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Dedicated to The Wolf Pack - Join us at [The Survivalist Blog dot net](http://TheSurvivalistBlog.net)

Table of Contents

- Day 1: Check your skills (page 5)
- Day 2: Start your preparedness binder (page 8)
- Day 3: Find Storage space and build a rotating canned food shelf (page 11)
- Day 4: Make a list of what and how much your family eats in a week (page 13)
- Day 5: Day 5: Build a solar water heater or cooker (page 17)
- Day 6: Let's go shopping for your 72 hour kit (page 20)
- Day 7: Schedule a CPR and First-Aid class for you and your family (page 22)
- Day 8: Optimize Your Time for Prepping (page 23)
- Day 9: Let's go shopping for your years food supply (page 25)
- Day 10: Get a check-up and build your medical kit (page 29)
- Day 11: Get your spouse On-Board for Your Preparedness Journey (page 32)
- Day 12: Sprout some seeds (page 34)
- Day 13: Let's take a trip to the hardware store (page 36)
- Day 14: Put together a bug out bag (page 38)
- Day 15: Let's go shopping (page 43)
- Day 16: Build a box trap and chicken wire fish trap (page 45)
- Day 17: Get a dental check-up and put together a dental first-aid kit (page 51)
- Day 18: Make a water filter and learn water storage and purification (page 52)
- Day 19: Don't Make These 10 Prepping Mistakes (page 57)
- Day 20: Take a firearms safety and or hunter education seminar (page 59)
- Day 21: Let's make a small game snare (page 61)
- Day 22: Prevent and Manage Stress (page 64)
- Day 23: Plan your garden (page 67)
- Day 24: A trip to the gun shop (page 68)
- Day 25: Put together a car survival kit (page 72)
- Day 26: Brainstorm ideas and look for gaps in your preps (page 74)
- Day 27: Build a Deadfall (page 77)
- Day 28: Put Together Your EDC kit (page 79)
- Day 29: Learn to cook in a thermos bottle (page 83)
- Day 30: Find Like-Minded Survivalist Friends (page 84)
- Day 31: Learn to tie a knot (page 87)
- 14 Lessons I've learned About Survival (page 96)
- Final Thoughts: Why Aren't You Meeting Your Survival Goals (page 99)

Introduction:

Welcome. Who among us doesn't want to survive? The desire to survive is born into us but unfortunately many in our increasingly, interdependent society prefer to rely on others for their survival, whether it be government, family or their neighbors for their wellbeing after a disaster.

Unfortunately, help may not be available when needed as is often the case and you will have to rely on yourself. Will you be ready? Would you know what to do and how to do it? Have you made plans and laid back the necessary survival food and gear to see you through a disaster?

If not 31 Days to Survival will help you plan and prepare to survive both short and long term disasters in an easy to follow step by step program. You just have to make up your mind and get started. Anyone can do it, it's not difficult.

Each day in the project contains:

1. A Task – something to DO that day.
2. Teaching – each day you'll be given instruction on both the WHY and HOW of the task for that day.

This two pronged approach is designed so that you come away from the assignment having not only learned how to do it, but you'll have actually DONE something with the knowledge, thus increasing your skills and ability to survive.

When you start this program don't let the "31 days" discourage you, you can take as much time as is necessary to complete each assignment and some assignments will indeed take longer than one day to complete for many readers.

Feel free to take extra time and complete each day's assignment at your own pace. No matter if that time amounts to an extra day, week or even an extra month. The most important thing is that you stay busy with each assignment and before you know it you will meet your goal of being prepared and self-reliant. Trust me it is a great feeling...

The great thing about 31 Days to Survival is that you can do it at your own pace and in your own way. This type of flexibility makes 31 Days to Survival a helpful and complete resource that is unique in its field.

By the end of the 31 Days you'll have:

- Built a rotating canned food shelf and filled you pantry with survival food
- Accumulated firearms for both foraging and defense

- Built both a first-aid and dental kit
- Made a homemade water filter
- Put together a functional 72 hour and Every Day Carry kit
- Learned firearms safety and first-aid techniques
- Made and used traps for small game and fish
- Planned and accumulated tools for your survival garden
- Put together a survival tool kit
- Made friends
- Learned to tie a knot
- And more...



Let's get started...

Day 1: Check your skills

Any project that undertakes to build a set of survival skills is best started with an assessment. Be honest with yourself. If you don't take an honest appraisal of where you are at, you have no reliable means of getting to where you want to be.

Do an inventory. In what are you very skilled? In what areas are you most lacking? Are you well versed in fire arms but lack any means of purifying water? Do you have a significant amount of food storage but now way to protect that food storage, should the need arise? Do you have an excellent first aid kit, but lack the knowledge to use it?

In this section, take stock of your skills. No business that fails to regularly take inventory can succeed. No prepper who fails to take inventory can succeed either. We need a starting point. And this lesson takes inventory of essential survival skills.

As you read through the following, check off those skills you have already mastered. Focus on those skills on which you need to improve.

1. Food Processing – many survival planners overlook food processing in favor of more exciting elements of preparedness. This is a mistake, I think cooking and preparing basic storage foods cooking food storage is one of the most important elements of preparedness.

2. Bulk Food Storage – without sufficient quantities of storage foods our demise is practically guaranteed after a major catastrophe. Storing basic grains and beans isn't difficult and any dunce can do it properly in a couple of hours with proper instruction.

3. Medical Training – every survivalist should have sufficient medical training. A good start is taking a basic CPR and first aid class, check with your local Red Cross for scheduling. If time and finances allow taking EMT classes would also be a good idea. Don't overlook herbal medicine, which maybe all we have to work with on an individual level.

4. Gardening – because of space and finances most of us cannot put back enough food to last the rest of our lives. We'll need to replace our storage foods with fresh supplies. Gardening is an excellent way to do this, and is it easy to learn with instruction and practice. It is amazing at the amount of food that can be grown in a small space under proper conditions.

5. Preserving – Most foods spoil rather quickly resulting in loss of quality, edibility and nutritive value – food preservation is an important survival skill. We need to learn to Can, Dry, Freeze, Salt, Smoke, Pickle, Bury, Vacuum Pack, Sugar, Jelly, Pot, etc.

6. Hunting – contrary to popular belief all wild game will not disappear after a collapse. Most people would rather stand in a food line waiting for a handout than scour the backwoods

looking for game and let's not forget that the extent of most peoples hunting skills doesn't go beyond the latest hunting video game.

7. Trapping – trapping is more practical under survival conditions than hunting. By setting a trap you can be other places and do other things while the trap does the hunting for you. Learn to set snares, build deadfalls, box traps, fish traps, and the use steel traps. Becoming a proficient trapper is not difficult – all you need to do is get off the couch and learn by doing.

8. Firearms Repair – basic firearms repair (replacement of broken parts) isn't difficult if you have the parts needed when something breaks. There's no need in learning to repair every make and model of firearm in existence. You do need to have an in-depth understanding of your chosen weapons, how they work and repair methods for each.

9. Self-Defense Skills – the most effective self-defense techniques are also the easiest to master. Striking vulnerable points, biting and eye gouging are simple and effective techniques that can be quickly learned and when applied with aggression can bring down the most determined attacker.

10. Firearms Skills – if you're new to firearms a basic safety course is necessary before learning defensive skills. Concealed carry permit classes are held in most areas as are hunter education programs – I suggest you participate in both. The National Rifle Association offers a number of classes that are most helpful.

11. Water Purification – another simple skill often overlooked is water acquisition and purification.

12. Using Tools – you should have a survival toolbox of basic tools, such as; hammers, saws, screwdrivers, winches, vice grips, wire cutters, files, etc. And the skills needed to put those tools to use.

13. Raising Livestock – raising animals for food goes hand-in-hand with gardening, hunting and trapping to provide a continuous source of nourishment during hard times. I highly recommend "Barnyard in your Backyard" this book covers everything you need to know.

14. Home Power – while it may be possible to survive with no electrical power, having some source of current will make life easier. My solar set up cost me under \$600 batteries included and building my homemade generator was under \$100.

15. Investing – after getting your survival necessities in order (food, water, meds, shelter, defense) it's time to start thinking about investing in precious metals, namely gold and silver. Just be sure not to make the mistake of going into debt while investing in these metals.

Today, I want you to check your skills (again be honest) against the list above – if there are areas where you are lacking then get to work learning and filling in the gaps in your survival skills.

Day 2: Start your preparedness binder



What's the most important part of your preps? Water, food, shelter, medical, defense or other?

And the correct answer is.... none of the above.

Yes, you need those essential life supporting items but if you asked me what the most important part of survival prepping is, I'd have to say information.

Some will disagree with me on this, but that's okay, we all have our opinions and that's great. Just don't let your beliefs nullify your good judgment lessening your chance of survival.

Information and individual survival skills are the key to survival and I cannot stress the importance of a well-rounded and organized survival library. Having a good survival library is in my opinion just as important as having a stocked pantry, as they say; knowledge is power and when it comes to survival you can't have too much information.

But books are expensive and building a survival library covering all the needed survival skills can run into hundreds or even thousands of dollars, dollars that most of us don't have. If you have an extra \$1,000 to purchase books and other related research materials raise your hand.

So how are you supposed to build a survival library without having to take out an extra mortgage on our home, selling our bodily fluids or pimping ourselves out on the nearest street corner. We start a survival binder (or binders), that's how... Let's get started...

What is a survival binder?

A survival binder is simply a binder of collected information gathered from various sources both on and off-line. You can use any type of binder you want, but I prefer the cheapest that I can find. I get mine at the local Wal-Mart here is [an example](#) of the type I use.

Most department stores carry 20 lb. 8.5 x 11 sized 3-Hole punched paper for use in this type of binder if yours doesn't have this type of paper in stock a [3 Hole Paper Punch](#) works well and is what I use.

To make it easier to keep up with what subject is covered in each survival binder you'll want to label it with the title or subject covered. If not as your library grows you'll have to spend a lot of time flipping through each binder trying to find the one you want with the information you need when you need it.

I write the Name / Subject on a one inch wide by eight inch long strip of paper that I cut from a standard sheet and tape this to the spine with [clear two-inch packaging tape](#) covering the paper.

One of the great things about the survival binder is that, unlike many books out there covering a broad range subjects that are of no interest or use to you with only one or two subjects about what you need, you can build your survival binder to cover only those subjects and survival skills that you need relative to your area saving you time, space and money.

What you put in your personal survival binder will depend on several factors, including but not limited to your location, survival plans and skill level. For example, if your retreat is in an area where raising a garden isn't possible, then filling your binder with information on gardening wouldn't make a lot of sense.

Or say, you live on the [Cumberland Plateau of TN](#) then you probably would not have a binder devoted to [desert survival skills](#). You get the idea. Your survival binder should be put together with your individual needs and location in mind. Don't waste time or resources with anything else.

Now the next question is where to find reliable, printable information for free (I love that word... FREE), well let's see, this blog obviously (check out the print friendly button at the bottom of each post) but where else...

A good place to start when looking for gardening, raising livestock and other homesteading information is cooperative extension publications for your state and U.S. department of agriculture publications. Here is the one for my state: [University of Tennessee Extension](#).

[FEMA](#) and the [American Red Cross](#) have a wealth of free information on emergency preparedness and survival ready to download and print on their respective sites. A good one from FEMA and a great place to start is [FEMA Are You Ready?](#) And best of all its free.

Your states Department Of Natural Resources web page is a great place to find information on topics such as trapping, butchering game, hunting, plants, trees, etc..

If you're looking for military tactics there are many sites (here is a [good one](#)) where you can download and print out hundreds of these types of manuals which detail everything from outdoor survival and weapons training to demolitions.

A useful and quick way to find printable information on many subjects is to do a Google search for the topic with PDF (Portable Document Format) appended to the search. For example, "raising tomatoes PDF" PDF files are great because they are easy to print and put into book form in your binder.

Today's assignment:

Take a close look at your area, survival plans and skills and write down those areas where you need more information and start a survival binder with the correct information to fill in the gaps. Well, what are you waiting on...?

Day 3: Find Storage space and build a rotating canned food shelf



This shelf of canned foods is clutter and difficult to rotate properly

If you live in an apartment, trailer or other small space you may be wondering where in the heck you're going to put all of the food and other survival gear that will be recommended in the following days assignments.

Well to be honest you may not have enough storage space for everything but you probably have more available space than you think. Here are a few ideas to think about...

1. Under your bed (flat roll-out bins for under-the-bed storage works great also consider putting risers under your bed so you can fit more things underneath)

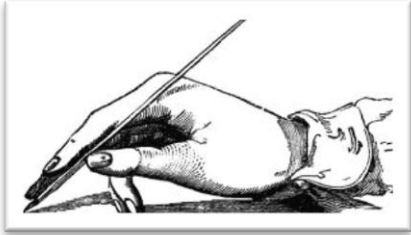
- 2.** In the closet (be sure to add a lock to the door to keep anyone from looking in)
- 3.** Under a staircase
- 4.** Under / inside a coffee table (with some types the contents can be completely hidden from view)
- 5.** Add shelves in the laundry room (heat and moisture could be a problem here)
- 6.** In the attic (heat may be a problem)
- 7.** Under the floor (if you have a large enough crawl space you may be able to partition off a large storage area here – you could even build a secret door through the floor into the storage area)
- 8.** Shelving between studs (add cabinets or shallow shelves between the studs along inside walls)
- 9.** Floor-to-ceiling storage (when building shelves or looking for storage space do so from floor to ceiling)
- 10.** Buy furniture with built-in storage (such as an ottoman with a storage space inside)
- 11.** And the most important of all de-clutter your home and storage area

For storage of canned goods consider buying or building a rotating storage shelf system – this type of shelving unit does the work of turning and rotating the cans for you automatically.

Shelfreliance.com sells [readymade units](#) (you'll have to put these together but this isn't difficult) or you can build your own to fit your needs, click on [this link for plans](#).

Today's assignment is to find and prepare space in your home / retreat to store your survival food and gear, because in the coming days you'll be going shopping and you need a place for those preps.

Day 4: Make a list of what and how much your family eats in a week



Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday:

Sunday:

Notes:

Print this worksheet and write down everything you and your family eats for each day in the corresponding blocks. By doing this simple exercise you'll get a much better indication of what and how much food you'll need over a given time period that you could from any other list or storage calculator.

Food Storage Shelf-Life / Print this chart and post it in your food storage area

Listing specific foods and their shelf-life is nothing more than an educated guess; there are too many variables to consider such as age, altitude and condition of the food when it was bought and the storage conditions in your pantry.

Generally speaking, most foods will remain palatable past the listed expiration dates but may fail to retain some or most of their inherent nutritional value. If the food looks and smells normal past the listed "use by date" then it is probably is still safe to eat, but then maybe not.

In the end you'll have to use your own judgment – so remember the chart and listings below are only a suggestion of shelf-life and not a guarantee, to claim otherwise would be irresponsible at best.

Food Type	Estimated Shelf-Life
Whole Wheat	Indefinitely
White Rice	Indefinitely
Enriched White Flour	Dry and Unopened, Up to 5 years
Corn Meal	Dry and Unopened, Up To 5 years
Rolled Oats	Dry and Unopened, Up to 8 years
Pasta	2 years or more
Pinto Beans	Indefinitely
Lima Beans	1-5 years
Soybeans	1-5 years
Lentils	1-4 Years
Dry Soup Mix	1-2 years
Shortening	3 months
Vegetable Oil	6 months to 1 Year
Mayonnaise	2-3 months
Salad dressings, bottled	1 year
Peanut Butter	1-3 years
Honey	Indefinitely
White Sugar	Indefinitely
Brown Sugar	4-6 months
Molasses	2-3 years
Corn Syrup	3-5 Years
Jams and Jelly	1-3 years
Fruit drink mix powdered	1-2 years
Flavored Gelatin	6-12 Months
Non-Fat Dried Milk	2-5 years (Store in a cool place)
Evaporated Milk	6-12 months
Baking Powder	18 months to 2 Years
Baking Soda	2 years
Yeast	Pkg. exp. date
Iodized Salt	Indefinitely
Vinegar	2-3 Years
Most Spices	1-3 Years
Canned Foods	1-5 Years or more
Cake Mixes	6-9 months
Chili Powder	6-12 months
Sauce and Gravy Mixes	6 months
Vanilla extract	1 year
Cocoa mixes	8 months to 1 year
Coffee in Cans	2 years unopened
Coffee, Vacuum-Packed	8 Months to 1 year

Popcorn	1-2 years
Tea Bags	18 months
Tea, Instant	2 years
Legumes	1 year – ten years or more in properly stored
Crackers	3 months
Bouillon Products	1 year
Molasses	2 years
Pectin	1 year
Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplements	1-3 Years

Note: As a rule I toss out any canned foods that are swollen or rusted around the seams. See this FDA site "[Examination of Canned Foods](#)" for a wealth of information on determining the safety of canned foods.

Day 5: Build a solar water heater or cooker



Box #1 lined with Mylar blanket

sharp knife and scissors.

This solar water heater is nothing more than an insulated box covered with aluminum foil to reflect the sun's rays back to the containers inside. The design is idiot simple but you can improve the concept by building your batch container from other materials such as wood and constructing a framed glass and hinged door etc.

What you can do is limited only to your imagination, skills and time.

The concept is simple; heat from the sun is absorbed by the water and the box, the sun's rays and heat are reflected off the aluminum foil back to the bottles thus speeding up the heating process. Painting the bottles with a flat black paint also helps speed up the heating process.

The time it takes for the water to reach a desirable temperature of course depends on season, time of day and other factors. In July and August, I can have hot water in under an hour but on cooler or cloudy days it can take several hours for the water to become warm enough to shower with or do dishes. It's not an exact science.

You only need a few gallons of hot water a day to wash dishes and take a shower so this small solar water heater set-up works great for the individual or even a small group, especially in summer when the sun is at its hottest.

You could of course choose an elaborate solar water heating system (and expensive) but I prefer to keep things simple and cheap, using scrap materials if possible. All you need to build this heater are two cardboard boxes, aluminum foil, tape, Mylar blanket, and clear plastic sheeting.

Tools needed include a box-cutter or

I picked up the cardboard boxes for free at the local hardware store, both were the same size, but one will expand to accommodate the other with a little work. The box I have will hold five 2-liter plastic soda bottles but you can choose a larger or smaller box depending on your needs.

To start, line the inside of box number one with the Mylar blanket, (these can be found in the sporting goods department of most department stores and often referred to as an emergency

or space blanket) use tape to secure it to the inside the box.



The finished product - note front of box cut at an angle and bottles inside

Keep in mind that box number two will be placed inside this one so it is important to leave enough flexibility when securing the emergency blanket to allow for this.

Next, line the inside of box number two with aluminum foil to reflect the sun's rays back to the water containers inside.

Now fit box number

two inside of box number one.

This may take a little cutting and slight modification. I had to cut about one inch off the front the box to make it work, but this should not be much of a problem.

Okay, now you need to cover your box – I used clear plastic sheeting secured with tape around the edges, leaving about ten inches free at the end so I can add and remove my water containers when needed. I tuck this loose plastic underneath the boxes when in use.

Now all you have to do is place your water containers inside the box (I used 2-liter soda bottles), but other containers can be used. Place the solar water heater facing the sun and wait for the water to heat up.

Solar cooking

A solar cooking is basically the same as the solar water heater above; there are many different designs from simple to elaborate with [this site](#) having a wealth of free designs with all costing nothing or very little money to build.

Today's assignment is to choose from one of the designs, from either this page or the linked page and build a solar heater or cooker.

Day 6: Let's go shopping for your 72 hour kit

As with any "prepping shopping list" you'll need to tailor the suggestions listed below to meet your specific needs, skills, location and circumstances. No such shopping list can cover the needs of everyone in every situation, everywhere.

The items listed below make up what is commonly referred to as a 72 hour kit and is where you should start your preps. In the following days, we'll build and expand your stockpile to the point where you will be prepared for both short-term and disasters lasting six months or more.

Now let's head to your local shopping mall or department store.

Here is your shopping list:

- 1.** A three-day supply of water - one gallon of water per person, per day.
- 2.** A three-day supply of non-perishable food - foods ready to eat or requiring minimal water is preferred.
- 3.** Small portable, battery-powered AM/FM radio extra batteries.
- 4.** Flashlight and extra batteries (don't skimp here get a good quality light).
- 5.** First aid kit and manual.
- 6.** Personal hygiene items including toilet paper, feminine supplies, hand sanitizer and soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc.
- 7.** Matches and waterproof container.
- 8.** Battery powered lantern and batteries
- 9.** Whistle
- 10.** Extra clothing according to climate and season.
- 11.** Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils, Styrofoam plates and bowls and a manual can opener.
- 12.** Special needs items, such as prescription medications, eye glasses, contact lens, and hearing aid batteries, etc.
- 13.** Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.

- 14.** Sleeping bag or warm blanket (one per person) rating depending on location and climate.
- 15.** A multi-tool. A roll of duct tape, crowbar, hammer, staple gun, adjustable wrench and bungee cords and heavy duty work gloves are also nice to have.
- 16.** Small bottle of unscented liquid household bleach and an eyedropper for water purification.
- 17.** Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows or [sheltering in place](#).
- 18.** Large heavy duty plastic bags and a plastic bucket for waste and sanitation or other suitable solution.
- 19.** A small multi-fuel [backpackers stove](#) (Colman makes a quality product).
- 20.** Dust mask for each person in your group.
- 21.** 100' of rope (550lb Para cord or similar)

It's also a good idea to have photocopies of credit and identification cards, health insurance and other important documents in a water proof container and \$100 in emergency cash in small denominations and quarters for phone calls. Also don't forget photos of family members and pets for re-identification purposes if you get separated.

You'll also need to put together a list of emergency and personal contact phone numbers as well as a complete list of allergies to any drug (especially antibiotics) or food for each person. It's also a good idea to have an extra set of keys to your house and vehicle.

How to pack and store your 72 hour kit

Remember, the 72 hour kit will also serve as an evacuation kit so it all needs to be stored in easy to move containers. You want to be able to "grab and go" should you be forced to evacuate your home.

I prefer to "double pack" – first neatly pack everything in duffel bags or backpacks the store these in plastic totes making it easy to quickly load everything into your car while still having the option of splitting up the gear among your group if you're forced to evacuate on foot.

Today's assignment is to put together your 72 hour survival kit... This kit will provide what you need to survive 95% of disasters and is a great starting point to building your preps. Now get to it...

Day 7: Schedule a CPR and First-Aid class for you and your family



At the very minimum for medical training everyone in your group should take and pass a basic CPR / First-Aid class. Nursing / home health care and paramedic / EMT classes are well worth the time and effort and will take you well beyond the skills taught in the average first-aid class.

Get as much training in this area as possible – you can't know too much, and you can always learn something new. Start by contacting your local Red Cross and signing up for their next available class.

Your assignment for day 7 is to take a class and to start building your medical library – here is a short list of books

that I have and recommend...

1. [Where there is no doctor](#)
2. [Where there is no dentist](#)
3. [The American Red Cross First-Aid and Safety Handbook](#)
4. [The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy](#)
5. [Ships Medicine Chest](#)
6. [U.S. Army Special Forces Medical Handbook](#)
7. [Emergency War Surgery](#)
8. [Medicine for the Outdoors](#)

Your assignment for day 10 is to get a check-up and start building your medical library.

Day 8: Optimize your time for prepping



Even though time is a limited resource, we still have 24 hours in a day, which is plenty of time, but it is a matter of re-evaluating your priorities. No, I'm not suggesting you abandon spending time with your family or anything so drastic – but then isn't the ones you love the reason you're prepping in the first place.

Some survivors might still have a job and work 8-12 or more hours a day, then you sleep another 6-8 hours leaving you with only a few hours each day for the other parts of your life – like family and prepping. So let's find ways to maximize your time and the effectiveness of your preps.

Here are 8 tips to help you make the most of the time you have.

1. Stop reading and start doing

Reading is important, but only to a point. This may sound strange coming from a blog publisher, but to be honest you can waste a huge amount of time in front of the computer. For this reason I try to keep my posts short and to the point, so you can quickly read and absorb the post and move on.

2. Focus on the tasks that have the highest impact

Don't sweat the small stuff – instead focus your efforts on tasks that have the most impact on your goals. For the survivalist, the goal usually is to increase your storage foods, survival gear and to learn new skills. If what you're doing isn't meeting this end, stop doing it and re-evaluate your plan.

3. Don't get distracted

When learning new survival skills it's easy to become lost and overwhelmed, leading to distraction and little progress. I've found the best way to learn needed survival skills is to break survival down into smaller parts. For example, you might study survival food storage techniques one month, preparing that food the next and trapping the next. The key is to focus on one area at a time before moving to the next.

4. Throw away your television

You're not going to gain many survival insights watching American Idol or another rerun of that 70's show. It's amazing how much time we spend in front of a television, and for the most part it's time wasted and it's not going to bring you closer to your emergency preparedness goals.

5. Maximize your health

If you're healthy you'll have more energy to get things done. Eat healthy, exercise and get enough sleep. Getting into shape will improve your productivity and increase your chances of survival under any circumstance.

6. Killing two birds with one stone

You should spend time with your family, but if possible make that time serve double duty. For instance take your children camping and spend the time learning and teaching them survival skills. Spend the weekend with the spouse learning to prepare basic foods. Take a first aid course as a couple. Go shooting. The most important thing is to include your family as much as possible and make it fun, which will bring you closer.

Today's assignment is to brainstorm way you can maximize your time for prepping.

Day 9: Let's go shopping for your years food supply



Below you'll find four different one year survival food plans each for different budgets and needs. Today's assignment is to take a close look at each plan, choose the one that is best suited to you and your budget and procure those items for your pantry.

Please note that the items and qualities listed are only suggestions and is best tailored to your individual needs. For example, you may not care for split peas and opted to exclude them from the list, replacing with an equal amount of a food you prefer, let's say 10 more pounds of pinto beans.

I have a full time job one person one year food storage plan

Basics:

1. Wheat Berries 150 Pounds
2. Self- Rising Flour 25 pounds
3. Corn Meal 25 pounds
4. Rolled Oats 25 Pounds
5. Rice 50 Pounds
6. Pasta 25 Pounds

Fats and Oils:

1. Shortening 4 Pounds
2. Vegetable Oil 4 Gallon
3. Mayonnaise 2 Quarts
4. Salad Dressing 1 Quart
5. Peanut Butter 4 Pounds

Legumes:

1. Pinto Beans 50 Pounds
2. Lima Beans 5 Pounds
3. Soy Beans 10 Pounds
4. Split Peas 10 Pounds

5. Lentils 10 Pounds
6. Dry Soup Mix 5 Pounds

Sugars:

1. Honey 5 Pounds
2. White Sugar 40 Pounds
3. Brown Sugar 3 Pounds
4. Molasses 1 Pound
5. Corn Syrup 3 pounds
6. Jams and Jelly 5 Pounds
7. Fruit Drink Mix Powdered 6 Pounds
8. Flavored Gelatin 1 Pound

Milk:

1. Dry Milk 75 Pounds
2. Evaporated Milk 12 Pounds

Cooking Essentials:

1. Baking Powder 1 Pound
2. Baking Soda 1 Pound
3. Yeast 0.5 Pound
4. Iodized Salt 10 Pounds
5. Vinegar 0.5 Gallon

Spices:

1. Basil, Chili powder, Cinnamon, Garlic, Sage, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Thyme and Black Pepper. Choose spices based on your tastes and preferences.

Canned Foods:

1. 25 Pounds of Assorted Canned Fruits and Vegetables
2. 25 Pounds of Assorted Canned Meats

Vitamins:

1. Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplement Approximately 365 Count
2. Vitamin C 500 mg 365 Count

Water:

1. Water 14 Gallon (NOTE) if you live in a dry region you'll need to store considerably more
2. One Gallon Plain Unscented Bleach
3. Coffee and tea if you are a consumer

I have a part time job one person food storage plan

Food:

1. 300 Pounds feed wheat from your local farmers market
2. 100 Pounds of Pinto Beans
3. 100 Pounds of Rice
4. 100 Pounds of Dried and Canned Fruits and Vegetables
5. 50 Pounds of Dried Milk
6. 25 Pounds of Honey or Sugar
7. 5 Pounds of Salt
8. 4 Gallon Vegetable Oil
9. 2 Pounds of Baking Powder
10. 1 Pound of Yeast
11. Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplement Approximately 365 Count
12. Vitamin C 500 mg 365 count

Water:

1. Water 14 Gallon if you live in a dry region you'll need to store considerably more
2. One gallon plain unscented bleach
3. Coffee and tea if you are a consumer

I don't want to mess with whole wheat and have very little money one person one year food storage plan

Food:

1. 25 Pounds of Sugar
2. 50 Pounds of Flour
3. Corn Meal 25 pounds
4. 50 Pounds of Pinto Beans
5. 50 Pounds of Rice
6. 25 Pounds of Split Peas
7. Rolled Oats 25 Pounds

8. 4 Gallon Vegetable Oil
9. 50 Pounds of Dried Milk
10. 5 Pounds of Salt
11. 2 Pounds of Baking Powder
12. Yeast 0.5 Pound
13. 100 Pounds of Dried and Canned Fruits and Vegetables
14. Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplement Approximately 365 Count
15. Vitamin C 500 mg 365 Count

Water:

1. Water 14 Gallon if you live in a dry region you'll need to store considerably more
2. One gallon plain unscented bleach
3. Coffee and tea if you are a consumer

I don't want to do anything for myself and have more money than I need one person one year food storage plan

1. See [this page](#).

Recommended Books

1. [Emergency Food Storage & Survival Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Keep Your Family Safe in a Crisis](#)
2. [Cookin' with Home Storage](#)

Day 10: Get a check-up and build your medical kit



A well stock medical kit is essential to survival

This is one area I think many of us overlook; you need to get regular medical check-ups, do at least moderate exercise such as walking 30 minutes each day, eat a healthy diet, maintain your weight and learn to relax.

Being unhealthy when the disaster strikes up will only make it more difficult to survive, and being healthy now can only make your life better.

Think about it... Get on a program and stick to it. After a few weeks it will become part of your normal routine and you'll do it without thinking anything else about it.

But, before you start you need to find out where you currently stand health wise. So today's assignment in our 31 days to survival program is to make an appointment with doctor for a complete check-up including blood work.

I know, I don't like going to the doctors or giving blood either but it will tell you a lot about your current health and will give you a baseline for improvement. Look at it as a challenge to bring your health, weight and vital numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol, etc.) down to the recommended readings.

You can do it, you just have to make up your mind and get it done.

After you get back from the Doc with a clean bill of health it's time to start building your survival medical kit. Below, you'll find my suggestions on what should be included in such a kit, but keep in mind that these are only suggestions and the final contents will depend on your individual skills and needs.

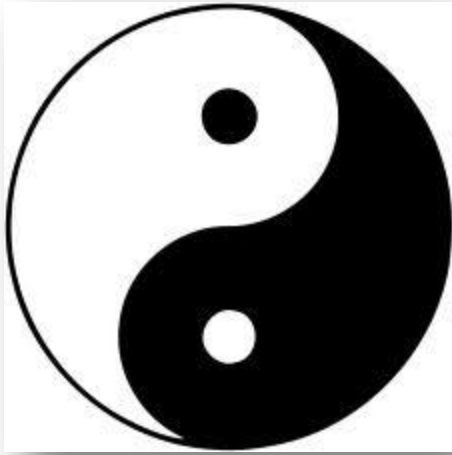
Recommended Survival Medical Kit Contents

Today's assignment buy the best basic first-aid kit from your local pharmacy or order online then expand the contents to include the following if your finances and medical knowledge warrants the expense...

1. Thermometer
2. CPR shield
3. SAM splint
4. Blood pressure monitor
5. Adjustable crutches
6. Bed liners or plastic sheeting
7. Snake bite kit (some sources say a spike bite kit is useless, I disagree)
8. Antibacterial soap
9. Epsom salts
10. Anti-diarrhea medication
11. Laxatives
12. Oral and injectable antibiotics / sulfas
13. Injectable epinephrine
14. Injectable antihistamine
15. Basic surgical kit
16. Stethoscope
17. Sterile needles and syringes
18. Sterile IV kit
19. IV electrolytes
20. Pain medications
21. Lots of rubbing alcohol, peroxide, iodine, betadine
22. Extra bandages and dressings (Large)
23. Quick clot
24. Several boxes of latex gloves
25. Glucose monitor and test strips (even if you're not diabetic)
26. Extra pairs of glasses (if applicable)
27. Hearing aids and batteries (if applicable)

It is also recommended that folks with glasses get their eyes examined at least every three years. Perhaps older folks and those with hearing problems should get their hearing checked and should pack extra hearing-aid batteries as suggested above.

Day 11: Get your spouse On-Board for Your Preparedness Journey



I think I'm lucky for the fact that I live by myself, with the girlfriend living in town. Marriage isn't a bad thing; in fact marriage can be wonderful if you have a compatible partner. Unfortunately, for many, the spouse isn't supportive – or even hostile toward the concept of emergency preparedness.

My girlfriend doesn't know the extent of my preparations; she thinks I'm just "into" living cheaply and preparing for bad weather and such. Over the last several months, I've slowly introduced her to more "extreme" disaster concepts such as economic collapse and peak oil.

She appears to be opening to the possibility that the world isn't unchanging and the need to prepare being paramount to our survival as a species.

If you're constantly fighting through the resistance of your spouse, you will not be able to sustain the required effort for the long haul. The way your spouse views your emergency preparedness pursuits will be based on the way they are affected and where they feel they fit into your priorities.

Here are some tips that should help keep your spouse happy and supportive of your efforts:

5 Tips to Building Spousal Support for Your Preparedness Efforts

1. Set Priorities

Trust me; I know how easy it is to become totally obsessed with prepping, planning, reading and learning. This is necessary if we want to have a chance at surviving the coming mayhem, just learn to set priorities. You may see collapse around every corner, that's fine after all if you're not paranoid you're not paying attention.

Just don't constantly communicate the fact to your spouse.

I'm not saying not to mention potential threats or your preps, just don't talk about it all the time. If you do they will quickly grow tired of your constant ramblings and possibly of you.

2. Communicate Your Reasons for Prepping

This may sound contradictory to point one, but it is necessary if you want to get your spouse on board. You just have to do it in the right way. Take it slow and try not to shock the senses.

For instance say you're watching the news when the broadcaster announces the latest update for whatever natural disaster – now would be a good time to ask your partner something like; what if something like that happened here, what would we do?

3. Seek Their Input

Try to get them involved in some way. Ask what they think and for suggestions. Maybe you could talk them into putting together their own bug out bag – you know in case a natural disaster happened in the area.

4. Watch Movies

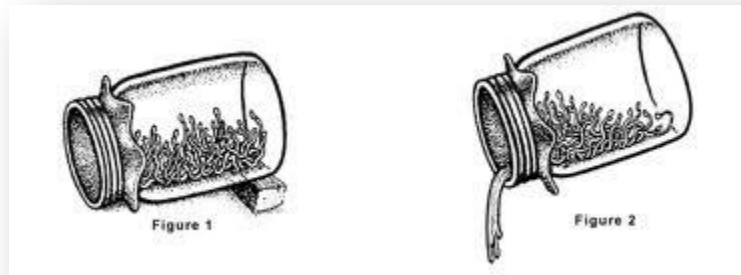
As far as I'm concerned most movies are a waste of time, but the latest disaster flick, could be a good way to help your partner visualize possible events and start them thinking about the need to prepare.

Again, don't shock the senses – a storyline about a massive earthquake, tsunami or tornado for instance, would have more influence than a zombie apocalypse. Try to keep it real and again suggest the need to prepare for a similar event.

5. Read Books

This can be a great way of breaking down the wall of resistance, especially if your significant other likes to read. Buy them a book, for example, [One Second After](#) by William R. Forstchen, have it gift wrapped and present it as a present on a holiday or special occasion.

Day 12: Sprout some seeds



Fresh sprouts are an amazing food that are full of vitamins and minerals that aren't readily available in the un-sprouted seed.

Sprouting allows you to have fresh greens even in winter and will expand the bulk of your food

storage many times without any extra expense to you.

To start sprouting you'll need at least one quart jar (a Mason or mayonnaise jar will work fine) and a six inch by six inch square piece of nylon window screen, cheese cloth or other porous material you both are easy to cut to the size you need with scissors or a sharp knife.

Next you put approximately three to four ounces of either wheat, alfalfa, chick peas, lentils, mung beans, pumpkin seeds, rye, sunflower seeds or other sprouting seed, in each jar and cover the mouth with the nylon window screen. You can use a large rubber band or string to hold the screen in place.

Next fill each jar with water approximately two inches top and let set overnight. When you get up the next morning, pour out the soak water and let the jar and seeds drain in the sink for an hour or two to drain.

Now flood the jars about every four hours and drain. At this point you want to keep the seeds moist but not covered with water.

In a few days the seeds will begin to sprout, when the spouts reach 1-2 inches in length (for most seeds) they are ready to eat. Sprouts can be eaten raw, cooked or dried and ground into flour and baked into bread.

To keep a steady supply of fresh sprouts simply start each jar 24 – 48 hours after the last as each jar finishes sprouting and is eaten and fresh seed and repeat. This is a great routine that will keep you in fresh greens year round.

And that is all there is to it.

If you want to learn more about sprouting including in-depth but simple recipes using sprouts recommend you order a copy of "[The Sprouting Book](#)" by Ann Wigmore. This book is an excellent resource and a must have for any serious "seed sprouter".

Today's assignment is to start sprouting seed – this can be one batch or several. Well get to it...

Day 13: Let's take a trip to the hardware store



You need tools for building and repairing and you could easily spend several hundred dollars building a tool kit and it would be worth it, but most of us simply don't have that kind of money. Below you'll find two survival tool kits. One a basic kit with the other being a bare bones kit.

Today's assignment is to put together one of these kits. If **possible put together the basic kit, if not then the bare bones kit** will have to suffice. (Note gardening tools will be covered on day 23.)

The Basic Survival Tool and Repair Kit

1. Chain saw, extra chains, two-cycle, spare parts, and safety gear, chain oil, chain files
2. Bow saw
3. Cross cut saw
4. Hack-saw and extra pack of cutting blades
5. Shovel
6. Double bit axe
7. Claw hammer
8. Rubber mallet
9. Screwdriver set
10. Vice grips
11. 6-inch adjustable wrench
12. 18-inch adjustable wrench
13. Needle-nose Pliers
14. Round-nose Pliers
15. Quality socket and ratchet set
16. Wire cutters
17. Bolt cutters
18. Spirit level
19. Tape measure
20. Wheelbarrow
21. Wire strippers
22. 8 pound wood slitting maul
23. Two steel wood splitting wedges
24. Jack hammer for starting wedges

25. Sledgehammer
26. Electrical tape five rolls
27. Duct tape five rolls
28. Guerrilla Glue
29. Extra work gloves
30. Safety glasses

The Bare Bones Tool Kit

1. Claw hammer
2. Flat head and Philips screwdrivers
3. Vice grips
4. 6-inch adjustable wrench
5. Tape measure
6. Duct tape 2 rolls
7. Bow saw
8. Hacksaw and extra blades
9. Extra work gloves
10. Safety glasses

Day 14: Put together your bug out bag

(Note) A bug out bag and 72 hour kit are essentially the same thing, but for our purposes with “31 Days to Survival”, we will look at it as two separate kits to make things easier to put together, both kits can be combined or separated if needed. The 72 hour kit listed for day 6 is more of a stay at home and ride out the short term disaster kit, while the bug out bag listed for day 14 is more of a grab and go kit.



The authors worst case scenario G.O.O.D bug out bag

The very idea of leaving the security of your home to “bug out” to the woods has never sat well with me – In nearly every instance it’s better to hunker down or “bug in” than to bug out. I mean, why leave the safety and familiar surroundings of your home, for the open and unforgiving wilderness.

For many people this is their first line of preparation against disaster, unfortunately, most will end up joining the multitude of other refugees freezing in a cave and eventually end up dead or wards of whatever government is still functioning.

I live in a fairly safe area and have prepared to survive at home and can conceive of only a few scenarios that would force me to leave. Even then, I

would go to an out-of-state relatives house with whom, I have a pre-arranged agreement, where if need be he can come to my place or I to his after a disaster.

I know what you’re thinking “what about an end of the world as we know it” type event, well if such an event were to take place, there would be no 100% safe place for most of us, and really do you think you would be better of making a go of it in the open wilderness as opposed to hunkering down at home.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying we should never bug out to the wilderness; we should indeed keep all our options open, what I am saying is that there are better ways to survive most disasters than heading into the bush.

You need to weigh the risks of bugging out vs. hunkering down and make your final decision based on logic and type of threat. That's the way decisions should be made, unfortunately many people when making plans for survival side with emotion (that emotion being to run and hide) instead of the more tried and true form of decision-making known as logic.

Relying on emotion instead of logic can make for some interesting adventures; however without sound planning beforehand those adventures are likely to be short lived. For example, I recently asked a fellow in his late 30's what he would do if disaster struck his area.

He thought for a moment and said he would gather his family and all the food, guns and ammunition he could find and head for the mountains that lay some seventy-five miles to the north of his home.

Depending on the type of disaster, his "plan" might work short term for a lone survivor or a small group of individuals in good physical condition with proper gear and mind-set. But he is a new father and his wife is one of those that think missing an appointment at the nail-salon is the end of the world as she knows it.

Making matters worse he has no outdoor survival training or skills other than watching reruns of Less Stroud's "Survivor Man" and camping at a national park campground with all the utilities and hookups. Why he thinks he can survive off the wilderness while dragging his family along, I don't know. He isn't thinking logically.

His decision was based on emotion and as a result if he ever has to put his plan to the test in the real world his family will likely suffer or die because of his decision and "Red Dawn" thinking. Unfortunately, this batman in the boondocks mentality is and will continue to be the chosen survival plan for many who haven't thought it through.

When making survival plans for your family you have to honestly weigh the risks of your decision based on logic. In almost every disaster scenario, it is better to stay put (bugging in) or head to a pre-arranged safe place at an out-of-town relatives or friends house than it is to head to the woods to eat twigs and pine bark.

For most people an evacuation bag is a better choice than a bug out bag. An evacuation bag should contain the gear necessary to get you from point A to point B, whereas a bug out bag (in most cases) is geared more toward wilderness survival. I have both, but admittedly my bug out bag is an option of last resort.

Knowing when to go is much more important than the contents of your survival pack or even where you will go. You don't want to jump and run before you need too, but you don't want to wait too long or you may never reach your destination.

If you wait for the authorities to give the order to evacuate it may already be too late. The roads leading to safety could be blocked and impassable by motor vehicle and walking to your destination may be impossible or too dangerous to attempt.

On the other hand if you jump and run in response to every potential disaster you'll soon deplete your resources and the patience of your family, school and employers. For example, say you live in an area prone to tornadoes like Texas and you evacuate to Arkansas every time the clouds turn dark or the wind shakes the leaves. You would literally stay on the road. But waiting until the twister is at your door will put you at an unnecessary risk.

There are no easy answers; all you can do is weigh the dangers of bugging out vs. hunkering down depending on the situation and logic. You have to consider the nature of the threat and ask yourself which gives the best chance of survival with regards to the type of disaster you are facing.

Then, there are times when evacuation is a no brainer, say you live on the Florida coast and a category 5 hurricane has been predicted to hit that coast within 72 hours, in that case you would be stupid not to go now, even if you have no prearranged bug out location...

On the other hand let's say there is snow storm heading your way and you have food, water, heat and a way to cook even if the power goes out for an extended amount of time then you are probably better off to hunker down where you are.

In my opinion the bugging out vs. hunkering down debate is moot because it all comes down to the type of threat, your personal situation and preparedness level – in the end you'll have to make that decision based on that knowledge and common sense.

Bug out bag contents

Please note that the following list is only a suggestion – your bug out bag should be customized to suit your individual needs, plans and location.

- A Fixed Blade Knife
- Multi-tool
- Two Small Lighters
- One Box Water Proofed Wooden Matches

- Water Filter or Bottle
- Small LED Flashlight with Extra Batteries
- Cell Phone
- Prepaid Calling Card
- First Aid Tactical Trauma Kit
- Antibacterial Hand Wipes
- Space Blanket
- Bag of Trail Mix, Box of Power Bars (15) and Electrolyte Packets
- Detailed Map of Area and Compass
- Handheld GPS Navigator
- OC Spray
- One Hundred Dollars in \$1, \$5 and \$10 Bills
- Reliable Handgun and 200+ Rounds of Ammunition
- Change of cloths
- Prescription Medications as Needed
- 25 Feet of Para Cord
- Sterno and Folding Stove
- Small Sewing Kit
- Fishing Kit

(Note) If forced to bug out and you are doing so by car load both your 72 hour kit and bug out bag.

Special considerations for children

Under stressful situations it is important for you to appear relaxed, confident and in control of the situation – even if you are a shaking bag of nerves on the inside. The last thing children need is extra stress brought about by a tense and out of control parent.

Another consideration is familiarity. During a bug-out situation you will be away from home this can be extremely stressful especially for children. It is important to eliminate as much of the stress of unfamiliarity as possible.

If they have a favorite blanket, pillow, stuffed toy or whatever gives them comfort and protection be sure to pack it before heading out the door. This is very important.

Children tend to bore easily, so adding things to extinguish their boredom is a good idea. You may want to put together a pack just for them, consisting of toys, books and games. Don't forget extra batteries.

Today's assignment is to put together a bug out bag.

Day 15: Let's Go Shopping



[Having a selection of supplies will make life easier post collapse](#)

Today, we'll be taking another trip to your local department store for basic survival supplies – below is your shopping list... Of course this list isn't written in stone and should be tailored to meet your individual needs.

1. Two good quality LED flashlights
2. At least 12 sets of extra batteries for the flashlights and radio
3. Two LED head Lamps
4. At least 12 sets of extra batteries for the head lamp
5. Five boxes of wooden matches
6. 12 "cigarette" lighters

7. 6 large tubes of toothpaste (per person in your group)
8. 12 toothbrushes (per person in your group)
9. 100 double edge razor blades (note: if you don't have a razor you'll probably have to order one from Amazon.com and don't forget a brush and bowl)
10. Women need feminine-hygiene supplies. Stockpile approximately 500 count (per woman in your group).
11. Toilet Paper (as much as you can reasonably store)
12. Two fire extinguishers per household
13. Deck of playing cards and several board games (avoid battery powered games)
14. Five 28 count boxes of 28 gallon trash bags
15. Five boxes of food storage (Ziploc) bags
16. Diapers and other supplies for infants
17. 12 Bars Bath Soap (per person in your group)
18. 12 Bottles of Dish Soap
19. Three pair of wool socks and thermal underwear
20. Coleman [Two-Burner Propane Stove](#) and 12 one pound propane cylinders (Note) a "dual fuel" model would increase versatility and are worth considering.

Day 16: Build a box trap and chicken wire fish trap



[Two commercial live traps bought at Tractor Supply – these work extremely well](#)

The single best trap going for the survivor is the box trap. Box traps are cheap to build using old scrap lumber or outdoor plywood. Box traps are easy on the critters trapped, unlike snares or steel traps that usually kill or maim the game that gets in them, game caught in a box traps are kept safe from hungry predators until the trapper returns to check the trap. Often trappers using other trapping methods will return to the trap site only to find where some lucky predator has made an easy meal of his catch.

Fifty years ago just about everyone living in the country knew how to build and use this type of trap, now the skill has been lost to all but a few old timers. Today our population is much more interested in watching TV or playing video games, than learning any useful skill. This is sad,

because one day a simple skill such as constructing a homemade box trap could make the difference between going to bed hungry or with a full stomach...

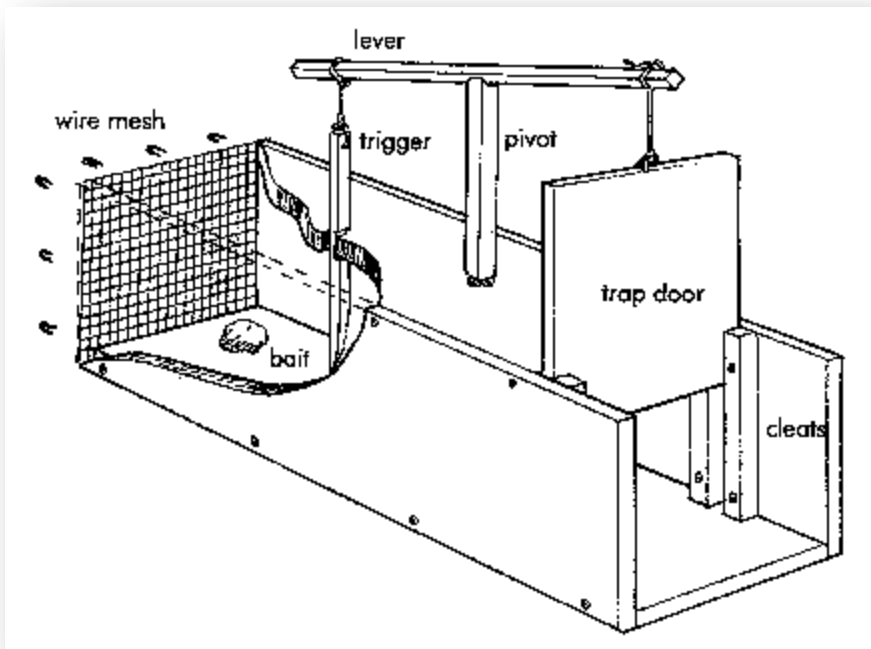
Begin construction of your box trap by putting together a box using plywood, lumber or some other suitable material. Each end should be left open and should be eight to 12 inches square. The top piece should be three inches shorter on each end, which will allow room for the sliding doors. The box should be four feet long, and have at least a 12 inch doorway when built for raccoons, opossums and cats. Two foot works fine for rabbits and squirrels.

Fashion a slide way for the doors to fall through and lock in. How to do this is hard to explain in writing, but should be self-evident when looking at the illustration. Use the heaviest material that you can find for the doors, this will help in several ways, such as the doors closing faster and going all the way down and locking in place.

Most box traps are set with bait, if you are baiting for raccoon use peanut butter or fish guts, for opossums use cut up apples, peanut butter or just about anything with a strong smell, cats like fish, squirrels like acorns, pheasants and quail like wheat or crushed up dried corn. When in doubt and if available use peanut butter as most animals seem to be attracted to it.

Many of us that keep chickens know how frustrating it is to watch our prize hens disappear, one at a time to a seemingly invisible predator. Catching the culprit can be a vexing problem, since we do not know exactly what we are trying to catch, or when it will make its next raid on the henhouse. Set several of these homemade box traps against the outside walls of the henhouse, baited with chicken guts and you should have your chicken thief by morning.

A dandy rabbit producing method is to set boxes out in known rabbit country, pile brush on top of the trap to make the trap look like a natural hiding place. Make sure that the brush you pile on doesn't interfere with the trigger of the trap. These traps do not even need to be baited; the rabbits just seem to wonder into them. You should not expect to catch anything within the first couple of weeks, because the rabbits in the area will need a few weeks to become accustomed to seeing the traps, then they will start to come in.



Single door live box trap construction

Or you can build a repeating box trap

When I lived in town I had the damnedest time with raccoons getting into the trash. Every morning I would wake to ripped trash bags and garbage strewn about. They would push over the cans to get to the goodies inside.

I tried everything I could think of. I poured bleach into the bags, mothballs; I even sprayed the contents with coyote urine with hopes of discouraging the little bandits. Nothing worked.

I could have made an awesome coonskin cap from the hide, but nosy neighbors, game wardens and not wanting to go to jail again for poaching kept me from pulling the trigger. My best option was to catch and move the critters far enough away that they would not find their way back to my trash cans.

I am sure most of you have seen or heard of the live traps sold by Havahart. These work great but are expensive running upwards of \$30 for the smallest models intended for squirrel or similar animals. Sizes for raccoon run \$97 dollars or more depending on the retailer. I didn't want to spend that kind of money for a trap, especially when I can make one for little or nothing.

Box traps can be constructed using any solid wood. Start by building a long rectangular box from two feet to four feet long, with an opening of at least six inches square.



Ground hog ready for skinning

This size works well for squirrels, rabbits, muskrats and mink. For medium-sized prey such as coons, possums, cats, skunks, groundhogs and foxes build an eight inch opening. Beaver, coyotes and badgers need a twelve inch opening and a trap that is three to four feet long.

Some trappers construct these traps with a door at each end of the box. They can also be built with only one door, the other end covered with heavy gauge wire or grating to block the animals' escape, while at the same time giving it the illusion of being able to move straight through the box

from one end and out the other.

Most traps of this type can only catch one critter with each setting; these work well but limit the trapper. The repeating box trap can continue catching game until the box cannot hold anymore or the forest has been emptied.

The repeating box trap is simply a box with one way doors or door depending on construction. Doors can be made from aluminum grating of the type found in old refrigerators that has been cut to size and arc welded back together for strength if necessary. The door swings up and into the trap but not out.

The animal pushes into the box past the door and once inside it can't get back out; the door is automatically reset allowing the next critter to be trapped in the same way as the first. Keep in mind that the four-foot boxes work best for trapping more than one of any given species.

Bait depends upon the game. Muskrats are attracted to sweet corn and carrots, coons like sardines and peanut butter; squirrels seem to come into buckeyes and freshly crushed acorns, cats like sardines, etc. Place the bait in a small jar with a perforated lid, so the first critter caught in the box doesn't eat the bait and spoil your chance of a later catch.

My favorite bait when going after predators like fox, coyote and bobcat is a live mouse in a jar. Punch holes in the lid and put in a handful of grass and a bit of grain. Catching the live mouse seems to present the most difficult challenge.

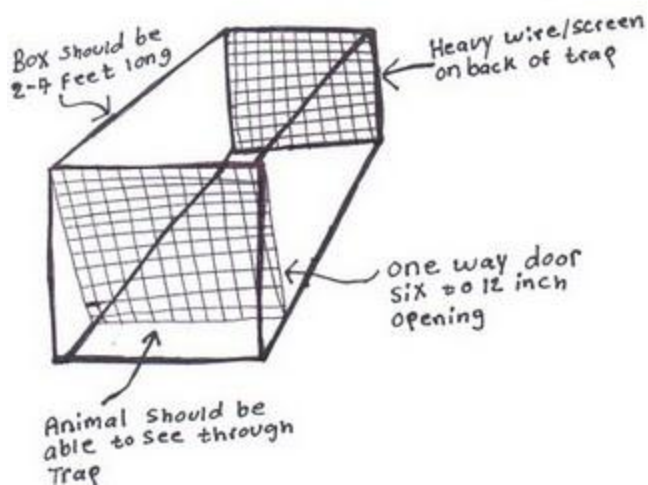
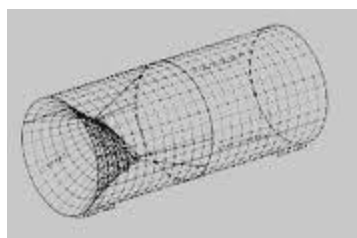


Diagram of the repeating box trap

Chicken wire fish trap

The chicken wire fish trap is a great trap, for the survivor because it is easy to make, use and hide with the potential to provide hundreds of pounds of fresh fish over time from creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes.

The chicken wire fish trap is nothing more than a cylindrical enclosure with a cone or funnel leading into the trap and an access door at the rear to get the fish out. The fish swims in through the funnel and into the trap where they cannot find their way back out.



Chicken wire fish trap

I make my traps 4 feet long using $\frac{1}{2}$ inch chicken wire from the hardware store. You'll need to cut a 7 feet long piece from the roll and wire this into a tube 2 feet in diameter. Next, cut two seven foot lengths of 10-gauge wire (available at the hardware store) or similar.

One circle of 10-gauge wire will be covered chicken wire then cut to size and wired into place around the length of 10-gauge wire. This will be your door and where you will remove the catch. Use light wire to secure this to the rear of the trap.

The other circle of 10-gauge wire will be wired in place around the diameter or the other end of the chicken wire cone; this will provide stability for the wire cone and help it hold its shape during use and transport. Don't worry about how neat it is or how it looks as long as it is secure.

Next you'll need to construct a funnel out of the chicken wire that reaches $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet into the body of the trap. The small opening should be no larger than four inches or smaller than three with the other end being the same diameter as the cone. Position the funnel with the small opening inside of the trap and the end mated to the 10-gauge wire along the perimeter of the cone.

For bait use dry dog food, meat scraps or guts (liver works well) tied up and secured inside a ladies stocking or sock. Tie the stocking or sock about 6 inches beyond the end of the funnel secured to the wire body of the cone.

To set simply tie a rope or cable to the trap via one of the #9 wire rings, toss the trap into the water, let it sink and tie the other end of to a tree or stake to secure the trap and allow for easy retrieval.

We'll get to work on your assignment for day 16...

Day 17: Get a dental check-up and put together a dental first-aid kit



The health of your teeth has been directly linked to the health of your body, and being unhealthy when the disaster strikes will only make it that much more difficult to survive, and being healthy now can only make your life better.

Make appointment with your dentist for a dental check-up and get any problems that need to be taken care of fixed.

It's much better to get it now under proper conditions than later, by uncle Bob with a pair of vice grips.

But even if you've taken all of the proper precautions dental emergencies do happen and you need to be ready just in case, with the tools and knowledge needed to take care of the problem. So, today's task after your dental check-up is to put together your dental first-aid kit and start obtaining the knowledge to use it properly.

Recommended Survival Dental Kit Contents

1. Temporary filling material (e.g., Temparin or Cavit)
2. Tweezers
3. Gauze
4. Oragel or other dental pain reliever
5. Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil or Motrin) to relieve pain and inflammation
6. Clove oil (a natural pain reliever)
7. Rubber gloves (some people are allergic to latex)
8. Dental wax
9. Toothpicks
10. Cotton
11. Dental mirror
12. Hand sanitizer

And let's not forget to stock up on the basics – toothpaste, floss and brushes. In a long-term grid-down situation these would also make great barter items.

I also suggest you get a copy of [Where There Is No Dentist](#), available amazon.com or as a free download from Hesperian.org.

Day 18: Make a water filter and learn the basics of water storage and purification



Containers for making the cheap Berkey water filter – any similar containers would work just as well.

What's the third most important element of your survival after shelter and oxygen?

Depending on health, physical activity and environment humans can survive less than five minutes without oxygen, less than ten days without water (50 F / 10.0 C with little to no activity) and four to six weeks without food. A source of clean water is essential for survival.

Just imagine how disappointed you'd be after investing all your time and money building your stockpile of survival food, just before you died of dehydration.

Having food storage without a reliable source of clean water is like eating soup with a fork, you're only getting some of what you need.



Bottom of top chamber with filter in place and improvised adapter

As you know, I'm a fan of the Berkey system, having used a Big Berkey extensively for over a year, I can personally attest to their performance. However, a lot of people can't or won't spend \$250 or more for a filter (mine was a donation from directive 21).

The key to the effectiveness of the Berkey system is the Berkey purification elements. Fortunately, it isn't difficult to improvise upper and lower chambers.

Here's how to make a "Dirt Cheap Berkey Filter".

What You'll Need

- [Berkey Filter Element](#) 49.5 each
- One gallon round pitchers (Wal-Mart) \$2
- One gallon pitcher with spigot (Wal-Mart) \$5
- Drill and 1/2 inch bit
- Hack saw
- Super Glue



Big Berkey filter and improvised filter side by side

As you can see from the photos it's a simple process – the whole thing took me about 15 minutes.

First drill a 1/2 inch hole through the bottom the pitcher without the spigot (top chamber). Avoid applying pressure when drilling as this could cause the plastic to spit across the bottom, use only the weight and momentum of the drill to get through.

Next thread the plastic tip of the filter element through the hole (rubber washer to the inside) and snug up the nut on the other, avoid over tightening, as this could damage the filter element or nut.

Since the top of the lower chamber was the same size as the bottom of the top chamber the filter became unstable when the two were put together.

To stabilize the unit, I improvised an adapter by cutting a two-inch tall ring from another pitcher with a hacksaw and super glued this to the bottom of the top chamber (see photo).

The Berkey filters are extremely effective at removing pathogenic bacteria, cysts, parasites, chemical contaminates and impurities – the elements have an indefinite shelf-life and will filter at least 3000 gallons before needing replaced. I store mine in zip-lock bags until ready to use.

Bleach

If you suspect the water to contain viruses, add 8 drops of regular, unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of water, stir it well and let it stand for 30 minutes before you use it. Or bring to a rolling boil for one minute, and then filter through the Berkey. This may sound like over kill, but it's not – you can never be cautious enough with your health.

Boiling

Boiling is one of the surest methods of water purification. All you need is a heat source, suitable container and water. Bring the water to a rolling boil to kill any viruses or bacteria that maybe present. Boiled water tastes like, well boiled water but the taste can be improved by pouring back and forth between two containers to re-oxygenate and improve taste.

The SODIS method

A transparent PET bottle is cleaned with soap and clean water. Then, the bottle is filled with the water in question and placed in full sunlight for at least 6 hours. (Note) it is the UV from the sun and not heat that kills the waterborne pathogens. Go to [this web page](#) for detailed instructions and illustrations.

Storage

As for water storage, I have six – five gallon containers bought at Wal-Mart in the sporting goods department. Thirty gallon isn't much, but I don't see water being a major issue at my current location.

If you live in a dryer region such as the south west, water would likely be a major concern that may necessitate the storage of hundreds of gallons for an emergency.

Don't store water in used five gallon milk jugs. They're not strong enough for long term storage and eventually breakdown and leak. The five gallon containers sold in the sporting goods section of most department stores work great, as do the 55 gallon plastic drums. Just be sure the drums are clean and contained no harmful chemicals before filling.

If you must use small containers, empty 2-liter pop bottles work well. They are stronger than the aforementioned milk jug and have better lids and are more convenient. Avoid glass containers because they break too easily.

Tap water considerations

If you're storing tap water from a municipal water system there's no need to add bleach as suggested by some. Water from the municipal tap already contains enough chlorine to thwart any bacterial growth and can be stored without any other additives.

Day 19: Don't Make These 10 Prepping Mistakes



Below are ten common mistakes that I've seen many survival planners make over the years (I've made several of them myself) and I don't want you to end up doing the same.

1. Giving up too early – Many new survivalist start out with a load of energy only to run dry, giving up before meeting their goals. The main reason – they think they have to spend thousands of dollars on a retreat, survival food and arsenal, money that they don't have – so they give up all together.

2. Putting off starting - Procrastination is something we've talked about before, but is worth mentioning again. Don't put

off starting your preparedness program. The number one excuse given is a lack of money – see point one above.

3. Not making their own plan - Many new survivalist, not knowing where to start attempt to follow the plans of others. Granted there will be a lot of similarity between most survival plans, but it is important to look at your location, needs and budget and plan so.

4. Overlooking the need for shelter - Many new (and veteran) survivalist fail to realize the importance of a paid for plot of land and shelter. They seem to think their debt will just disappear or be forgiven. Sorry folks it doesn't work that way.

5. Bugging out - Bugging out can work, if you have a place to go and make it there unscathed. But the throw on a pack and live in the woods "plan" is lacking in reality and practicality. Some will pull it off – most will not.

6. Too many guns - Firearms are very important, but many new (and veteran) survivalists have more guns than pounds of wheat. Get the life-sustaining basics squared away first.

7. Buying books and not reading - I'm sure many of you do this. You read a review of a preparedness book, send for it, it arrives in the mail, you open the package, thumb through it, you think "I'll read it when I have more time" and on the shelf it goes.

8. Buying books and not doing - Still others read the books, but that's as far as it goes. They never go out and test or learn what they've read. Reading is great, but you need to get off the couch and put what you've read into practice.

9. Not planning for unexpected arrivals - What will you do when unexpected visitors arrive at your door looking for a handout post collapse? Buying extra food and assembling care packages is a good idea.

10. Closed mind - They become fixated with their plans (or plans of others see #3). If something works, great; if not, you need to find out what the problem is and fix it – even if it means a complete overhaul of your original plan.

Today's assignment is to do a self-evaluation (be honest) keeping the ten points above in mind – if you find you're guilty of making any of the mistakes listed then get to work correcting that issue.

Day 20: Take a firearms safety and or hunter education class



[Savage Scout Rifle in .308 Win](#)

Going to a dedicated firearms training camp isn't possible for the average survivalist. Let's face it; most of us are hard up for cash and what "extra" we do get usually goes toward procuring needed survival gear.

Most of you who have made it this far, probably have a good working knowledge of firearms safety and shooting fundamentals. If not, I recommend you to take the time needed in learning the basics by taking a safety class in your area.

The hunter safety classes offered by most states are free to anyone and are a good start, as well as the handgun permit class if available. Once you have the basics mastered and can shoot well enough to place all your shots into a six-inch circle or less at 25 yards, then it is time to broaden your skills.

Instructional DVDs and books are good learning tools for those of us with neither the time nor money to take dedicated instruction from a training facility such as Front Sight or Thunder Ranch.

For learning handgun techniques, I recommend you get copies of [Jim Grover Defensive Shooting Series](#) and [Tactical Pistol Shooting](#): by Lawrence Erik, these are the best productions in their niche, and the only ones you'll need.

You'll get instruction on defense mindsets, pistol terms, shooting fundamentals and shooting positions, with emphasis on important safety precautions and lawful personal defense as well as advance handgun principles and techniques.

With the cost of ammo as well as everything else going through the roof, it can be a wallet flattening ordeal to practice with live ammo.

Sure we must use live rounds to an extent, but a lot of realistic and constructive practice can be done with the CO2 powered pistols sold in the sporting goods section at your local Wal-Mart.

Another advantage to this type of training is that it can be done in your backyard, even in town, if you have a good fence to keep your activities from prying eyes that is.

Your practice can even be undertaken in a basement or extra room if convenient. Just remember to make it as realistic as possible and always reinforce what you learn with live fire.

Okay, today's assignment is to find the nearest firearms training class and get signed up – and attend on the given date...

Day 21: Let's make a small game snare



Appliance wire slit and ready to be twisted into a small game snare

Snares can be used to trap animals from mice to elephant and no survival book would be complete without plans for making and setting a snare. Since, I don't think many of you will be snaring elephants (or mice) we'll concentrate our efforts today on making and setting a snare sized for rabbit and squirrel, however most of the same principles will work just as well for smaller and larger animals.

Effective snares can be fabricated from any pliable wire, cable, string or rope but the best material for making a small game snare in my opinion is appliance wire, I get mine for free from discarded appliances found at the local dump but you can also buy it at any hardware store for a few cents per foot.

To start you'll need a piece 20 inches long, split the wire down the center into two 20 inch pieces. Next, peel the rubber insulation back about two inches and using pliers begin pulling the wire out of the insulation. It may be necessary to split the insulation with a sharp knife before the wire and the rubber insulation can be separated.



Small twig ready to be broken away to form loop

The goal is to pull the copper wire free from the insulation in a way that the strands don't unravel and tangle when pulled free. Don't worry, if you have trouble the first few times, you'll get better with practice.

Once you have the wire and insulation separated, cut the ends off the wire evenly, then measure a section three inches long from one end and tightly wrap this around a small twig (slightly larger than the wire) or match stick forming a small loop now break the stick opening up the loop, now take the other end of the wire and pass it through the loop you just made forming a lasso.

At the other end opposite the lasso tie a small loop about half an inch across, this will be used to secure the snare to a longer line or string. Now, you're probably asking why not just use a string in the first place avoiding the wire altogether – well you could do that but wire makes a much better snare for a number of reasons but mainly because it holds its shape when set.



Finished small game snare

Today's assignment is to make a small game snare using appliance wire – a great book and one I recommend is "[Into The Primitive: Advanced Trapping Techniques](#)" by Dale Martin.

Day 22: Prevent and Manage Stress

There's no such thing as a stress-free life. Most of us deal with stress on a daily basis, from getting the kids off to school and on time, to driving to work in heavy traffic to taking care of a sick family member.

Our bodies were designed to deal with stress on a short-term basis, then to relax and recuperate before facing the next stressful event. Our reaction to short-term stress is a "fight or flight" response and was in the past (and still is depending on the situation) necessary for our survival.

Short-term stress doesn't have the same effect on our bodies as does extended periods of tension and most healthy people can deal with it without any long-term problems developing. It's those periods of long-term stress that we need to be concerned with, such as stress during an extended emergency or grid down situation.

During an extended emergency our stress levels will naturally rise, possibly affecting both our physical and mental health and judgment. For this reason, it is important to know what stress does to your body and how to manage it, so it doesn't become a problem in a survival situation or everyday life.

What Long-Term Stress Does To Your Body

When you're stressed, the brain's sympathetic nerves signal the adrenal glands to release a number of chemicals into the body including epinephrine (aka adrenaline) and cortisol. Persistently high levels of these chemicals can impair memory and the ability to learn, which can inadvertently lead to mistakes. Mistakes can be deadly.

Stress triggers the body to produce extra blood sugar, to provide energy to power our inherent "fight or flight" response and in some instances this is a good thing. But if your stress is ongoing such as would be the case during a long-term survival situation, raised glucose levels may, over time turn you into a full-blown diabetic, especially if you are already at risk.

Long term stress can lead to cardiovascular problems, especially if you're already at risk due to lifestyle or heredity. Stress can raise blood pressure and over the long-term stress can lead to narrowing of the arteries and raised cholesterol levels which increase your chances of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Ongoing stress can cause a loss of sleep thus weakening your immune system, decreasing your body's ability to fight off infection, impede wound healing and make you more susceptible to infection and disease.

Stress can cause indigestion and nausea possibly leading to diarrhea or constipation. This can lead to a lack of appetite or dehydration, both of which can cause to other health concerns.

Tips for Stress Management in an Emergency

Below are 10 tips that I've found effective for dealing with stress. Hopefully you can adopt some strategies to help you manage stress now and after the balloon goes up.

Be Prepared

Need, I say more. Being prepared is the best and most effective way of dealing with stress during and after a disaster or TEOTWAWKI. Nothing beats being prepared. While everyone else is running in circles you can relax and watch the show. But you have to start.

Take Valerian Supplements

Valerian has been used for centuries for nervous conditions and has been traditionally used for treating sleeplessness, epilepsy, depression and hysteria. I've taken Valerian supplements during periods of insomnia, and they work well. As with any supplement ask your doctor first and start with a small dosage until you know how your body will react. More information on Valerian can be found [here](#).

Take B-Complex

Supplementing with B-Complex can play an important role in stress reduction. In addition to B-complex, Passionflower and Skullcap may help to relieve stress and improve sleep patterns. I take this brand which has everything needed in one capsule. As stated above, ask your doctor first and start with a small dosage.

Get Enough Sleep

Several months ago, I read a report (can't remember where) that said if a human went past 10-11 days without sleep they would die. While I can't say for sure how long before you or I would die without sleep, it is a medical fact that a lack of sleep can wreak havoc with your health and mental functioning. I've went two days without sleep and my mental function, coordination and reaction times were definitely off normal. No matter how bad things are or the type of disaster you will have to sleep. As mentioned above, Valerian supplements help. Here are some other tips that may help.

Try To Keep Some Semblance of Normalcy

While it may not always be possible, try to keep your some semblance of normalcy in your life. For example, if you read before going to bed and work-out in the morning continue to do so. By

keeping a familiar schedule your mind and body will be better able to deal with the stress caused by a long-term disaster.

Entertain Yourself

By keeping your mind busy during periods of down-time you can limit stress and its negative effects on your body. I have a plastic-tote full of old (unread by me) paperback novels, that I've picked up at yard sales and flea markets for ten-twenty cents each. Altogether they probably cost me less than \$25 total they will provide invaluable entertainment value post collapse. I also enjoy listening to music and have a number of CD's and rechargeable batteries to keep the music playing.

Keep Children Happy

If the kids aren't happy then no one is happy. It is important to eliminate as much stress and unfamiliarity from their lives as possible, especially at first while they adjust. Children tend to bore easily, so adding things to your cache to stave off their boredom is a good idea. You may want to put together a special pack just for them, consisting of toys, books and games. Don't forget extra batteries for electronics.

Meditation

Meditation has long been used for stress reduction and as means of relaxation. Basically meditation involves clearing your mind of what is around you while focusing on proper breathing techniques to reach a state of relaxation and calm. See this article "Benefits and Different Types of Meditation Techniques" for more information and techniques on this subject.

Pray

If you believe in God prayer can be a great help for relieving stress and affording feeling of well-being and hope. Here is a great example of a prayer to you deal with stress that I've ever read (sorry, but I can't remember the original source).

"Lord, I pray that you provide me your hand and walk me through the dark times. I ask that you reduce the burdens in my life or show me the path to get things done or rid myself of the things weighing me down. Thank you, Lord, for all you do in my life and how you will provide for me, even in these stressful times."

Today's assignment is to learn how to control your stress level – trust me this is one of the most important parts of your preparedness plan.

Day 23: Plan your survival garden



Let's face it we cannot realistically store enough food to last for the rest of our lives (unless of course that life is very short) and that is where skills such as hunting, trapping, foraging, raising livestock and gardening come into play in the total survival food plan.

One of the most common excuses I've heard when talking to people about raising a garden is that they don't have the time or space to plant a garden. Both are valid in some cases, but

if done right raising a garden doesn't require a large amount of time and most people have more space than they think, they just need to look at it realistically.

When I lived in the city I successfully raised tomatoes and other vegetables in a window box and in several hanging baskets on the terrace. Remember, even a small garden is better than no garden at all and starting small has several advantages – such as less space required, less expense to get started, less time and perhaps most importantly starting small will give you a chance to obtain the skills needed to eventually plant and grow a full sized garden if space permits.

Tools Needed

Contrary to what you might think you don't need a lot of expensive tools to plant and tend a garden. My most important recommendations when buying tools is to buy the best tools that you can afford and to buy forged tools over stamped. Even though quality forged tools will cost more they will last considerably longer and make the job of gardening much easier.

Tools needed will depend on several factors such as your location and what, how and how much you intend to grow, but at a bare minimum, I suggest have a [peasant hoe](#) also called an eye hoe, [regular garden hoe](#), [mattock](#), [pitchfork](#), [rake](#), [digging shovel](#), [classic round point shovel](#) and [digging fork](#).

What to Grow

Grow what grows in your areas – how do you know what crops grow best in your area? Well, the best way is to ask, talk to local gardeners and the employees at your nearest farmers co-op or similar establishment. A wealth of information can be obtained here just by asking.

USDA climate zone maps are another great resource that will provide a rough estimate as to what will grow best in your area of the country. Every seed catalog I've seen has this type of climate zone map printed within the first couple of pages, or you can find one with a simple online search.

For particular crops that are best suited to the survival garden, I recommend you consider potatoes, corn, beans and squash.

Choosing Seeds

When it comes to gardening, we obviously must start with seed and the one question I'm asked most often pertaining to survival gardening is "should I choose hybrid or non-hybrid seed". My answer is always the same and that is both.

Seed from non-hybrid ("heirloom") varieties, can be saved from one year to the next and will grow true to the parent plants. Hybrid varieties tend to grow more vigorously the first planting and are easier to grow but seeds saved will be unpredictable at best.

I suggest you start with hybrid seed and proceed to growing non-hybrid varieties exclusively as your gardening skill increases. But with any seed, you need to actually plant it, tend it and watch it grow before you can learn or reap the harvest. One of the biggest mistakes, I see being made is buy seed and storing it but never going beyond that point.

Finding Information

Of course this isn't a how to book on gardening but a 31 step plan to get you prepared and equipped to survive when the balloon goes up. For in-depth gardening information and plans I suggest you pick up copies of [The Resilient Gardener](#), [Gardening When it Counts](#) and [The Sustainable Vegetable Garden](#).

Day 24: A trip to the gun shop



It's hard to beat a Smith & Wesson model 10

What's the perfect survival gun? That question has been asked many, many times over the years, and more than a few survivalists have attempted to answer with their own favorites. But for the most part the effort has been in vain because the real answer is: none exists. Some firearms are indeed more versatile than others, but none is up to the task of doing everything well. There is no perfect

survival gun.

You need a battery of firearms to cover defense, foraging, concealed carry, and other tasks, but you do not have to spend a lot of money. Below I have outlined five arsenals, each covering a broad range of tasks, needs, and budgets. If nothing else, my suggestions should generate discourse.

"I work at Wal-Mart Arsenal"

1. Mosin Nagant 91 rifle
2. Single Shot .12 gauge shotgun
3. Smith & Wesson model 10 revolver

"The Government Welfare Arsenal"

1. Short Magazine Lee-Enfield rifle
2. Mossberg Maverick 88 12 gauge pump
3. Smith & Wesson model 10 revolver
4. Ruger 10/22 rifle

"I have a full-time Job Arsenal"

1. Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle or AR-15
2. Mossberg 500 12 Gauge shotgun
3. Glock Model 19 pistol
4. Ruger 10/22 rifle

"Two Jobs and Maxed Credit Card Arsenal"

1. Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle or AR-15
2. Remington 870 express pump 12 gauge shotgun with spare riot barrel
3. Glock Model 19 pistol
4. Ruger 10/22 rifle
5. Winchester Model 70 bolt-action rifle in .308 Win.
6. Taurus CIA Model 850 .38 SPL. Revolver

“And Finally the Yuppie Survival Arsenal”

1. L1A1 or Springfield Armory M1A Rifle chambered in .308 Winchester
2. Remington Model 7 bolt-action chambered in .223
3. Winchester Model 70 bolt action rifle in 308 Win.
4. Remington 870 express 12 gauge shotgun with spare riot gun barrel
5. Colt 1911 A1 .45 ACP
6. Taurus CIA Model 850 .38 SPL. Revolver
7. Savage Model 24F .223 Remington over 12 gauge (if you can find one used)
8. Ruger 10/22 rifle
9. Barrett 82A1 .50BMG rifle



The 12 gauge shotgun is one of the most versatile firearms you can own

It should be noted that the above are only suggestions and a representation of what I've owned and can recommend from personal experience (with the

exception of the Barrett 82 A1) which I have never owned) These suggestions aren't written in stone, and there are many substitutes that could be made without a loss in quality or versatility.

For example, the Taurus CIA could be replaced by a Smith & Wesson revolver of equal dimensions or even a Glock 26; or you could replace the Colt 1911 A1 with one made by another company or even a Springfield Armory XD chambered for the .45 ACP.

Guns Not to Buy For Survival

There have been countless books and magazine articles written about choosing the “perfect survival gun”. What I haven't seen is a list or suggestions of what firearms one should avoid, I think this is a mistake because knowing what not to buy is just as important as what to buy.

I'm sure many will disagree with my conclusions, or have other suggestions, that I failed to mention or overlooked. In some cases it isn't a matter of overlooking or forgetting to mention a certain manufacture or firearm, but simply that I have no experience with the firearm or manufacture not on the list.

Unlike some others, who seem to give their endorsement or criticize without firsthand knowledge, I only give advice on things I've personally used, tested, worked on in my shop and fully evaluated.

Best Avoided

- Phoenix Arms – low price and low quality.
- Lorcin – Cheaply made, with poor quality parts.
- Hi-Point – The carbines are fair, the handguns are prone to failure.
- Bryco – Jam – Fire – Jam – Fire, Jam, Jam, broke firing pin.
- FIE – Well known for their inferior quality, currently out of business.
- Llama – Some good, others junk – best to avoid the lot.
- Sterling – mediocre quality and usually unreliable, currently out of business
- Charco Arms – Formally Charter Arms, chambers rough, the action tends to lock up and they have a tendency to shave lead.
- Intratec – Tec-9, Low quality construction, inaccurate, will not reliably feed hollow-point ammunition.
- Norinco – Quality control is hit and miss, some of their products seem to be pretty good considering the price, others not so much.

For today's assignment head to your nearest firearms dealer and buy your survival arsenal based on the recommendations above. And don't forget ammo. Buy as much as you can afford...

Recommended book: [Boston's Gun Bible](#) by Boston Tea Party

Day 25: Put together a car survival kit

We spend a lot of time in our cars so we need a car kit in addition to our everyday carry kit. Below are lists of contents for two kits for those with two different amounts to spend – today's assignment is to put together one of the car survival kits below...

The deluxe kit

1. Jack and lug-wrench
2. Spare tire
3. Fix-A-Flat
4. Folding Shovel
5. Flash light and extra batteries
6. Two light sticks
7. Road flares
8. Extra fuses
9. Roll of Duct tape
10. Hose clamps
11. Ice scraper
12. One gallon each of motor oil, windshield washer fluid, engine coolant
13. Jumper cables
14. Fire extinguisher
15. One gallon drinking water
16. Matches
17. Road flares
18. Change of clothes depending on season
19. Sleeping bag or wool blanket
20. First-aid kit
21. Toilet paper
22. Whistle
23. Special needs items, prescription medications, eye glasses, hearing aid batteries and infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.
24. Energy bars or similar food
25. Your EDC KIT (see day 28)

The basic kit

1. Jack and lug-wrench

2. Spare tire
3. Folding Shovel
4. Roll of Duct tape
5. Jumper cables
6. Fire extinguisher
7. Small first-aid kit
8. Gallon of water
9. Toilet paper
10. Your EDC KIT (see day 28)

Day 26: Brainstorm ideas and look for gaps in your preps



A simple trick I use to find gaps in my emergency preparedness plan, is to ask myself, what would I do if I knew the end of the world as we know it (TEOTWAWKI) was going to start in 30 days? Keeping this question in mind, I look at my situation, skills and supplies and make a list of ideas using a "mind map".

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia "A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid to studying and organizing information, solving problems, making decisions"

This trick has helped me find gaps in my preps that would have went unnoticed, had I not set a deadline for the beginning for TEOTWAWKI and mind mapped ideas.

For example, the last time I did this, I found that I needed to learn more about trapping wild game, more spices for cooking and hydrated lime for waste disposal.

When doing this exercise it is important that you have the correct mind-set.

While it's true, we don't know the exact start date for TEOTWAWKI, (or has it already started?) for this exercise to be most effective you have to do your best to envision it happening on your given date.

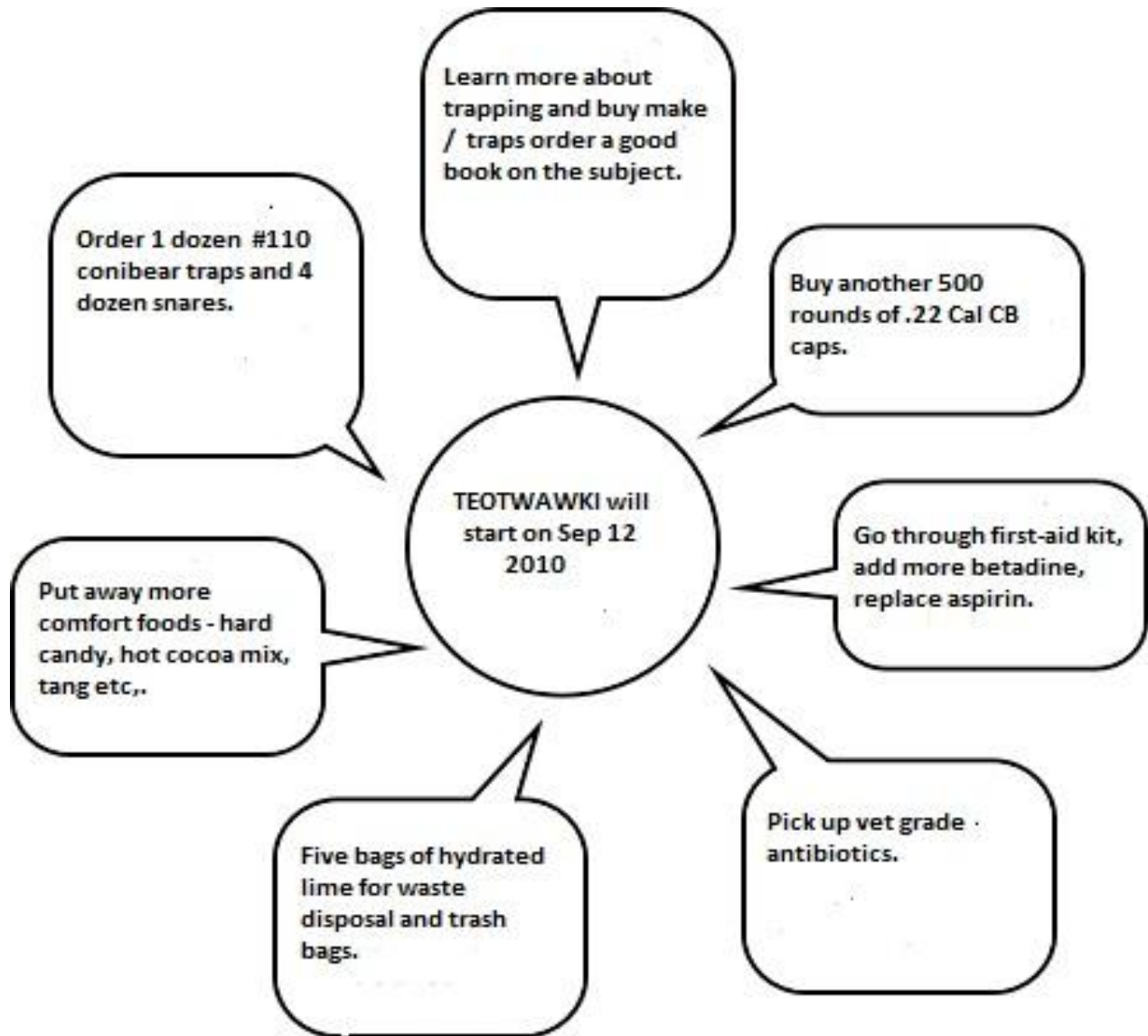
If you don't take the date seriously you'll fail to see important gaps in your preps making the process a waste of time.

Once you have the proper mind-set, take a pen and paper and draw a circle in the middle around your start date for TEOTWAWKI. Now brainstorm ideas for what you need (and can) do to prepare for that date and TEOTWAWKI .

For each idea draw a line out from the originating circle, draw another circle and write the idea inside of it. The key at this point is to let yourself be as creative and outside the box as you

want. Any idea is allowed at this point. Don't over think it just write the ideas down as they enter your mind.

Here is an example:



I try to do this exercise at least every other month and it can be used to look for gaps in any area of your preps such as food storage, medical, defense, skills, etc.

After you complete the exercise today you'll have a better understanding of what you need to do in order to increase your preparedness.

Day 27: Build a Deadfall Trap with a Figure 4 Trigger

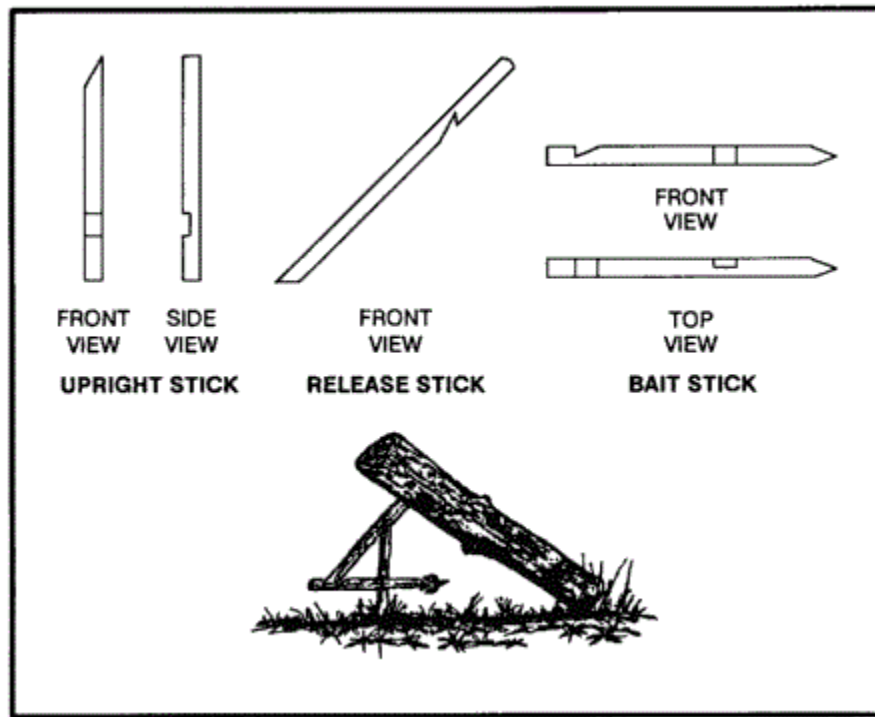


Diagram of figure 4 trigger and deadfall trap

Those of you who have been following my blog already know I plan to trap wild game, fish and fowl, to supplement my food storage, domestic animals and garden.

I don't think having one food source after the crash is wise as many things could happen to my primary food storage.

Always have a plan B and a plan C to back up plans A and B.

When selecting wood to construct a figure four type trigger, choose only dry, seasoned hardwood that will not warp or shrink during the natural aging process. This is important; because once you get the trap set up you want to keep it producing for the next several years.

The most crucial element, and the one most often overlooked by beginners, is the fact that all pieces which make up the trigger, should be squared with all bark removed. If this is not done correctly the trigger pieces will fly apart, when weight is applied, refusing to hold together because of the roundish trigger pieces...

The ground stick should have a forked bottom, so as not to let the trigger spin around and out from under the drop weight when the bait is taken. If allowed to turn the trigger may hold together and not trip when the bait is taken.

The best type of deadfall and the one I use most often is what I call the log drop. The first step in building the log drop deadfall is to build a small pen about 14 inches square and 24 inches

high with small sticks, trigs, leaves, grass or whatever is nearby. The pen isn't being built to hold the animal, just to guide it into position where it can be effectively trapped. One side should be left open.

Next cut a small log of about four to six inches in diameter and four feet long. Bury this log part of the way in the ground in front of and across the opening of the pen. Now, cut four stakes which are about 4 feet long, drive the stakes two on each side of the bottom log. These stakes should be about thirty inches high after being driven into the ground.

Next cut a drop log that is from six to seven inches thick at the base and approximately twelve feet long. Set the figure 4 trigger with the drop log resting on top, and the bait stick slightly pointed back into the opening of the pen.

As you might have guessed, when the animal tries to take the bait, it pulls the trigger pieces apart letting the top log fall crushing the critter against the bottom log. This is quick and painless.

The bait should be fastened to the bait stick before setting the trigger under the drop log. To do otherwise can result in having the log fall on the trapper's arm, which I have done and can tell you this is not at all pleasant.

Today's assignment is to build a deadfall trap using a figure 4 type trigger system.

Day 28: Put Together Your EDC kit (Every Day Carry)

Contributed by Lint Picker (Northern California)

After I completed making my Bug Out Bag (BOB), a Get Out of Dodge bag (GOOD), and a Get Home Kit (GHK), I realized there was one more scenario that needed to be addressed – suppose I need help or need to get home or to my car and I'm without my BOB, GOOD, or my GHK? What if all I had for survival was whatever I had on my person, in my pockets? With this new scenario in mind, I searched for ideas. I found some information on a few survival-related blogs and on several YouTube videos.

What I learned was that there is a name for this type of survival gear – it's called Every Day Carry (EDC) because it is carried with you whenever you leave the house. I also learned that EDC is as varied as BOBs, GOOD bags, and GHKs because each of us has different needs and those needs change. . IOW, my EDC would be a work-in-progress throughout my life just as my BOB, GOOD bag, and GHK are.

What good is EDC if there is so little to it? Good question (if I do say so myself), let's look at a couple of emergency scenarios.

Scenario 1) Suppose you've gone trout fishing up the Snake River in Idaho and you slip on a wet rock and break a leg. You can't crawl to your truck because it's 2 miles away – uphill. You can't use your cell phone because you're in a canyon and there is no signal. What are you going to do?

Scenario 2: Or imagine you're in San Francisco on the 10th floor of an office building when a 7.4 magnitude earthquake collapses the structure. You survive the initial disaster, but now you're trapped with a heavy file cabinet on your chest and a bad slice on your noggin. What do you do?

If you have your EDC in your pocket or purse or around your waist or in your vest, you can do lots of things to help yourself. In Scenario #1, you could take out your whistle and blow it, hoping somebody else on the river will hear you and come to investigate. Or you could use your flashlight as a signaling device at night when a rescue plane flies overhead. Or you could start a fire with your fire making kit. Now you can stay warm and keep predators away, as well as signal aircraft with it.

In Scenario #2, you can use your whistle to signal the rescue crew so they can find you in the rubble. (You can use a whistle even when your chest is crushed by a file cabinet.) Or you could shine your flashlight in their direction if they are searching in the dark. You could even use your

knife blade to cut off a piece of your clothing to stem the flow of blood from the head laceration.

My personal EDC consists of various little tools hooked onto a couple of key rings, as well as my wallet, my car keys, house keys, and my cellphone. The wallet and car keys go into my right front pants pocket where I can get to them easily – I'm right handed and frequently need to get to my wallet and car keys. In my left front pants pocket are my house keys, EDC-specific tools, and my cellphone – things I need less frequently. EDC consists of anything you carry with you whenever you leave your home or your car.

It consists of things you have with you at the time of an emergency, whether the original intent was for survival or not. For example, let's say you are walking down the street in your hometown when a gas station explodes two blocks away. You don't get seriously injured from the initial blast, but you feel hot ash falling from the sky and hitting you on the head. You have your pocket knife, keys, cellphone, flashlight, and other typical EDC gear, but you also have a briefcase because you're a salesman and you were on your way to contact a customer.

Your briefcase could be considered part of your EDC gear because you carry it with you almost every time you leave your home. So now you use it to shield your head from hot ashes. It enabled you to stay relatively unharmed while you sought the safety of your car, which is two blocks farther from the explosion site.

EDC is your most intimate and basic survival aid. It is with you whenever you leave your home or vehicle. It becomes as much a part of your daily routine as putting on your shoes. It isn't everything you'll need, but it isn't meant to be. It's a set of tools needed for dealing with your immediate and very personal emergency. It's not the end-all survival kit, instead it's meant to get you to a better situation so you can survive long-term. It's like a first aid kit, it's not intended to provide anything except quick and immediate assistance. And just like a first aid kit, EDC could save your life.



EDC kit Photo 1

Photo #1 – These are my EDC gear, shown the way I carry them in my pockets. Starting at the top of the photo with my Car Keys with Remote and going clockwise: Cellphone; Yellow Trifold Wallet;

key ring (I refer to this key ring as my “tool ring”) with Green Mini Multitool; Silver Medication Tube Vault, Gold-tone Money Tube Vault, Green Whistle, Red Victorinox Knife, Green & Black 1-LED Flashlight, Black 4-Purpose Tool; on another key ring (I refer to this key ring as my “house key ring”), which is attached to the tool ring, are – House Keys and Blue Mini Maglite.



EDC kit photo 2

Photo #2 – These are my EDC gear opened up to show their specific components. Starting at the top of the photo with my Car Keys with Remote (Your car’s remote control device can be very useful in an emergency, With it you can locate your car by honking the horn or flashing the lights and you can also use it to get attention if you are unable to reach your whistle or yell for help.), and going clockwise: Basic Cellphone; Yellow Trifold

Wallet with cash and large band

aid (as well as the usual stuff which I didn’t want to show for Opsec reasons); on the Tool Key ring are: Green Mini Multi-Tool with pliers, 1-LED flashlight, saw blade, knife blade, can opener with standard screwdriver tip, and awl with sewing eye; Silver Medication Tube Vault with a day’s supply of prescription meds; Gold-tone Money Tube Vault with \$20.00 bill; Red Victorinox Knife with scissors, tweezers, knife blade, and file; Green & Black 1-LED flashlight with strobe option; Black 4-Purpose Tool composed of 1-whistle, 1-compass, 1-magnifying glass, and 1-thermometer (on back side); attached to the Tool Ring is the House Key Ring consisting of my House Keys and a Blue Mini Maglite.

With these items I have 3 ways to signal with sounds, 3 ways to signal with lights, 2 sources of cash, 2 knife blades, several other small tools, a communication device, and a bandage for minor injury.

This is just the beginning of my EDC. I intend to change things and add things as I learn from others and as I experiment with it, already I realize I need a few matches or a small lighter

(perhaps the Peanut Lighter) and some Duct Tape would be good to have. I think I can wrap some DT around the metal case of the Mini Maglight.

What would you suggest I do to improve my EDC? What do you have in your EDC? How do you carry your EDC? I've seen people use something as small as an Altoid tin, or something like I use – key rings and pocket-size devices and other preppers use things as large as a soft side briefcase.



M.D. Creekmore's EDC kit

Day 29: Learn to cook in a thermos bottle

I first learned of thermos cooking when reading Kurt Saxons old "Survivor" newsletter back in the late 1980's and have been using the method to save money on propane used for cooking ever since. I have no way of knowing for sure but I would estimate a savings of \$40 to \$50 per year from doing this.

In a grid down situation using the least fuel will be a top priority, and cooking with a thermos bottle will help you get the most from the smallest amount of fuel possible. All you'll need is a small mouth Aladdin Stanley thermos and a funnel. Let's take a closer look at how to do it.

Start by preheating the thermos, to preheat the thermos you simply bring enough water to a boil to fill the bottle and after filling the bottle you screw on the cap and set the bottle aside while you do the following steps.

Next you heat the food you are preparing to the boiling point, in a pot on your stove top, and when the food is boiling hot, pour the food (after you pour out the water used for preheating -using your funnel so you don't waste) into your preheated thermos bottle, and finish cooking the food in the thermos.

That's it... Simple isn't it... Here are several tips to make it easier and even more energy efficient...

1. Lay the thermos on its side. The food will cook more evenly that way.
2. Wrap the thermos in a blanket to retain even more heat.
3. Be sure you get a small mouth Aladdin Stanley thermos and not some cheap knock off.
4. If you do get another type thermos be sure it has stainless steel inside and not glass.
5. A gallon plastic bottle; milk, bleach, vegetable oil, etc. cut in half makes an excellent and free funnel.
6. Shake the thermos every few hours so the contents don't bunch up or stick to the sides.

Now you're probably wondering what foods you can cook in a thermos bottle... I cook whole wheat breakfast cereal, steel cut whole oats, rice, beans, lentils and pasta. One of my favorites is rice and chopped up vegetables.

Cooking time will depend on what you are cooking, the thermos and the amount of preparation. You'll learn by doing. But don't get in any hurry because your food will not burn or be overcooked.

Thermal Cooked Beans

You'll need a large pot with a tight fitting lid, wool blanket and a cooler with lid. Sort and pre-soak beans overnight, the next day bring the contents to a rolling boil for about ten minutes, cover the pot with the lid and quickly remove from heat and wrap pot tightly in the wool blanket. Cover the pot completely because you don't want the heat to escape.

Carefully set the wrapped pot of beans into the cooler, filling any remaining space between the cooler and blanket with old newspaper and place lid on cooler. Pinto beans take approximately three hours to cook completely, if not done to your liking simply reheat and re-wrap and let stand for another hour.

The advantages with this method are many and can be used with other foods besides beans. You get three hours of cook time for only ten minutes of fuel used, food does not stick in the pot or burn if left unattended. Water usage is kept to a minimum because it does not boil away or need to be refilled while cooking. Thermal cooking is the most cost effective and least labor intensive cooking method that I know of.

Today's assignment is to buy a thermos and cook something in it...

Day 30: Find like-minded survivalist friends

Many readers of my blog have asked “where or how do I find like-minded folks to form a survival group to help man our retreat?”

Unfortunately, I’ve known of several survival groups that are no longer together. In most cases they dissolved due to a lack of funds, seriousness of members and infighting.

It’s been my experience that most groups fail within the first two years. People just can’t get along, no matter the need, at least not for long. But I’m sure there are exceptions... The successful survival groups are the ones we never hear about.

It’s my belief, that those who make it through the collapse will be those who meld into their surroundings, avoiding becoming a target. Remember a fight avoided is a fight won.

Having a large group can thwart this necessary blending. It is my contention, that groups should be kept as small as possible while allowing for a complementary skill set within the group.

Finding people with complementary skills, beliefs and interests who can form a group and work together for the long haul can seem impossible and in some cases it may be.

Yet, no man is an island. Finding the right survivalist friends could mean the difference between a long life and a quick demise.

Several readers have questioned my fortitude for living alone in the backwoods. What they don’t understand is, that I live alone, but I’m not alone. Let me explain.

I have friends and family in the area (the only reason I stay) that will help me if I need it. They form a survival group, naturally without even knowing it.

Take a look at your situation, family and friends – would they be there for you and each other when the balloon goes up? What are their skills? What do they have to offer? Will they work together?

If the answers to the above questions are negative, than you need to look elsewhere for support. But where do you look. And, perhaps more importantly, how do you do it without drawing attention to yourself or inviting danger into your retreat.

Consider looking into:

- Churches with similar religious convictions to your own.
- Hunting clubs
- Gun clubs
- Garden clubs
- First Aid & CPR class attendees

- Those attending self-defense classes or seminars

I'm sure you can think of other possibilities, but you get the idea.

Starting your own related club, as a ruse to attract like-minded people for an initial "feeling-out" process isn't out of the question. Even if you don't find a worthy candidate you'll at least have gotten off the couch.

I know a former Army ranger who offered free wilderness survival classes as a ruse when building his survival group. They would spend a weekend out in the woods learning various outdoor survival techniques. While he secretly, watched and evaluated each as a potential member for his survival group.

Often finding potential survivalist friends is as simple as networking; after all you can't expect them to find you. You have to get "out there."

Obviously you don't want to blurt to everyone you meet about your survival plans. Even those that seemed like likely candidates could be the opposite of what you're looking for when you pry below the surface.

It's best to start slow, keeping your options open. Act like you are just as unprepared as everyone else, but concerned about the future and recent disasters. Say you would like to be better prepared for such an event but you don't know where to start.

Maybe they'll start giving you advice. Listen closely. If the advice is sound you may have hit the pay-dirt. Informally talking about your fears and concerns may open up the conversation, but still be very careful with whom you share information.

Trust should be built over time and that trust should be earned not given. You don't want to give your secrets to a government snitch or future raider. And no matter what, or how much you're offered, never do anything illegal if asked. Remember Randy Weaver?

Today's assignment is to get out there and start evaluating potential survival friends...

Day 31 Learn to tie a knot

This is one area where many “survive the end of the world” type manuals fall short, most include information on choosing firearms and food storage but few tell you how to tie a good knot. Knowing how to tie a good knot is an important survival skill and today’s assignment is to learn how to tie a knot by following the instructions that are reprinted below from the U.S. Army Survival Manual.

TERMINOLOGY

To be able to construct shelters, traps and snares, weapons and tools, and other devices; you should have a basic knowledge of ropes and knots and some of the terminology used with them. The terms are as follows:

Bight. A simple bend of rope in which the rope does not cross itself.

Dressing the knot. The orientation of all knot parts so that they are properly aligned, straightened, or bundled. Neglecting this can result in an additional 50 percent reduction in knot strength. This term is sometimes used for setting the knot which involves tightening all parts of the knot so they bind on one another and make the knot operational. A loosely tied knot can easily deform under strain and change, becoming a slipknot or worse, untying.

Frap. A means of tightening the lashings by looping the rope perpendicularly around the wraps that holds the spars or sticks together.

Lashings. A means of using wraps and fraps to tie two or three spars or sticks together to form solid corners or to construct tripods. Lashings begin and end with clove hitches.

Lay. The lay of the rope is the same as the twist of the rope.

Loop. A loop is formed by crossing the running end over or under the standing end to form a ring or circle in the rope.

Pig tail. That part of the running end that is left after tying the knot. It should be no more than 4 inches long to conserve rope and prevent interference.

Running end. The free or working end of a rope. This is the part of the rope you are actually using to tie the knot.

Standing end. The static part of rope or rest of the rope besides the running end.

Turn. A loop around an object such as a post, rail, or ring with the running end continuing in the opposite direction to the standing end. A round turn continues to circle and exits in the same general direction as the standing end.

Whipping. Any method of preventing the end of a rope from untwisting or becoming unwound. It is done by wrapping the end tightly with a small cord, tape or other means. It should be done on both sides of an anticipated cut in a rope, before cutting the rope in two. This prevents the rope from immediately untwisting.

Wraps (Figure 1). Simple wraps of rope around two poles or sticks (square lashing) or three poles or sticks (tripod lashing). Wraps begin and end with clove hitches and get tighter with fraps. All together, they form a lashing.

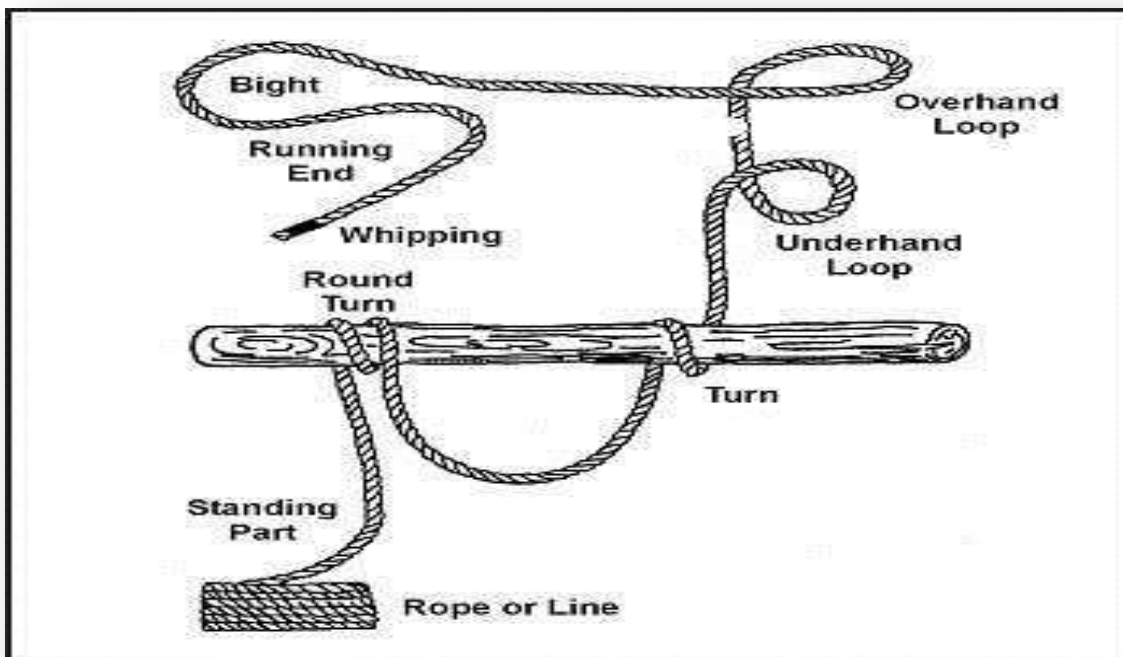


Figure 1

BASIC KNOTS

The basic knots and methods of tying them that you should know for your survival are as follows:

Half-hitch. This is the simplest of all knots and used to be the safety, or finishing, knot for all Army knots. Because it had a tendency to undo itself without load, it has since been replaced by the overhand.

Overhand (Figure G-2). This is the simple knot that most people tie everyday as the first half of tying their shoes. It can also be used to temporarily whip the end of a rope. This knot should replace the half-hitch as a finishing knot for other knots. This knot alone will reduce the strength of a straight rope by 55 percent.

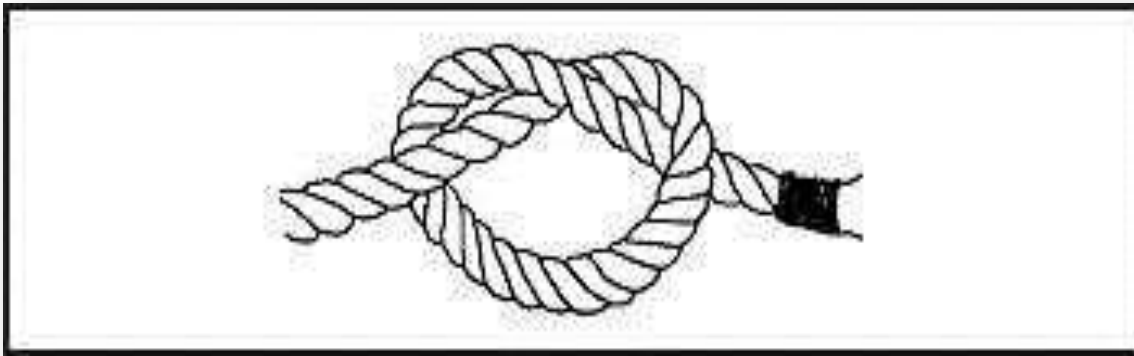


Figure G2 Overhand knot

Square (Figure G-3). A good, simple knot for general purpose use. This knot is basically two overhand knots that are reversed, as in Right over Left, Left over Right. It is used to tie the ends of two ropes of equal diameter together (just like your shoe laces) and must be secured with an overhand on both ends. It is easy to inspect, as it forms two loops and is easy to untie after being loaded.

Round turn and two half-hitches (Figure G-4). This is the main anchor knot for one-rope bridges and other applications when a good anchor knot is required and where high loads would make other knots jam and difficult to untie. It is most used to anchor rope to a pole or tree.

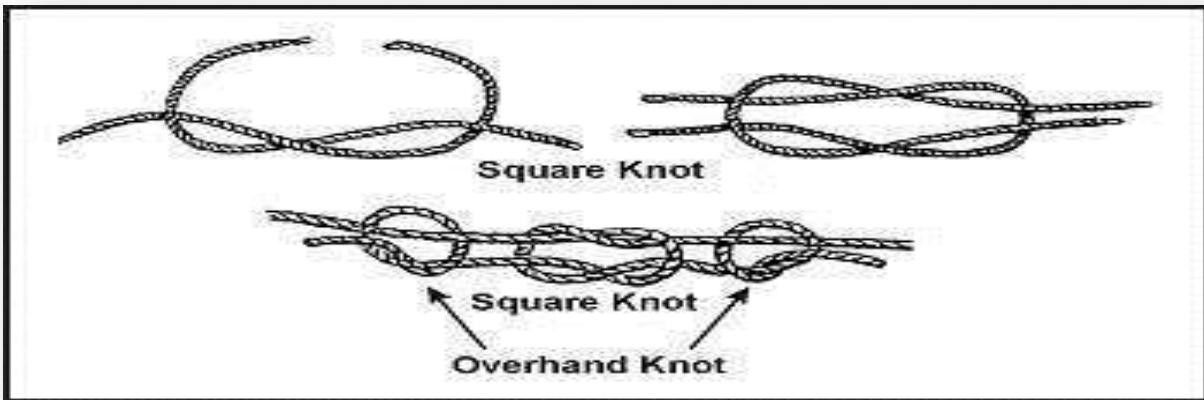


Figure G3 Square knot secured by overhand knots

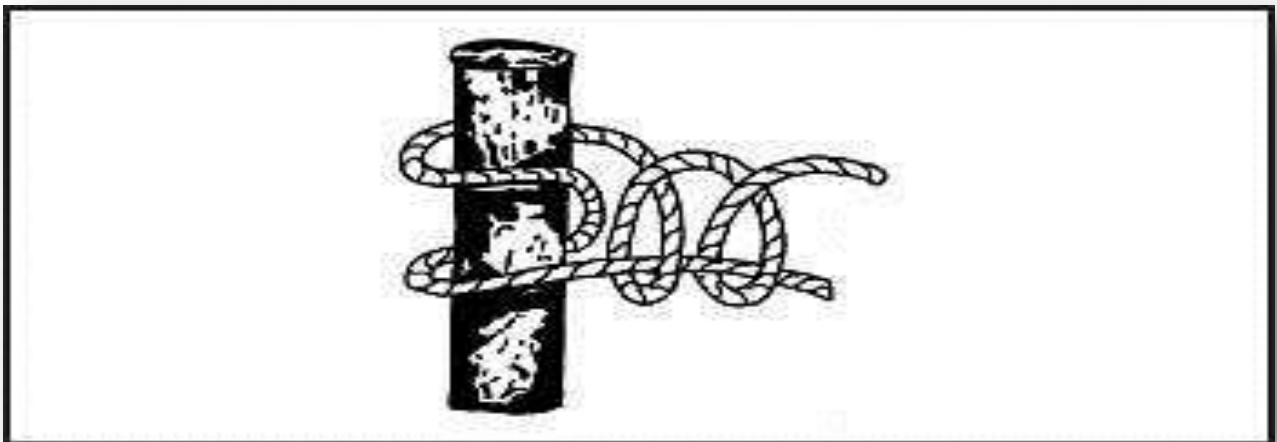


Figure G4 Round turn and two half hitches

Clove hitch and end-of-the-line clove hitch (Figures G-5 and G-6). It can be used to fasten a rope to a tree or pipe and also puts little strain on the rope. It is an easy anchor knot but tension must remain on the knot or it will slip. This can be remedied by making another loop around the object and under the center of the clove hitch.

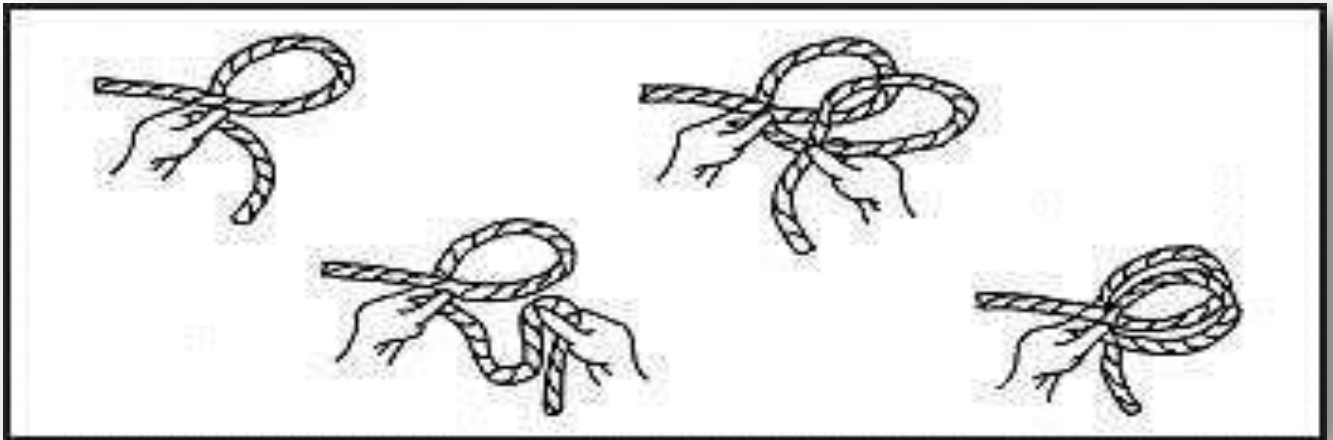


Figure G5 Clove hitch

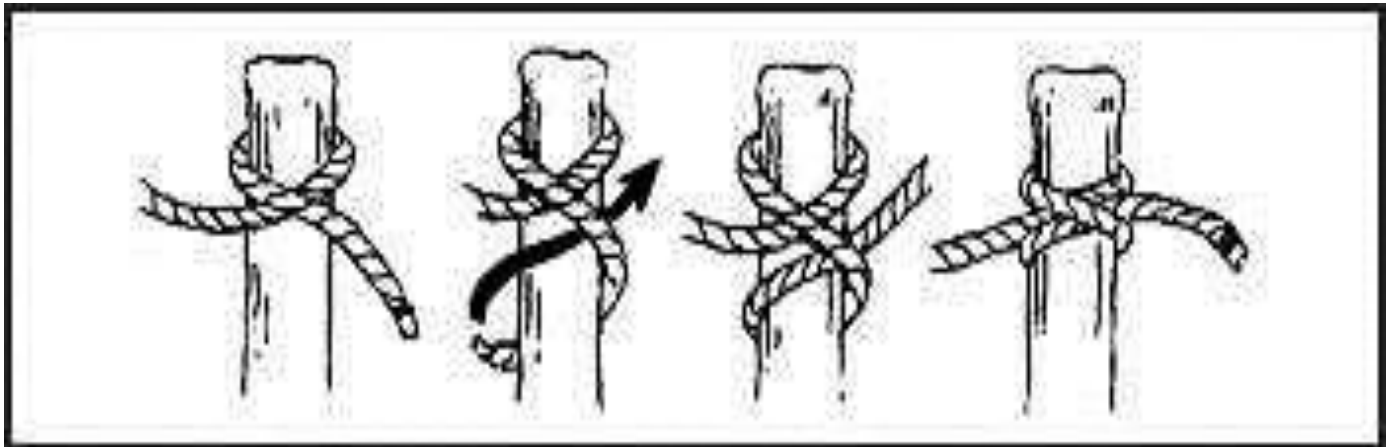


Figure G 6 End of the line clove hitch

Sheep shank (Figure G-7). A method of shortening a rope, it may also be used to take the load off of a weak spot in the rope. It is a temporary knot unless the eyes are fastened to the standing part of the rope on both ends.

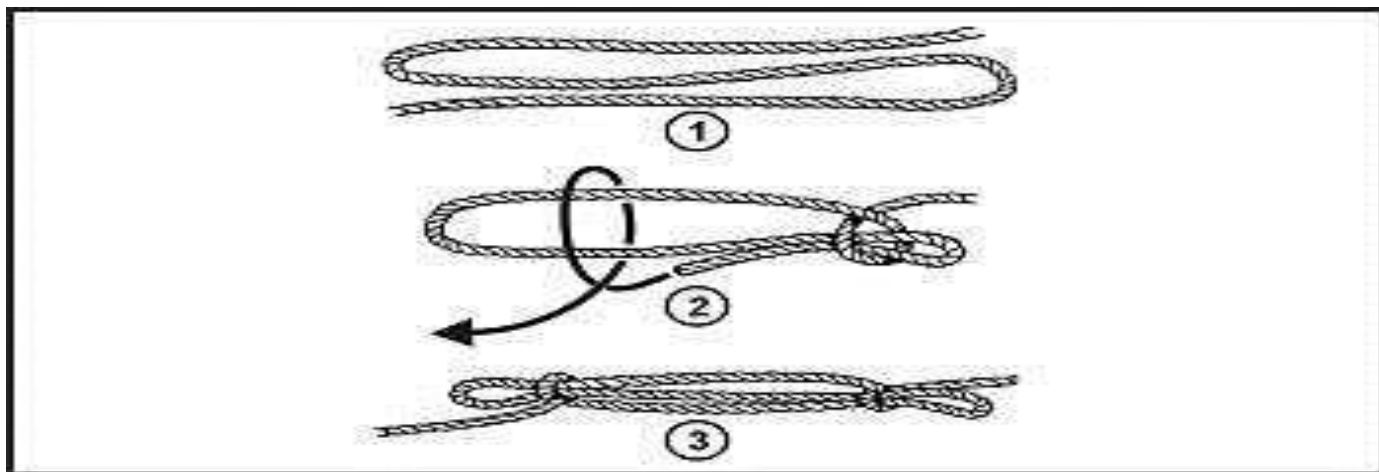


Figure G7 Sheep shank

Double sheet bend (Figure G-8). This knot is used to tie together the ends of two ropes of equal or unequal diameter. It will also join wet rope and not slip or draw tight under load. It can be used to tie the ends of several ropes to the end of one rope. When a single rope is tied to multiple ropes, the bight is formed with the multiple of ropes.

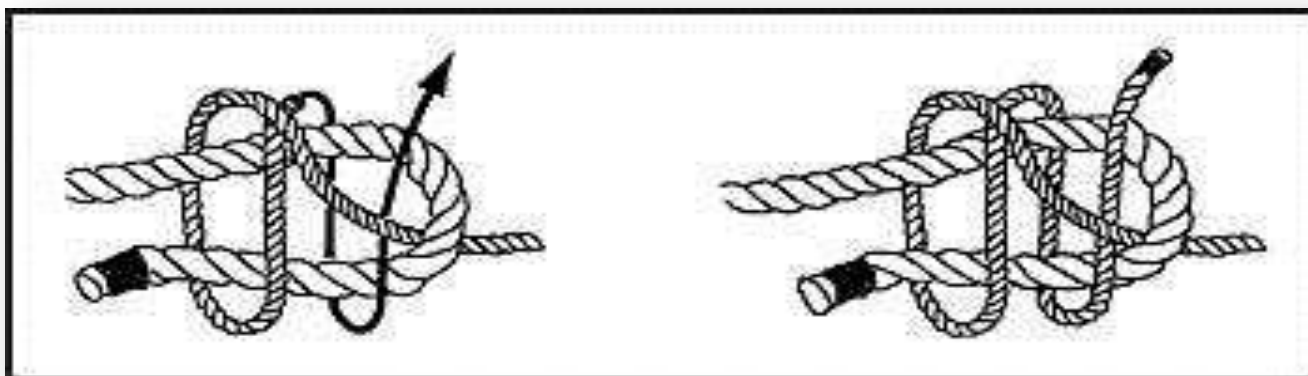


Figure G8 Double sheet bend

Prusik (Figures G-9 through G-11). This knot ties a short rope around a longer rope (for example, a sling rope around a climbing rope) in such a manner that the short rope will slide on the climbing rope if no tension is applied, and will hold if tension is applied on the short rope. This knot can be tied with an end of rope or bight of rope. When tied with an end of rope, the knot is finished off with a bowline. The nonslip nature of the knot on another rope allows climbing of ropes with foot holds. It can also be used to anchor ropes or the end of a traction splint on a branch or ski pole.

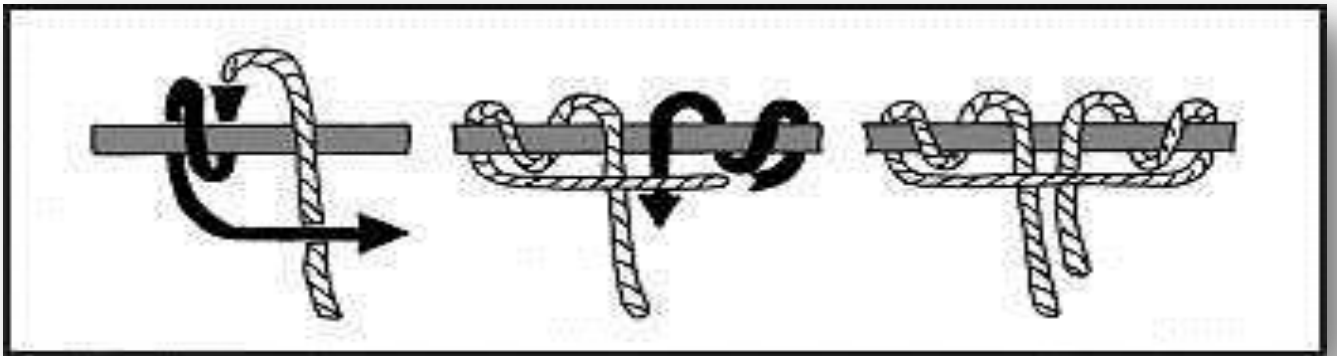


Figure G9 Prusik, end of the line

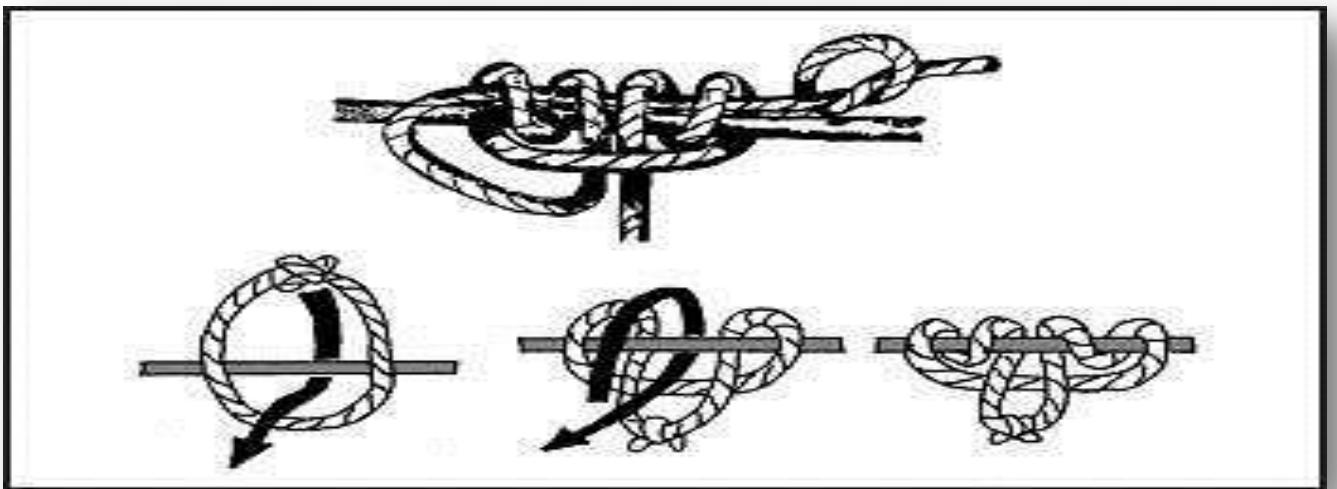


Figure G10 Prusik, end of line and center line

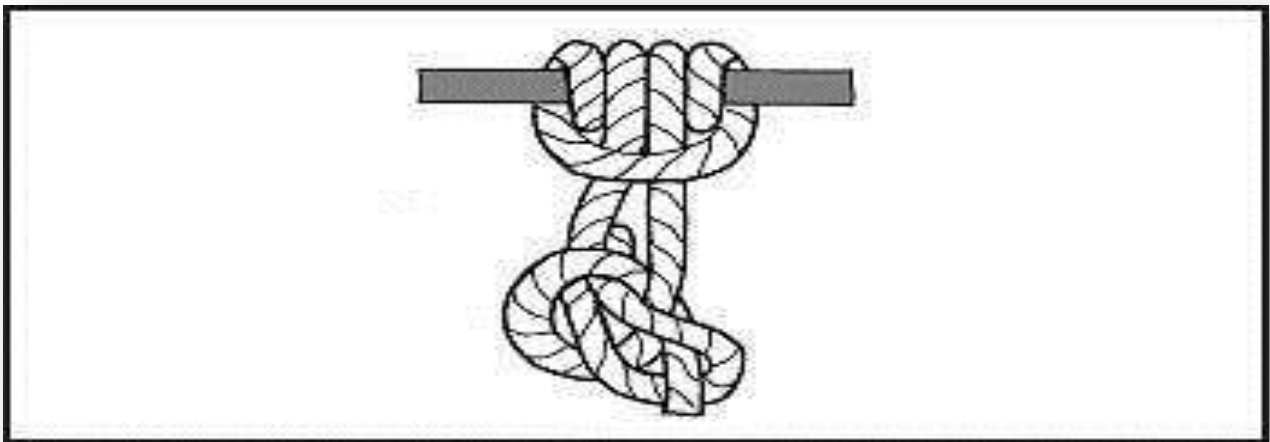


Figure G11 Prusik, end of line with bowline for safety

Bowline and bowline finished with an overhand knot (Figure G-12). Around-the-body bowline was the basic knot used for rescue for many years as it provided a loop, which could be placed around the body that would not slip nor tighten up under strain. It has been replaced by the figure 8 in most applications as the figure 8 does not weaken the rope as much.

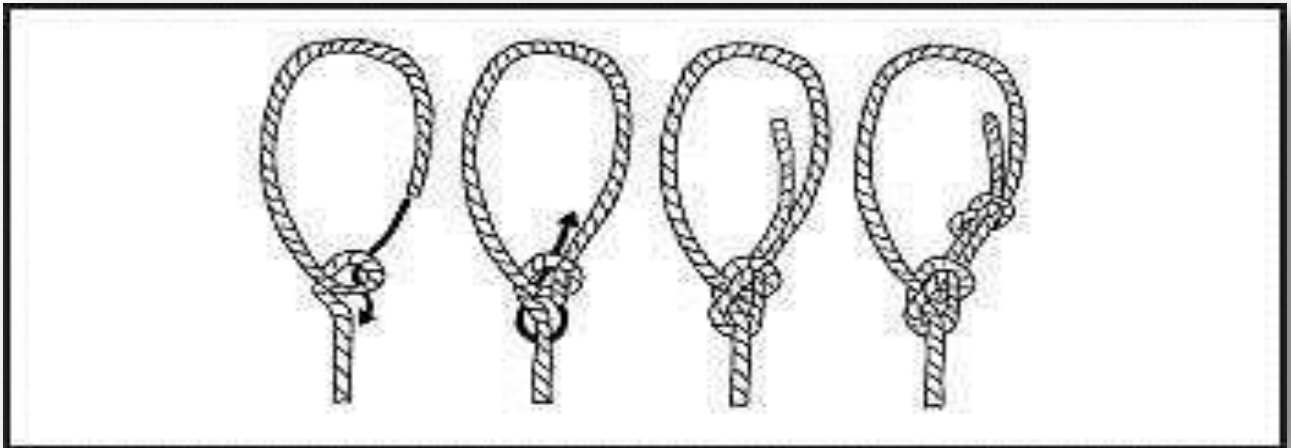


Figure G12 Bowline and bowline finished with overhand knot

Figure 8 and retraceable figure 8 (Figure G-13). This knot is the main rescue knot in use today. It has the advantage of being stronger than the bowline and is easier to tie and check. One disadvantage is that when wet, it may be more difficult to untie than the bowline after being stressed. The figure 8 (or figure-of-eight) can be used as an anchor knot on fixed ropes. It can also be used to prevent the end of a rope from slipping through a fastening or loop in another rope when a knot larger than an overhand knot is needed.

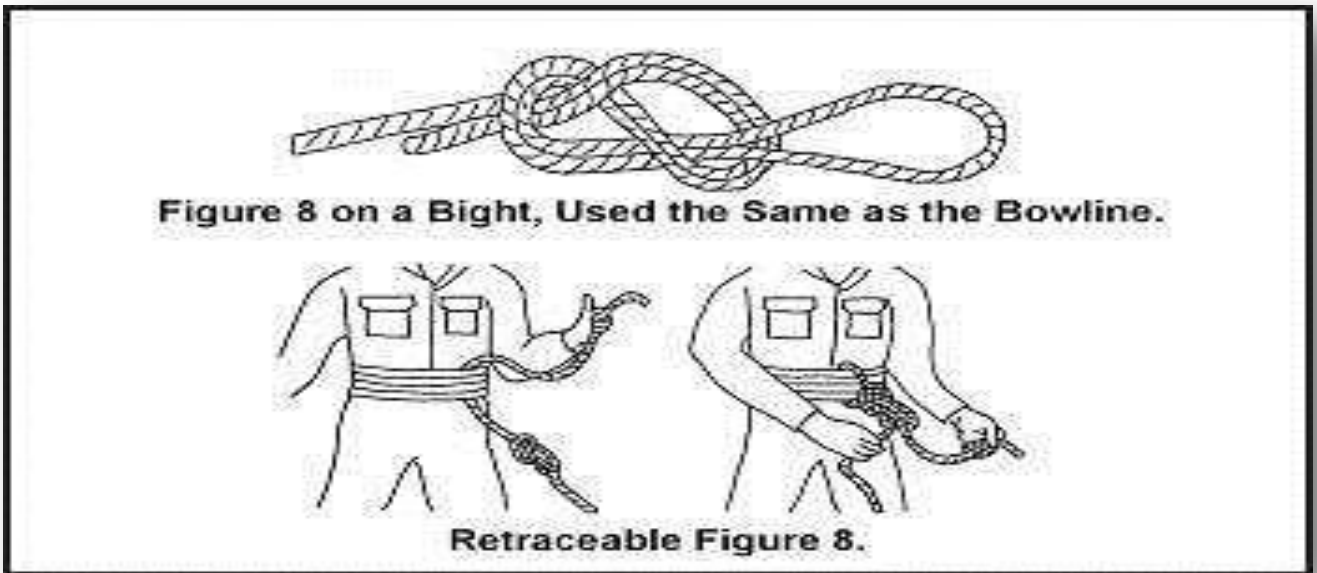


Figure G13 Figure 8 and retractable figure 8

14 Lessons I've learned about survival and how they pertain to you

1. You Can't Do It All At Once

This is a mistake that I and I am sure many others have made when starting out, we want to get it all done – yesterday. You run around all frantic, shaking and scatter brained determined to become prepared for a major disaster within a week of starting. But all you end up doing is wasting money and time. Relax; make a plan and work toward your goals and you'll get there sooner than you think.

2. You Don't Have To Be Rich

By reading some survival blogs and books you get the expression that you need to spend \$100,000 to reach a suitable level of preparedness. Unfortunately, this causes many to give up before they start. You don't have to prep like the rich – you just need to prep smart.

3. Make Your Own Plan

No two survival plans will be exactly the same. Granted there will be some semblance but each will have to be different to meet the needs of the individual. For example, I often suggest wheat as the backbone of the survival food storage plan but a small percent of the population are allergic to wheat and will need to store other foods in equal or greater value. You need to take a long look at your location, skills and needs and plan accordingly. Make your own plan.

4. Preparedness Isn't Measured By How Many Guns You Have

I'm sure many of you have made this mistake. When I started prepping I worried more about finding the perfect survival gun and building a battery than building my other survival preps. Guns are fun and it is easy to get lost in the appeal just don't let other areas of your preps suffer while you try to build your dream arsenal.

5. Skills Are More Important Than Gear

We've all heard the expression "he who dies with the most toys wins", I'm still trying to figure out what the winning prize is. I have nothing against using the latest technology and gear – just don't depend on it. Things break, get lost, stolen or don't work as intended. The most important piece of survival gear is your brain – learning survival skills should be your number one priority.

6. You're Not Rambo

Most of the "Rambo-want-to-be" types won't last long. Many new survivors fall into what I call the Rambo mind-set, they can't wait for the collapse and breakdown of law and order, and then they will

take to the woods and engage in one firefight after another. They see themselves as the ultimate killing machine taking down the bad guys in a burst of gunfire.

7. Get a Life

Preparedness is a serious business and it is easy to become obsessed – don't do it. I love learning new skills, reading survival books and planning for different possibilities and all this takes a lot of time, but I've learned that unless I take time off the rest of my life tends to fall apart. Go see a movie, spend time with family and relax. Then when you come back to all this you will do so with a fresh and rested mind which will allow you to get more done and make fewer mistakes. The key is balance.

8. Don't Just Read About How to Do Things

Most books on survival and self-reliance are never read or used. They are bought, flipped through and put away – never tested or learned from. This is a mistake. Read the books, study and try it for yourself. This is the only way to learn and know what actually works.

9. Have a Backup Plan

When I started prepping I thought all I needed to be prepared was a full pantry. We have all heard the warning "don't put all your eggs in the same basket" this is good advice in life as well as in survival planning. Too many things can go wrong and probably will. You need a backup plan, which brings us to our next point...

10. Remember the Number Three

You need to have at least three independent sources to meet all of your essential survival needs. Let's take for heat; you could have a wood stove, propane heater and cold weather sleeping bags. Power might consist of a backup generator, small solar set-up and a stockpile of disposable batteries. Food could include in home food storage, home garden and secret cache in a secure location away from home.

11. Include Your Family

If possible get your family on board so your prepping becomes a family affair, where you all can learn and spend time together. A family working together toward their preparedness is the best survival group. For example, take a first aid class, hunter safety course, self-defense class, or shop course together. Try to make it fun, interesting and include your family as much as possible.

12. Diversify (learn different skills)

Diversification ties in with number nine and ten above and the age-old advice of not putting all your eggs in one basket. Learn as many survival skills as possible. Being a master gardener for example, is a great skill that can be made even more efficient by also learning to keep what you grow. An expert trapper can increase their chance of survival by also learning to find edible plants. You get the idea.

13. Try to Do Something Every Week

The “what did you do to prep this week” segment is included every week on [my blog](#) to keep everyone motivated toward this end. At one time my preps were random – one week I would do a lot and the next two or three nothing. By setting a goal of doing at least one thing each week you will meet your goals earlier and be more efficient doing it.

14. Eat What You Store

Most of us have been guilty of this at one time or another, we fill our pantry with unfamiliar foods, thinking we will adapt our diet “when the time comes” but this is nonsense. You need to learn to prepare and use your storage foods now so they become familiar.

Final Thoughts: Meeting Your Survival Goals

Congratulations – you’ve made it through our 31 Days to Survival plan. I hope you have actually completed each day and not just skipped over the days while actually doing nothing. If you fall into the latter group (you know who you are) the information on meeting your survival goals in this section is for you...

Written Vs. Stored

By having your goals written on paper instead of stored in your head means you can refer to that list daily, thus reinforcing those goals and making them easier to do. I carry my list in my pocket and look over it at least once a day. Short term goals are written on Post-It notes and stuck on my refrigerator door and mirror.

Writing down your survival goals makes them harder to forget. Storing goals in back of your mind isn’t very efficient. Stress and day-to-day life make it easy to become distracted and eventually you lose sight of those goals altogether. Making a list is the best way to stay on track and get things done.

By your writing goals on paper, something happens. They go from an imaginary target to being real. They go from dreams to things-to-do.

A few weeks ago, I wrote down several survival goals of my own. Some, I never thought I would actually meet but as I started completing them, I saw that they were possible. Combined with determination and drive, I found that writing my goals down helped turn them into reality.

Big Enough to Stretch

I’ve set my survival goals high with my main short-term goal being moving to a safer retreat area (or at least one I like better) within the next six months and having a garden started at my new location by the beginning of next growing season.

That will be challenging, but I figure if I work hard enough, I can get it done. And it appears that I’ll meet my goal. I’ve found land in my chosen area and am working out the details with the property owner.

I’m setting similar fitness and survival skill goals, making them real by writing them down then working toward each. My long-term fitness goal is to sprint two miles with a loaded pack.

My skill goals included learning at least one new survival skill per week. Not just learning by reading, but actually doing when possible.

Start Now

The last piece of advice I have for you is to make your list now. Not tomorrow. Not next week. Not next month. If you haven’t written out tangible goals, figure out what you would like to do within the next month and the next year. Go ahead I’ll wait...

Remember goals can change. If you come to the conclusion that a goal on your list is no longer applicable to your situation, mark it off your list. It is not written in stone. Look over your list and work on these goals daily. By the way, every survival goal you complete builds confidence leading to completing the bigger ones on your list. It's a domino effect.

Now get busy...