prevent smoke from entering the lungs (at least to a degree).

Metal Spork – The one utensil a person will need. This is a catchall eating utensil that is good for both “wet” food such as soup and solid food such as meat.

LED Flashlight – The buildings in an urban environment can block sunlight and make the entire area much darker than it would be otherwise. If a person must travel inside buildings or underground for any period of time, you’re going to need a good source of light. A solar powered flashlight would be best because it could simply

charge outside during the day while traveling. Battery powered flashlights are not a bad thing to have, but one should keep in mind that they do rely on batteries, which adds another item to carry and another thing to worry about running out of.

Hand-Crank Radio – A good radio to pick up signals from other survivors or from emergency personnel is essential. Hand crank, again, is better than battery powered because it doesn't rely on the ability to find batteries to work.

Water Purification Tablets – Another essential. Water purification tablets can work in a pinch if water is not available and if boiling is not an option. Carry enough for around 72 hours, per person.

Flint and Steel – Flint and steel are essential for any survival situation in order to start a solid fire.

Small Mirror – Lightweight. Portable. Mirrors can help signal others, to help direct and focus sunlight in order to start fires, and to check around corners and other hard to see areas for protection.

Medications – In addition to any essential personal medication, it is good to carry Neosporin, aspirin, and a small bottle of alcohol or peroxide for cleaning wounds.

Antibiotics are a form of medication that is often overlooked by the prepping community as a whole. The reasoning is that they either do not understand what to buy, do not understand the proper storage, or do not believe that antibiotics are something that can simply be obtained easily enough to make them viable. Urban preppers have a benefit insofar as they have access to many more resources than preppers in rural or wilderness areas. Animal antibiotics can be used in humans as well, since they are inherently the same chemicals. It should be noted that antibiotics inherently treat bacterial infections. They are useless in the case of viral infections such as colds or flu.

Amoxicillin – sold as Fish-Mox at most pet stores. Amoxicillin is a powerful antibiotic that can be used to handle bacteria, which cause middle ear and/or respiratory infections. It is also safe for pregnant women and children. There is a possibility for allergy, however, so care should be taken.

Ampicillin – sold as Fish-Cillin in many pet stores. Useful for urinary tract infections, gastrointestinal problems, respiratory problems, or the myriad of things that penicillin is useful for. Less likely to cause allergic reactions than penicillin or amoxicillin.

Metronidazole – sold as Fish-Zole. This is useful for diabetic foot ulcers, gastrointestinal problems, joint and bone infections, meningitis, and many other types of bacterial infections.

Food – Canned food can be good, but it is extremely bulky. It is better to pack high protein and high calorie meals, if possible. Energy bars make a good choice, as do things like beef jerky. Pack enough canned food for at least 72 hours, per person, if possible.

Cooking items: Make sure to have a small backpacking stove and fuel, in addition to a small pot or a large cup for boiling water and cooking food.

Waterproof Matches – Another backup. Just in case fire cannot be started with the flint and steel, a small container of waterproof matches can work as a backup.

In addition to the essentials, there are a number of pieces of accessory equipment that can be included in a bug-out bag. Weight is always a factor in a survival situation and should be kept in mind when deciding what sorts of accessory equipment to include.

Accessory Equipment for an Urban Bug-Out Bag

Clothing – Clothing is being listed under accessory supplies for two reasons: It is heavy and it is bulky. Wear what you need, and maybe have an extra outfit ready to go if you need it. Don't pack a lot of clothes, however. If you pack anything, pack extra socks and underwear.

Rain Gear – Rain gear is a certain subset of clothing that includes ponchos and waterproof gear that can be useful during times of rain. This gear is useful but will not necessarily be essential in an urban environment because of the presence of so many buildings. It is very likely that a person could find an area to shelter themselves from the rain relatively easily.

Money – Money may or may not be useful. It might be nice to have in some situations, since the ATMs probably will not be working during a survival situation, but it may not be useful the longer the survival situation drags on. A person has to assume that money wouldn't be as useful in huge disaster situations so it may not be needed. During short-term survival situations, it is also hard to think of a reason to need money. Who will take the money? This is a toss-up – take some if you think it will be helpful, but don't worry about stocking up on huge piles of cash.

Tarp – Tarps are heavy and they are bulky. You must weigh the pros and cons when deciding whether to include them in your bug-out bag. They can be used as makeshift shelters, to help carry items, or to protect a group from the elements.

Paracord – Paracord has a myriad of uses. One of the best uses it to either tie things for dragging (such as a sled on which supplies or injured persons can be placed). Another use, though not quite as

important in an urban environment, is its ability to hold up tarps or other coverings and to work as the backbone of makeshift shelters.

Batteries – Batteries are not as important as the essential items for two reasons: in an urban environment, they will probably be relatively easy to find and most of the items in the bug-out bag should be self-sufficient (solar flashlights, hand crank radio, flint and steel, etc).

One important thing to note about bug-out bags is that they are not the only things that a person will need to survive. Just as important, if not more than, as the bug-out bag itself is the knowledge that a person brings to the table. Knowledge truly is power and one of the best ways to prepare for any type of disaster is to have basic knowledge of survival and environmental conditions. Even the best laid plans and the best bug-out bag cannot prepare you for every scenario, so it is important to have knowledge to back up your tools and equipment. It is important to know where things are in relation to each other in your area, the safe methods and areas of travel, where one might find help should they need it, and the general flora and fauna that can be found in the area. This sort of knowledge can provide a lot of help should a person need to modify their plans while on the move.

Another thing to keep in mind is that a person should carry certain essential items (such as flint and steel) in their survival bag

regardless of their location. Even in an urban environment, where it doesn't seem like a good idea to make a fire, a person can never know when it may be necessary. There is always the possibility of migrating out of the initial urban environment toward more rural areas as well.

Home Preparations

Even in an urban survival situation, having your home prepared for moderate to long-term survival is a good idea. It pays to be prepared for any situation. With that in mind, there are a number of things an urban prepper can have around which will help greatly, depending on their exact living situation. Most of these items are large and are not meant to be carried anywhere, but rather kept within the home for the duration of the situation. Should a person need to leave, very few of them will even be a viable option for carrying.

Generator – Electricity will probably be one of the first things to go in a survival situation. A small generator can keep the juice flowing long enough to settle any last minute issues.

Gasoline – At least ten gallons would be best. Gasoline may be at a premium during a survival situation, but this amount will keep things moving long enough to get settled. Make sure you have it stocked, because at the first sign of disaster, the gas stations will fill with long lines of unprepared people who are looking to fill their tanks. You

want to avoid that situation and so should have a small stock of gasoline on your premises at all times.

Chainsaw – Preferably gas powered. Chainsaws are useful for hundreds of things, but in an urban situation there may be a need to move through fallen debris or to cut a new way out of an area.

Heavy tools – An axe, a sledgehammer, and a large tool kit (at minimum). This is important for both moving through the environment, clearing areas near the home that may be blocked or inaccessible, and taking apart or repairing the myriad of items a person may find within the urban environment.

Beyond preparing items in the home, there are a few security issues that a prepper may want to take care of as well. Urban preparation in this regard is almost nothing like rural prepping. There will be no bunkers or fences to put up in an urban area. Instead, preppers must simply work with what they have got. That means fortifying doors and windows, among other things. A heavy steel door should be a priority, if possible. Windows can be reinforced with locks and steel mesh, if necessary.

One important thing to remember: an urban home only needs to be prepared for the length of time a prepper plans to spend in it. If the plan during the survival situation is to leave the home immediately

and try and find a safe place or to migrate out of the city, then there is no need to put extra reinforcement into the home or to keep long term supplies there. If you are planning to bunker down in your condo or urban home for an extended period of time, you're going to want to reinforce your home as highly as possible. It all depends on the exact plans of each individual prepper.

Health, Nutrition, and Fitness

Health, nutrition, and fitness play an enormous role in any survival situation. In urban survival situations, however, they play a larger than normal role. Physical fitness is something that preppers can look to that will greatly increase their chance of survival. A prepper should work on being physically fit prior to any event occurring and should train for the general environment that they may find themselves in. For urban populations, that means preparing for survival within an urban environment. Food and water are always priorities. Preparations for urban survival should include both a knowledge of where to find food and water in addition to storage of food and water within the urban dwelling. Finally, it is important to have a good knowledge of the various hazards that may present themselves during an urban survival situation.

Any given survival situation will only go as smoothly as the health of the survivor allows. It is important to stay healthy and physically fit in order to be prepared for any possible eventualities that could occur. A proper physical fitness routine for a wilderness area may include basic weight exercises, cardiovascular exercise, and endurance

exercises. The type of preparation a person should do for urban survival should lean more toward endurance and weight training than cardiovascular work. Staying moving in a city can prove difficult given the high probability of obstacles (cars and trucks, damaged buildings, etc). Movement may not be as quick but it will be more physically taxing.

One type of exercise, in particular, that may be useful in urban areas is parkour. Parkour is a cross-disciplinary type of exercise that emphasizes freedom of movement through environments (particularly urban environments). With a bit of training ahead of time, many obstacles that seem like they cannot be overcome will seem like child's play. Particularly when it comes to traversing ledges, through tight spaces, and maneuvering around obstacles. It is very likely, in an urban survival situation, that cars, trucks, and other debris will be present and will block many potential routes through the environment. With parkour training, the mind will quickly be able to find ways to overcome these various obstacles. Most parkour training will focus on climbing obstacles and jumping between them. Landings are also an important focus. Landings and rolls are of interest to practitioners of parkour because they can reduce the damage and stress on the body that is caused by falling or jumping an appreciable distance.

As with rural prepping situations, food is still a good thing to store in the home. There is a chance that, even in an urban environment, people will either be asked to remain within their homes or their

home will prove to be the safest place to be. If that is the case, stored food will be a lifesaver. The priority in an urban home will tend to be toward compact and high calorie foods that will not spoil. A shelving unit within a closet or a pantry would suit the urban prepper just fine in terms of storage space. Urban prepping is, at heart, a relatively short-term endeavor. If long-term survival is the goal, leaving the urban environment should become the first priority. For time frames of a month or less, however, the home may be a viable survival space.

The best foods to store in an urban storage are going to be canned and jarred foods. High calorie and high fat and protein foods are the best foods to store. When consumed fat will, contrary to popular belief, stave off hunger. Eating fat is what signals the body to start using its fat reserves for energy and to stop being hungry. Some of the best protein and fat sources to store are canned tuna, chicken, salmon, and other fish (such as sardines). Potted meat and Vienna sausage are also good choices. Vegetables are, also contrary to popular belief, not the best types of foods to store for a survival situation. There is a very simple reason for this: they are low calorie and they take up a lot of space. Some vegetables are good to store, such as large containers of green beans or yams, but for the most part the space requirement that they bring to the table trumps the caloric payoff that they offer. It may also be useful to store lemon juice and salt. Both are capable of helping electrolyte restoration and to help with any number of medical or survival needs. There is, always, the chance of scurvy setting in if enough citric acid is not obtained in the diet. Lemon juice can help prevent this eventuality

and has a very long shelf life (the acidity prevents the growth of bacteria).

Salt carries a particular amount of importance in a survival situation. It can be used to store meat long term (through the process of dehydration), it can be used to help fight against infections in the throat (gargling with warm salt water), it can be used to cook food (obviously), it can be used to melt ice, it can be used to prevent bugs (putting salt in a doorway will help create a barrier), and it can be used to help relieve the itching that is often associated with bug bites. Salt is easily stored and is one of the most useful things that can be stored in the home.

Beyond canned foods, high calorie carbohydrate sources are a good choice to store for energy purposes. They may not have the nutritional value necessary to sustain long-term survival, but they may be necessary at times in order to maintain energy levels.

Here are a few good choices for calorie dense carbohydrates to prep:

White rice – a single cup of white rice can contain over two hundred calories. Given that most stores carry bulk bags (up to fifty pounds) of rice it is possible to get a couple of bags and have enough food to last for months.

Dried beans – beans are sold in bulk and only need to be rehydrated for use in cooking applications. As a source of protein and carbohydrates, beans are a calorie dense food that does not take up a lot of space and can be stored in the home.

Sugar

Powdered drink mix – high in calories in addition to having a ton of vitamins and minerals.

Food that can be taken on the go should be able to last, at minimum, 72 hours. Beyond that, it is going to be up to the survivor to find more food. The best choices are going to, again, be high fat and high protein sources. Carbohydrates, at least as far as canned foods go, are not good choices to bring because of the weight and space requirement. Canned tuna and canned chicken breast are great choices as far as protein sources go. For carbs on the road, it is best to pack some sort of high calorie and high sugar candy. This can keep the survivor moving on the road throughout the day, help to stave off hunger, and has a low space and weight requirement.

Urban environments do not completely remove the capability of preppers to garden. A good seed stock should be kept in the home and can be rotated every couple of years as the viability of the seed stock drops. Though the land area is often much lower in urban environments than it is in rural areas, small gardens can still be created in yards. Hydroponic grow setups can be created in cities. The issue with hydroponics during survival situations, however, is that electricity and water is required to keep them running. This is not

even taking into account the need for fresh nutrient solutions, which will not be available if a disaster occurs.

As a way to recap this section, here's a handy guide to help you stock up on food prepping in an urban environment.

10 Best Survival Foods at Your Grocery Store

This most recent winter taught all of us that disasters and emergencies can strike without warning. It also showed us the importance of being prepared. Buying provisions like food and water during or right before a disaster is typically not an option because most stores stock less than a week's worth of food under normal circumstances and are therefore picked bare during emergencies. Keeping a healthy stock of survival foods on hand is a good way to ensure you and your family weather unexpected emergencies.

Creating a supply of emergency food is as easy as making a trip to the grocery store. Below are ten great survival foods that you can find at your local store. These foods have a long shelf-life (from 2 to 10 years), are calorie dense, and relatively inexpensive. All of these things make these ten foods good choices to keep on hand in the event of a crisis.

Dry Beans: Beans are a super food. They are high in protein and fiber and other nutrients that can help keep you healthy during an extended crisis. They are also an excellent way to feed more than one person as 1 cup of dry beans makes 3 cups of cooked beans. Make it a habit to pick up one or two large bags of beans every time you go to the store. Practically all variety of beans are nutritious and long lasting so feel free to pick your favorite.

Lard: During an emergency situation, you'll need oil for cooking. Lard is long-lasting and high in calories (calories are important during a disaster). Plus, it will add a bit of flavor to your food, which can be hard to come by during a crisis. A little lard goes a long way so one large can will be enough.

Rice: You need carbohydrates to fuel you through a disaster and rice is a cheap and healthy way to keep carbs in your diet. Half a cup of dried rice makes 1 cup of cooked rice so it is also a good way to stretch your food supply. Every time you go to the grocery store, pick up a large bag of rice to add to your emergency food supply.

Canned Meat: Stock up on cans of tuna, ham, and chicken as a great source of protein.

Pasta: Like rice, pasta is a great way to get carbohydrates. Plus, pasta can be very cheap so it is worth stocking up on.

Salt: Every time you go to the grocery store, buy salt. Not only will you use it to help store your emergency food supply, it will also come in handy as a seasoning during a crisis.

Cornmeal: Cornmeal is better to keep on hand than flour because it takes fewer ingredients to make breads with cornmeal than with flour. Just add some lard and salt to cornmeal to make a tasty skillet cake. Additionally, cornmeal has a longer shelf life than flour. It is a good idea to stock up with several 5lb bags of cornmeal.

Canned Fruit and Vegetables: Canned fruit and vegetables don't offer much in the way of calories but they are a good way to keep vegetables and fruits in your diet during an emergency, which is important. Stick with cans of green vegetables and low-acidic fruits like pears because those canned foods have a longer shelf life.

Peanut Butter: Peanut butter is a tasty source of protein and much needed fat. Plus, you'll be happy to have this quick snack on hand during an emergency. Peanut butter can get expensive but if stored properly, it will last for five years so stock up on it every chance you get.

Sugar and Honey: These two sweeteners will store for years (forever, really) and are a good way to add flavor to your emergency

food. Add sugar to your rice to create a sweet breakfast cereal.

Placing food in long-term storage requires some preparation. First, it is important to find a cool, dry place that is dark. A basement or cellar is ideal. Try to avoid placing emergency food in the garage because the temperature fluctuates too much and that can affect your emergency food supply.

The best way to keep your food fresh for years is to place it in heavy-duty food-grade sealable containers. Keep your food separated—use one container for beans, one for rice. If you like, you can store the canned foods in sealable containers as well. Doing so will allow you to keep them in one place and make them easy to move if that become necessary. Add salt to the sealable containers (1 cup of salt per 5 gallons of storage space). Put your food into the container, and then place some dry ice on top of your food. The dry ice is key, as it will absorb any oxygen in the container. There are such things as oxygen absorbers but dry ice has the added benefit of being a fumigant, meaning it will kill any bugs that happen to find their way in your food supply. Plus, dry ice is fairly cheap at about \$5 or \$6 for 5lbs of dry ice. A little bit of dry ice goes a long way; you only need around 1 ounce for 5 gallons of storage area. Because the dry ice is there to preserve your food, it is better to use too much rather than too little so feel free to add 2 ounces of dry ice to your food container as it will not harm the food you are storing. Once you have the salt, food, and dry ice packed in the container, seal it tightly. Put a label

on the container that list the ingredients and the date the container was packed.

If you make a point of picking up a couple of these survival food items each time you go to the store, you will quickly have a healthy supply of provisions that will see you and your family through any crisis.

Water

Every prepper knows that water is the most important thing a person can have in terms of survival preparation. The body loses water constantly through exertion. Sweat, urine, and even breath causes water loss. Above average or extreme heat can cause the human body to lose half a gallon or more of water per day. It is important, therefore, to make an effort to drink at least a gallon of water per day. There are a few things that every prepper should keep in their home to help maintain hydration during a survival situation. First and foremost: Stored bottled water. The exact amount is going to depend on the amount of space available, but it is good to keep in mind that the average person needs to drink around a gallon of water a day just to maintain hydration. Beyond stored bottled water, a supply of water purification tablets should be kept along with some lightweight carbon filters. This will both purify the water and allow particulate filtration.

Water on the go is a more difficult matter to handle. Carrying a small stove, carbon filters, and pot in the urban bug-out bag can provide

an infinite source of clean water provided boiling is an option. A pack of water filtration tablets can be used to purify and, when used in conjunction with the carbon filters, can purify potentially dirty water sources on the go. It is not recommended to carry more than a canteen (possible gallon sized, if possible) of water at a time due to weight and space requirements. Too much equipment can weigh a person down and make travel more difficult. This issue is of particular importance in urban environments where there is a high potential for debris or other obstacles to block movement, requiring climbing. The average human in good physical condition and good environmental conditions can survive a maximum of around four days without water.

Physical hazards are almost definitely going to be an issue in an urban survival situation and the urban prepper should be aware of and prepare to encounter them during their survival preparations. Some of the primary physical hazards that may be encountered can be downed (live) electrical lines, large pools of water, or fallen buildings. Also be on the lookout for fires, falling debris, and wreckage in the streets. Remember: cities are composed almost entirely of concrete, steel, and glass. When a disaster happens in an urban environment, these three things all become huge obstacles that must be overcome. Preparing for physical hazards can be, first and foremost, a matter of knowing what to expect. Cars will likely be jamming the streets, building debris and glass may be on the streets. If there are fires going on somewhere close, there may be ash or coals on the streets as well. In any event, expect the unexpected. In an ideal situation, the urban prepper will have an outfit ready to go

that will take into account all of the physical environmental hazards that may be encountered. A pair of good steel-toed boots, a pair of sturdy cargo pants, a nice and thick cotton undershirt, and a good leather jacket are all good choices. Steel-toed boots can prevent damage to the feet from debris underfoot or from damage from falling objects.

Biological, chemical, or radioactive hazards are something that should be taken into account but are very difficult to prepare for. Hazards can vary drastically depending on the nature of the disaster that befalls the urban environment a prepper finds himself in. During any sort of radioactive event such as a reactor meltdown or a nuclear attack, a city can be either a saving grace or a deathtrap. Radiation tends to absorb into concrete and rebar which will then continue to emit radiation. The first step is to get as far away from the blast area as possible. Remaining upwind of the radioactive event to avoid fallout is of utmost importance

Biological hazards are not as much of an issue in urban environments initially. They pose a larger threat as time goes on. Medical waste and garbage become breeding grounds for disease and bacteria, which can pose a real threat to survivors. Avoid areas that may contain either garbage or medical waste if possible. Rotten food can become a breeding ground for insects and disease as well. Route planning should avoid these areas for two reasons: the potential for disease and the potential for running into other survivors. Survivors may be the biggest threat to overall safety in an

urban survival situation simply because of their unpredictability. Careful preparation ahead of time and careful route planning will completely remove any need to go near supermarket type areas for food during a survival situation regardless. Regardless, it may not be possible to avoid all possible biological hazards, especially if foraging becomes a necessity. If that is the case, there are a few hazards that a person should be aware of in urban survival situations.

Specific biological hazards to be aware of:

Insects (bedbugs, roaches, lice, etc.) - These insects will spread very quickly in an urban disaster situation. The primary reason stemming from the fact that no people are bothering to keep their numbers in check anymore. Keeping a bit of diatomaceous earth around to spread at entrances to your home or sleeping environment can go a long way to preventing them from entering your domicile and killing off any insects that have already moved in.

Botulism – Botulism is a potentially fatal illness that is caused by the botulinum toxin that is produced by the bacteria *Chlostridium botulinum*. Spores, which can lead to its production, can be found in soil and water sources. They are typically activated by certain environmental conditions such as certain temperature ranges or low oxygen levels. Food sources can be contaminated by *Clostridium botulinum*. It is important to, especially with canned food and preserved food, cook it thoroughly. If a can seems to be “bulging” at the ends, it is probably contaminated and should not be eaten.

Symptoms of infection include becoming tired, weak chest or arm muscles, drooping eyelids, and trouble speaking.

Another possible source of botulism is wound infection. Since *Chlostridium botulinum* can live in soil any open wound can potentially become infected and the situation can quickly become life threatening. It is important to maintain proper wound care and cleanliness in situations when wounds may become exposed.

Mold – Urban environments are often the same types of environments in which mold and mildews thrive. Mold often grows in dark and damp areas. Without electricity and with possible deterioration of urban areas, the entire environment can become a large dark and damp area. Mold can quickly spread via spores. There are a few ways that mold can affect the health of an urban prepper. High numbers of spores within the air can lead to allergy problems (runny nose, possible lethargy, low energy, puffy and red eyes) or asthma problems. There is also the potential for mycotoxins within the spores, which can lead to neurological problems and, potentially, death.

Local threats – Beyond the general threats that can be present in urban areas, it is important to know the threats that are more localized. In the northeast, there will be issues that are not present in the Midwest. One of the most important things a prepper can do is to

learn about the potential local threats prior to any sort of survival situation.

Some of the biological hazards that are present in either rural or wilderness areas are not as large a problem in cities, but they could become one as the disaster or survival situation lengthens in time. Wild animals (or even hungry domestic animals) could be loose within the city. In addition, insects such as ticks or mosquitoes could potentially transmit infections to survivors within the urban environment. Mosquitoes, in particular, could become a problem very quickly considering their choice for breeding areas. Mosquitoes typically breed within stagnant pools of water. Even a light rain could provide mosquitoes with an entire slew of new breeding grounds within a city, especially if damage allows water to get into buildings. A person may not think that “wildlife” such as animals, birds (and bird droppings), or biting insects (such as ticks) would become a large issue during an urban survival situation. Everything becomes an issue, however, when a duration of time without regular maintenance by humans allows that to occur.

Chemical hazards are extremely varied. In urban environments especially, it is very important to be mindful of the thousands of chemicals all around. Any water or food source could be contaminated with any number of volatile or toxic chemicals. Without a functioning infrastructure, there is very little to keep water and food sources clean and sterile enough for human consumption. Chlorine and fluorine are regularly added to municipal water supplies in order

to kill parasites and bacteria. Without the addition of these chemicals there is nothing stopping water lines from becoming overrun with bacteria. For this reason, it is important to keep food, health supplies, and water prepared in the home in order to last as long as possible without having to forage for food or to find a clean water source. If all else fails, make a backup plan to migrate from the urban environment if the situation seems like it is becoming long-term. One type of chemical hazard to be very aware of is gas. Gas mains could break and leak flammable or deadly gas into urban areas. Beyond that, carbon monoxide is still an issue within cities. If there is a large electrical problem in the city, ozone buildup could also become an issue.

Family Matters: Getting Everyone Involved

The family unit serves a very important purpose in life itself. In a survival situation, family may be the only source of support a person can look to and depend on. One of the major issues in an urban survival situation is that, though the prepper is prepared for survival, the rest of the family may not have the same training or knowledge at their disposal in order to be of much use. It is, therefore, very important to include the family in any survival plans and to make sure that they are well aware of what plans and tools have been set in place for the situation at hand.

The close family unit, the spouse and the children, should be made aware of the survival plan, the preparations in the home, and the possible routes out of the city. There should be a plan in place for

what to do in the event of an emergency. At the very least, a specified area to meet should the family be split up at the time of the event should be designated. Perhaps a backup area should be designated as well, just in case. Everyone in the family should be assigned certain tasks and the work should be divided equally if at all possible. The close family can be included in the initial preparations and should be taught any of the relevant skills (fire starting, how to use weaponry, etc).

Extended family is an entirely different subject. If any extended family lives in the immediate area, it may be pertinent to include them in your plans and map out relevant routes between homes. If necessary, either they may need to relocate to the prepared home or the prepper may need to relocate to their home. Either way there is safety in numbers and trustworthy individuals may come at a premium.

SelfDefense in Urban Areas

Selfdefense is an aspect of survival that is often overblown in terms of preparation. It is, of course, important. But a person must remember that food, water, and shelter will always come first in a survival situation. In an urban environment, however, there is a much higher chance of encountering another person during any sort of survival situation. Any interaction with another person without the constraints of normal law and order can deteriorate into a dangerous situation at a moments notice. The exact preparations will, again,

depend entirely on the plans that a prepper has made during their route planning and survival planning.

At the most basic level, a prepper should learn at least one form of martial arts. Some are better than others. For hand-to-hand combat, either boxing or grappling skills will serve a survivor well. Particularly in the close quarter areas that urban areas consist of. In addition to basic martial arts training, it may serve a prepper well to study ways of disarming melee weapons or handguns from potential threats. As always, risks should be avoided. With that being said, it can never hurt to expect the best and prepare for the worst.

The most useful piece of non-ballistic weaponry (melee weaponry) to carry will be some sort of hatchet. It is lightweight, provides a myriad of uses, and is not bulky. In addition to a hatchet, it is extremely useful to carry a hunting knife. A person never knows when a knife will be necessary until it is too late and, given the environmental concerns in urban areas, it may become necessary to cut or saw synthetic materials that simple pocket knives are incapable of cutting.

Ballistic weaponry is typically where preppers end up going a bit overboard. Yes, having weapons is an important part of prepping. But the likelihood of needing fifty thousand rounds of ammunition or an entire arsenal of guns is a bit ridiculous. Defense of the home and the surrounding area should be of primary concern to urban

preppers. The high population makes it much more likely that a person may suffer from marauders or attack from other groups of survivors. It pays dividends to prepare for this eventuality regardless of the likelihood of it actually occurring. There are four primary types of weapons recommended to include in an urban home. Pistols, rifles, shotguns, and air powered pellet guns. The best pistol, rifle, and shotgun will depend on the abilities and preferences of each individual prepper. One of each will be fine. Air powered pellet guns are recommended for a few reasons: they are good for small game, the ammunition is extremely cheap, the ammunition is plentiful, and they are powered by air.

If a person has to leave their home, carrying two primary weapons will have the best result, as far as weight and practicality goes. Shotguns may not be a practical weapon to carry around, though given the tight spaces in an urban setting they may be more useful than they would in rural areas. A pistol and a rifle should be sufficient. Beyond that, not much should be needed. A person does not need to be a walking arsenal to be successful in an urban survival situation. If a time comes that someone needs more firepower than a pistol and a rifle, the time has come to find an alternate way out of the situation. Beyond the lack of need, there are space and weight considerations that need to be taken into account. Given all of the equipment a survivor may be carrying and the unique problems associated with navigating through a debris filled urban environment, there is simply no viable reason to add the extra weight that more weapons would allow. Not to mention the added need of carrying another form of ammunition.

As much ammunition can be stored in the home as space allows. Again, it is good to have one of each type of weapon and, obviously, ammunition should only be stored for those weapons specifically. Cleaning kits may also be stored, just in case. A primary concern is often how much ammunition a person should store in their home. The response is: enough. There is really no way to tell. A few boxes of each type of ammunition should be sufficient. If space and money allows, more ammunition will always be a boon to the survival effort. Urban environments may necessitate even more ammunition storage in the home simply because the higher population can allow for many more threats requiring the use of firearms. When moving, however, a couple of boxes of each type of ammunition a person requires will be all that space and weight allow. Ammunition, like it or not, can be bulky. With that being said, it can also be valuable, particularly if it is needed and the situation makes it impossible to find more.

Threat assessment consists of three basic steps: identify, assess, and manage. The identification of potential personal threats will usually come in the form of gut feelings. If an individual, an animal, or a group is seen that just feels off, it may be best to simply avoid them. It is always best to minimize risk. This may mean hiding or taking an alternate route. The primary goal, remember, is survival and rescue. Assessment can be as simple as determining the chances of survival against the potential threat. If alone and facing down a gang or a group that looks dangerous, avoid them at all

costs. A firefight should only be considered as a last resort. At no time should a survivor attempt proactive attack. There is nothing to gain and everything to lose. Survival is, first and foremost, a defensive game. Threat management is simple. Get to a location away from the threat and either move on or wait for the threat to pass. Again, even with weapons and ammunition, it is always going to be a better idea to run than to fight.

It is important to note that, if a person is walking around an urban area with a ton of weapons and firepower, they will immediately be perceived as a potential threat by anyone that they meet. It may be prudent to plan your selfdefense accordingly. Especially since urban populations often have a very different outlook on weapons than rural populations do. Any law enforcement or military presence during the survival situation will also, in all likelihood, be less than thrilled to find armed citizens wandering the streets. Carrying as little weaponry as possible is a good rule to go by in an urban area.

A few last minute defense tips all fall under the general heading of: "don't attract attention to yourself unless necessary." Avoid cooking with a lot of spices or fragrant foods that may attract desperate people who are hungry. If possible, simply eat things out of a can or out of a box that does not need to be cooked at all. Fires and food will almost certainly attract attention and not all attention is the kind a person would want to attract.

Protecting Your Apartment or Condo in a Survival Situation

Trying to defend your apartment or condo requires a slightly different approach than protecting your house out in the country or where you may have a bit more land to work with.

The first thing to do is get together several supplies that you will use to fortify and defend your apartment. You will want a few tools: power drill and screwdrivers, hammers, bolt cutters, wood screws and nails. You will also need several 2x4s, chain link fence, bubble wrap and thermal curtains (the kind that block cold, heat, and sunlight). You will also want battery operated door alarms and motion sensors. Because you are preparing for a very dangerous situation, you will also want a way to defend yourself from looters and other anarchist. The best way to do this is with a gun.

Guns

Any gun expert will tell you that handguns require repeated, frequent training in order to be a useful tool for defense. Pulling a trigger is a shocking thing to do and you don't want your first time (or your first time in a while) to be in the middle of a dangerous situation.

Additionally, as well as knowing how to load and unload a handgun, you have to know what to do if the gun jams and you also have to be a decent enough shot to hit a moving target while being terrified and in fear of your life. Despite what movies portray, defending yourself with a handgun can be hard and requires practice.

When someone doesn't have a strong familiarity with guns, a shotgun can be a better choice than a handgun. Shotguns are less likely to jam, and the cocking sound of a shotgun is typically an immediate deterrent to someone who means you ill. It is true that shotguns pack a kick, but if you keep it pressed firmly against your shoulder, your body will be able to absorb most of the kick, making it less powerful. Another positive about shotguns for people not familiar with guns is that buckshot scatters on impact so you do not have to be as good a shot as you do with a handgun. If you miss your target but hit a nearby lamp or table, it is likely the person attacking you will still be struck by buckshot.

How to Fortify Your Apartment

Now that you have your supplies out, the first thing you need to do is fortify your doors and windows. No matter what floor you live on, windows are an entry point to your apartment. Place bubble wrap over your windows to distort the view from the outside into your apartment. It is important to obscure the view of your apartment because looters will be looking for signs of life, and they will assume that if someone is living in the apartment, that person has provisions. Next, nail panels of chain link fence to your windows so looters can't enter if your windows get broken. It is also a good idea to fence in your patio or balcony as well. Finally, hang the thermal curtains. At night, always keep the curtains completely closed so no one can see inside. Thermal curtains will also keep any light you have on in the apartment invisible to the outside.

The best type of door for your security is a metal fire door but most buildings won't allow you to install one as a front door. During a dangerous situation, the second best option is to reinforce the door you have. In reality, most people trying to enter your apartment by force do so by breaking the doorjamb (not the door). Typically, doorjambs are weak and held together with a few small screws. If you know how, reinforce the doorjamb, hinges, and strike plate with long wood screws.

If you are not sure how to do this, there are many videos and articles online explaining how to best approach the subject. Reinforcing these areas is actually pretty simple but takes time: To reinforce the jamb, just remove the doorstop and replace all the screws with wood screws that will drill into the stud, then pop the doorstop back on. Do the same thing with the screws in the hinges and strike plate, making sure all the new screws drill into the stud. Disaster situation aside, it is actually a very good idea to reinforce these areas anyway since kicking in the doorjamb is usually how burglars get into homes.

Once you've reinforced your doorjamb, place some 2x4s horizontally across your door. Place them several feet apart, one above the doorknob and one below it. Use a drill to secure the boards with heavy screws. If at all possible, make sure some of the screws drill into the studs around your door. Don't place wood vertically or diagonally across the door, as this won't really do anything except waste wood. Once you've put up the 2x4s, fill any cracks or spaces around the door with cloth so no light shows through the door. One

of your best lines of defense during a survival situation like this is to make it seem like no one is in the apartment; this means covering up signs of life like light and sound. Looters are less likely to enter your apartment if they think it is empty because they will assume there are no supplies inside.

For additional security, hang a door alarm on the doorknob and place motion detectors in your apartment's high traffic areas. These alarms will not deter a looter but they will give you warning so you have enough time to prepare to defend yourself or escape.

Following these steps and having a decent supply of food and water on hand will help you survive any dangerous emergency situation.

Essential Techniques for Survival

There are certain techniques that will prove useful in any survival situation. Whether in an urban area, a rural area, or a wilderness area, there is some knowledge that is invaluable to possess. Any good prepper will prepare themselves with this knowledge in order to be a more viable survivor. Above all, the most important item that a prepper has is right on top of their shoulders: their brain. Don't panic, stay calm. One of the key aspects of prepping is to have a plan and knowledge in place to prevent panic during a survival situation. It will pay dividends for any urban prepper to not only gain the knowledge of these survival techniques, but to actually attempt them at some point. Knowledge can only go so far without real experience.

Fire starting – Fire is the single most important skill a person can have. In urban populations, many people have never even set a fire by themselves. Electricity and amenities like clean running water and air conditioning have prevented the population from needing to know techniques such as building and maintaining a fire. Typically, people will assume that there is no reason to have a fire in an urban area. This is not the case. Some areas are either cold year round or get cold during certain seasons. Either way, if a survivor must remain in the environment for one reason or another, it is very important to know how to stay warm. Fires can, aside from simply heating an area, be used to purify water, cook food, or as a signal.

Where to build: Building fires in urban areas can be a problem for a number of reasons. Building inside can potentially result in buildings catching fire and starting an even bigger problem. Building outside can attract people who could, potentially, be dangerous. The primary reason for not wanting to attract people is this: by the time a fire is needed in an urban environment, it is safe to assume that rescue efforts have already either failed or are taking too long. Fires should either be lit in safe buildings (warehouses, concrete or brick lined buildings, etc) away from flammable materials, in small back alleys, or in metal barrels when they can be found. Do not light a fire around flammable materials such as wooden buildings or vehicles (oil and gas could ignite).

How to build: Fires should be built using smaller and more flammable materials on the bottom and stacking larger materials on top. Lint from dryers, paper material, and some clothing can make great tinder to initially get a fire lit. These items should go on the very bottom. Wooden furniture and other larger items can be added on top of the tinder in an orderly way in order to enlarge the fire. It is very important to note two things: air flow is needed for fire and some materials will burn and create toxic smoke. Both of these things coincide to make one important thing: Have as much air flow and ventilation as possible around the fire. Smoke inhalation, toxic smoke, and heat can all become problems in closed environment. The construction of the fire should be done in a way to allow air flow to the larger materials and to allow smoke to exit the general area.

How to light: There are a slew of ways to light a fire. In urban areas, the number of ways gets even larger due to the presence of tools and flammable materials. Lighters and matches are, of course, the easiest ways to accomplish this. If flint and steel was brought, they can be used as well. Some of the more esoteric methods of lighting fires that are used in wilderness areas such as rubbing sticks or creating bows will not be necessary or even possible in most urban areas. Lighting a fire is simple: just light the tinder on the bottom and blow a bit on it if necessary to create extra heat and air flow. The fire, if built properly, should grow to the desired size. If using a flint and steel to create a spark, it may be necessary to add some flammable liquid to the tinder such as a small amount of gasoline or high proof alcohol.

How to maintain: Maintenance of a fire is easy. This is particularly true in urban environments. Simply add fuel to the fire and keep the coals stoked in order to maintain air flow. The only issue with fire maintenance is making sure that none of the surrounding environment catches on fire. This is especially true in areas that may be carpeted or have other flammable materials (such as wood floors or low ceilings).

Water purification – The need for water has already been established. But the question is: what does a person do when their clean water has run out? How can a person replenish their water supplies in an urban environment that is probably full of water, most of which is very likely contaminated and unsafe to drink? The answer is: purify that unclean water and make it drinkable.

Purification tablets – These can be used easily to purify water. The package should have the exact instructions for use. The steps vary between types of tablets.

Boiling – This can be done either through the use of fire or through the use of some sort of electric heater if possible. Simply put the contaminated water into a pot capable of being heated and heat the water until it boils. Boil for five or so minutes and then allow to cool. The water should be safe to drink. This method will destroy bacteria and pathogens that may be within the water.

Collection – During times of rain, water can be collected in buckets and cups. Assuming there has not been a radioactive event, this water should be safe to drink immediately, but there is always an added safety measure that can be added by boiling the rainwater before use. Urban environments often provide hundreds of vessels in which water can be collected. Much more than would ever be found in the wilderness. This is not, however, to say that stagnant pools of water found around the city will be clean. Only trust water that has been personally collected.

Principles of good shelter – Shelter can be as simple as something to keep rain off of the survivor. Shelter is one of the great benefits of being in an urban area. Almost any building can act as a shelter. They can protect from the elements as well as providing a bit of safety from marauders or predators. When choosing a shelter make sure the structure is stable and safe from flooding. Make sure the area chosen is not already inhabited.

How to handle weapons – Practice at a shooting range can solve this problem. All of the weapons in the world will be of no use to a person who does not know how to properly use them. This would include weapon maintenance, cleaning, and storage. Good gun maintenance can prevent misfires, can help maintain aim, and can prevent other problems associated with dirty or damaged firearms.

How to signal for help – Urban environments provide an array of possible options for signaling help. Sound tends to carry and echo in urban areas because of the high density of buildings. Small radios can be used to receive or transmit signals from other survivors or from rescuers.

Flares are another possible option if they are available.

Smoke signals will probably not be much use in an urban setting. The reasoning is simple: anything burning will probably be making black smoke making it very difficult to discern smoke signals from actual fires. In addition, unpredictable wind directions and obstructed view from buildings makes smoke signals virtually useless in urban environments.

Signals can be left on walls of buildings or on the ground with chalk, paint, or permanent marker. These signals can either be left to lead rescuers to the location of survivors, to designate safe areas and safe directions for others to go in. Signals can be as simple as SOS, HELP, X, or arrows. There are, in some cases, established protocols for the types of signals to leave. One of the problems is: even if a prepper knows these signals, the average person won't. The best signals to leave are simple signals that indicate something and are easily interpreted.

Sunlight – Sunlight can be reflected off of CDs or mirrors or any other type of reflective surface. Sunlight can make an effective signal even over relatively long distances. The density of buildings within urban areas may make this form of signaling less effective than it would be otherwise. This is especially true when the amount of metal and glass objects in urban areas is considered.

First aid – Of the priorities in a first aid situation, they go in a specific order: restore and maintain breathing/heartbeat, stop bleeding, protect wounds and burns, immobilize fractures, treat shock. It is extremely important that, before approaching an accident victim, you check for danger to yourself and insulate yourself from it. Electrical cables, wreckage, unstable structures, gas pipes, or falling debris.

One of the first things to do when administering first aid is to remove the victim from danger. The rule is to move from danger first if possible and then to administer first aid.

If breathing but unconscious, turn the victim on their side so that any blood or vomit does not choke them should they spit up.

If alone, the Heimlich maneuver can be self-administered by pulling or pushing against some sort of blunt object like a tree stump, a chair, or something similar.

Arterial bleeding is the most dangerous kind of bleeding. If a tourniquet cannot be applied and nothing is available to stem the bleeding, the bleeding can be slowed by applying pressure to the appropriate pressure point. It would pay dividends to any prepper to memorize the major pressure points of the body in case of emergency.

Getting Rescued

Getting rescued can be a situation unto itself. As with all other survival situations, getting rescued should be the number one priority after survival itself. This can occur in one of two ways: either the prepper must remain in his or her home until help comes and things return to normal or that is not possible and the prepper must leave the home along with his go bag and anything he or she might need and go find rescue. Most of the preparation for staying in the home should already be done. Food and water should be accounted for. Home defense and route planning should already be done. With all of these things taken care of, the only remaining scenario that needs to be accounted for is finding help.

With route in hand and the go-bag prepared, all one needs to do to begin finding help is to simply leave the home and go to where help might be found. The hand-crank radio should be used in order to listen for signals from rescue crews. Look for signals when on the road. Avoid risk and be safe, but look for written signals in chalk or paint that may lead to an enclave of survivors or help. Be amicable with rescuers if they are found. Avoid carrying weapons in the open if searching for help.

Final Thoughts

Prepping is not difficult. Prepping in an urban environment is not difficult. Urban prepping simply requires a different set of skills, knowledge, and items in order to accomplish its goals. One should not be afraid of the unknowns that come along with a disaster. The primary goal is to be as prepared as possible for the slew of contingencies that may come along with survival situations. Food, water, and shelter are the most important things to have during a survival situation. A good route and a little preplanning can ensure that all of the items necessary for survival are already in place before a situation occurs.

The higher population and the density of buildings in urban areas brings with it a slew of hazards and situations that will not be encountered in rural or wilderness areas. Disease and insects are able to thrive in urban areas. Insects, in particular, can form dense populations in the crevices that urban areas provide. Particularly with the presence of human waste and the plentiful sources of water that are available in them. It is important to know that knowledge and experience go hand in hand. In any survival situation, it is better to err on the side of caution and not to take risks unless absolutely necessary. This is particularly important in urban environments where there is increased risk due to population and building density.

As with any survival situation, staying put is the first best option. If a person must leave due to a mandatory evacuation effort or because

the home is compromised, a route should be preplanned for leaving the urban area. Once out of the home territory, all efforts should be made to survive and to be rescued. This may mean having to find the way to a safe area on foot or finding some means to signal a rescue effort. Good route planning and a map will help greatly with the effort to find rescue.

Proper preparation for urban survival can ensure a safe journey through a disaster. Being prepared can help both the prepper and his or her family remain alive during a moderate to long-term survival situation. Urban survival provides unique challenges that are not present in rural areas. Wilderness challenges are replaced with urban jungle that must be overcome by those choosing to live in those environments. Urban prepping is a subject that is both simple and complex at the same time. Be safe, don't take unnecessary risks, stay calm, and remember the basics. Knowing these rules and following them will be the difference between your family surviving and prospering or not.

Good luck!

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