
THE PREPAREDNESS REVIEW

Spring 2014

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From the Editor:

Thanks for downloading the 4th edition of The Preparedness Review. I'm always excited to release another edition because I know that great preparedness knowledge is being made available in a concise format for preppers to keep on their computers, tablets, phones or even print out to keep as a hard copy.

The release of TPR4 takes me back to one of the very first articles I linked to on Prepper Website. The article was on SHTFPlan and it was by Fernando Aguirre. The title was "How to Spot the Triggers of a Socioeconomic Collapse." That was almost 2 1/2 years ago. The economy hasn't "crashed" or "collapsed" like most of us were expecting. But I think we can all agree that it continues to limp along and any little bump in the road could send this slow spiral that we are on speeding to the bottom with a loud thud!

But even though we are on a slow decline, lives are being disrupted. People are losing their jobs, food is becoming more expensive, businesses are closing. For some, the collapse has already occurred. In this economic environment, we need to evolve from the way that we have looked at "things" and "stuff" in the past. We might need to downsize, repurpose, become DIY'ers, become more frugal. Preppers need to become more resourceful.

I'm pleased that this edition has the DIY'er, frugal, repurposing prepper in mind. Yes, there are articles that deal with other topics that wouldn't fit into these categories. But even then, they are still valuable to the preparedness community.

I would like to point out that, like our 3rd edition, there is a template that you can download. The template has been graciously contributed by Chris of The Bug Out Bag Guide and contains, you guessed it, a template to help you organize your bug out plans. If you follow his plan, you will be organized!

I'll close with the same lines from TPR3..."things seem to be at a fever pitch out there in the world. If you feel it, you know what I'm talking about. There are a lot of "voices" you can listen to. But the most important are the ones of rational thinking, confidence, preparedness and faith. God's blessings to you."

Peace,
Todd

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Applebox Oven: Bake In a Box Jamie Black-Smith

I'm starting to understand why people sometimes get the impression that preppers are crazy. Who else does a photoshoot with an aluminum covered box at 3 am? I know, I really need to get a life!

At the [Emergency Fair](#), multiple people told me they had made an AppleBox Oven when they were in Girl Scouts! The only thing I remember from my Girl Scout days was trying to see how many cookies I could sell my mom. The top earner would get a prize and I was so excited when I finally got it one year... a \$5 compass (LAME). I haven't sold a cookie since!

Anyways, if you didn't have an awesome Girl Scout leader, have no fear. You can make one of these with a box and a few supplies you can find in your neighbor's trash. Also, don't feel like you have to do it at 3am, but I think it works better if you do ;)

MAKE AN APPLEBOX OVEN

This is another [alternative cooking method](#) and a great way to bake in an emergency! It only uses about 1/2 the charcoal that a Dutch Oven uses and gives the same results as baking in a regular oven! You can bake your kid's birthday cake, whip-up your famous muffins, or even cook up to 3 loaves of bread in it at the same time! Go ahead and make one, or if you don't have time, grab the supplies to have on hand for if the power goes out (or if your oven breaks)!

SUPPLIES:

- **APPLEBOX** – Need top and bottom (20"x 13" x 12 1/2")
- **HEAVY DUTY FOIL** – 1 Wide Roll
 - I just walked into HEB and asked for one!
- **HIGH HEAT FOIL TAPE**
- **SPRAY ADHESIVE** – I used the Loctite High Performance
- **OVEN BAG** - 1 oven bag cut into a 10x5" piece
- **BOX CUTTER**
- **CANDY THERMOMETER** – Needs to read up to 400



1- Cut out a window!

Cut out a window about 9"x4" that is centered, and 2 1/2" from the top.



2- Cut out the 2nd Window

Place boxes inside of each other, trace the window on the 2nd box, then cut it out!



3- Fill in Holes & Gaps

With the extra cardboard you just cut for the windows, use it to fill in all the gaps and holes on the box.



4 – Tape up Corner/Edges/Holes

Using the High Heat Foil Tape, put it on all the seams, corners, sides, holes, window openings, and anything else that will make it extra durable!



5- Cover EVERYTHING with Foil!

Now it's time to make your box look like a spaceship!

- Roughly estimate the size of foil you need and tear off a piece.
- Go ahead and mold it gently so it won't tear when you put it in.
- Spray Adhesive spray on the **DULL SIDE** (shiny side will show).
- Press the foil on the box and smooth until it is as secure as possible
- REPEAT: Tear Piece, Spray Dull Side, Smooth on Box, do this until the **ENTIRE** box is covered!



6- Make the Window

Cut the center of the foil, then cut diagonally to meet the center line, repeat this with each corner. Spray the foil inside of the window and fold tabs inside the box, smooth it, and tape if needed.

BOTTOM BOX ONLY:

- Using the oven roasting bag, cut a double layer rectangle.
 - 10"x5" (1" larger than window).
- Secure oven bag in place on the **OUTSIDE** of only the **BOTTOM** box!
 - Use the Foil tape and Stretch it Tightly!

I accidentally did the inside, but not a big deal.



7 – Put Boxes Together



8 – Stick Candy Thermometer Through Box

Put a candy thermometer through both boxes in the upper right hand corner.



COOKING WITH THE APPLEBOX OVEN

SUPPLIES:

- **CHARCOALS** - About 17 coals for 1 Hour @ 350 ([Kingsford Brand](#) is Best :)
 - One Year = 22 (16 lb bags)
 - Don't Forget to Store Newspapers & Matches
- **POTS & PANS** – Make sure they FIT Inside the oven.
- [CHIMNEY CHARCOAL STARTER](#)
- **LONG-HANDLED TONGS**
- **MATCHES & NEWSPAPER** – To help light the charcoal.
- **FOIL OR PAN** – To place the charcoals on.
- **BLANKET** – If it's cold, place one on top to help keep the heat in.
- **RACK** – Make with:
 - 4 empty cans filled 1/2 way with rocks
 - Cookie Cooling Rack

1- PREPARE AREA:

- Place piece of foil, shiny side up, on level ground, and on nothing flammable!
- Place cans filled with rocks so that the corners of the rack will rest on them. Make sure the AppleBox oven fits easily over the cans and rack without knocking them over.
 - Don't use full cans, I just didn't feel like drinking 4 Cokes!



2- PREPARE CHARCOAL

You can control the temperature of the oven by the number of coals you use in it.

- **Each coal is about 35 F** (350 = 10 coals)
- In very cold weather a couple additional charcoals may be needed.

USING THE [CHARCOAL CHIMNEY STARTER](#)*:

- Put desired number of coals into the charcoal chimney.
- Place chimney on a piece of foil on the ground.
- Place a wadded up piece of newspaper in the base of chimney and light.
- Allow to stand 5-10 minutes .
- Wait until all the coals have white spots at least the size of a dime.
- Using tongs, place the hot briquettes on the foil.
- Spread them out evenly between the cans and across the middle.

*A [charcoal chimney](#) starter allows you to ignite charcoal without needing starter fluid, using only newspaper! Charcoal rests on a shelf with holes and there is space below for the wadded up newspaper. Place some heavy-duty foil on the ground, then light some newspaper beneath the chimney. You'll have charcoals ready for cooking in only a few minutes.

3- COOK!

PRE-HEAT OVEN

- Place the Applebox over the coals and the rack.
- Rest one corner of the box on a 1" rock or something that will leave a little space (this allows enough air in the box for the charcoal to stay lit).
- Let stand for 5 min.

COOK

- Carefully lift Applebox above rack and place on the ground (this will help to hold trapped heat in the box).
- Quickly place the tray of food to bake on the rack and replace box over coals, resting one corner on the rock for air.
- Charcoal will burn for 35-40 minutes.



ADDING ADDITIONAL HEAT

- When longer cooking times are required, additional hot charcoals can be added by slightly lifting the box and slipping them in with long tongs.
- When adding more coals, only add 1/2 the original number.
- SAFELY dispose of charcoal! No burning up church trash cans ;) At least I know what to do if that happens!

EXTRA NOTES:

- I found the rack above at Wal-mart that fit perfectly. Yes, it will melt the plastic off, but now I don't have to worry about drinking 4 Cokes before making dinner!
- Use light-colored pans so that baked foods do not get too dark on the bottom.
- When setting up the oven, face the window toward the sun. This allows you to check the foods visually if it's done.
- When baking in freezing temperature, place a doubled piece of wool blanket or other material that is insulated on top of the box to retain the inside heat.

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Low-Cost Survival Hygiene: Making Lye Soap From Fat and Wood Ashes

Josh

We've previously taken a look at wood ashes, and as promised in this article we're going to delve into one of their most prominent uses as a soap-making ingredient. Lye soap is actually quite old, having been used by many different cultures and societies around the world as a way of profitably reusing meat drippings and the remains of old campfires. For the preparedness minded, lye soap is a convenient cleanser for the body and many other surfaces in addition to being an easily transportable barter item.



Disclaimer and Important Safety Info. I put disclaimers on most of my posts, but in this case you should really take a moment to read this. Lye in its distilled form is extremely caustic, and it can easily eat through your skin, muscles, fat, and even the nerves without you noticing until it is much too late. Always cover exposed skin, wear eye goggles, and wear thick rubber gloves when making lye or handling it when making soap. Always use lye in a well-ventilated area. Be extremely cautious with it and you should be fine.

Furthermore, despite what you may have heard, vinegar is *an absolutely terrible idea* when you are burned with lye, as the reaction between small amounts of vinegar and burning lye will actually cause extreme heat, which will add a thermal burn on top of the chemical one. Rather than trying to neutralize the lye with vinegar, simply dilute the lye with as much water as you can by vigorously rinsing it and rinsing it as much as possible. I would recommend that you have someone else (such as a helper!) call 911 so you can focus on washing the lye until they tell you different. [This website](#) goes into the nitty-gritty of why this is, so please check it out if you aren't fully convinced.

With that little disclaimer out of the way, let's delve into the soap-making!

First step, getting the lye

The first thing you need to make lye soap is, naturally, the lye. This is typically derived from wood ashes, specifically ashes from hardwood trees as they tend to be less resinous and give better product over all. The method for taking ashes from your fire and turning them into lye is as follows:

Lovely brown lye water. Make sure you don't use a metal container!

1. Gather the fine white ashes (not wood chips if any remain) and place them in a container that can resist the alkalinity of the lye. Metal and glass are not suitable for this task: use plastic or wood. This container should be large enough to hold several gallons of water, and ideally should have a tightly closable lid to avoid accidental spills or splashings.
2. Gather several gallons of soft water, usually rainwater works best. Water from wells and rivers tends to be filled with additives that interfere with soap-making, and you may need to add a few scoops of baking soda to the water if you don't have sufficient rainwater handy.



3. *Slowly and gently* pour the soft water over the ashes, taking care to avoid splashing. Stop when you start seeing ashes floating around in the water instead of dissolving.
4. Allow the mixture to sit for at least 24 hours, though it may be even longer. The water needs time to leach the lye out of the ashes, and you'll know there's lye in the water once it starts turning brown.
5. Test the water periodically by adding an egg or potato and seeing if it floats in the liquid. If it floats with about half of the egg or potato showing, you have the proper ratio of lye to water. If it sinks too much, you have too much water and you need more ashes. If it floats higher, add more soft water since the lye concentration is too high. Alternatively, place a single bird feather in the mixture and see if it dissolves the feather to determine proper concentration. *Immediately dispose of any foodstuffs that touch the lye water, and do not put it in a compost heap.*
6. Carefully scoop out the lye from the surface of the water into another resistant container for final boiling. You'll want to use avoid getting actual ashes on your skimming tool of choice, but otherwise just avoid splashing.
7. Test the lye again for proper balance.

Preparing the fat

Fat is the other primary ingredient in lye soap, whether it be leftover fat from butchering or just the drippings of grease from cooked meat. Fortunately this is a lot easier and safer to deal with than the lye, though you should watch for grease fires.

Once the fat has been cleaned and hardened, scrape off the muddy looking junk and use the pure white fat.

1. To clean the fat, pour the liquid drippings through multiple layers of cheesecloth in order to strain out gristle and meat bits from the fat.
2. Bring equal parts grease and water to a boil, then remove the mixture from the heat source and add another 1/4 of water.
3. Once the fat has solidified, remove anything that looks "dirty", leaving the clean fat behind. Continue this cycle until the fat is pure.
4. On your final cleansing add about a spoonful of salt to the mixture. If using drippings of fat from cooking, also boil this last load in a mixture of 1/2 cup of water mixed with a few spoonfuls of vinegar per cup of fat you've collected.



Bringing it all together to make soap

Now you need to mix the fat and lye together to make your soap. The goal is to use the fat to solidify the mixture while the lye works to keep the greasiness of the fat to a minimum, making a nice liquid mixture that can harden into a bar of soap. Generally speaking the mixture should be 12 parts lye to one part fat. Take care to properly dilute the lye during this process or the soap will remain caustic and dangerous to the skin!

1. Mix lye in about 10 quarts of water and begin boiling it. This gets the lye ready to be mixed in with the fat and dilutes it a little more.
2. Mix in your fat, maintaining the boil. You don't need to stir just yet, but you do want the fat to desolidify if you let it harden back up between the first cleaning and when you decide to make soap.
3. Add 4 more quarts of water and begin stirring the mixture together as it boils down. Continue mixing until it is about the consistency of corn syrup, dripping but solid.
4. Place a little bit of the mixture in a mold and let it dry into a bar of soap, then test it for proper feel and lye concentration. If it burns, add more fat to the rest of the mixture with water to dilute the lye. If the mixture is very greasy and the mixture has lots of scum on top of it during stirring, add more lye to break it down. Err on the side of too fatty rather than too caustic, since fat isn't likely to hurt you!
5. Once you have tested and found the proper balance, make as many bars as you wish and enjoy scrubbing. The soap is great for people as well as general household use. Flakes can even be shaved off and added to laundry wash water for homemade dish soap.



Lye soap can be quite soft, and is a great homemade item for preparedness.

And that's all you need to make your own lye soap at home. Be careful with the lye and balance the concentration correctly and you should avoid any burns and have a safe, fun time making this stuff.



Josh learned preparedness and self-reliance at a young age in the fields and woods of his Midwestern home. He currently helps his family run a small homestead complete with lazy dogs, hungry pigs, and far too many garden weeds.

When he can pull himself away from that, he is also one of two exclusive writers for Preparedforthat.com. This survival site is a resource designed to help anyone from the beginner to the expert learn how to be better prepared for any emergency situation. Both Josh and Prepared Preacher keep the website regularly updated in addition to adding other content on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Preparedforthat), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/Preparedforthat), and [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/Preparedforthat) on a daily basis. You can reach both authors with questions at Preparedforthat@gmail.com.



DIY: Build a Counter Top Extension for Hidden Storage

Dale Goodwin

As we begin our food storage we are all looking for places to put our food and supplies, we fill out closets, shelves and any nook and cranny we can find, Lisa even puts a few cans food behind the pots and pans, so why not hide it in plain sight?

It is not only important to have this stockpile of food and supplies ready if something were to happen that required us to use it, it is also important to not put all of our eggs in one basket and find new and different places to hide it.

If someone were to find out we had these supplies and decided to come take advantage of our preparedness or if the government decided to "confiscate" it for the greater good of the people forcing us to stand in line for our rations just like everyone else that would put us in the same position we are trying to avoid.

Not only can we store food and supplies in different places like under our beds, in the garage and even behind the pots and pans we can also hide it in plain sight. This is what I decided to do when my wife asked me to build her a cabinet to go beneath the kitchen counter top.

How to Build the Counter Top Extension

Building a kitchen counter top extension doesn't require you to be a master craftsman or wood worker. With the right tools you would be surprised how easily this can be done, and it also helps you learn a new [skill that might be useful in a post collapse](#) society.

There are some tools what will make this a whole lot easier, but if you don't have a table saw or a nail gun all you need is...

- A hammer.
- A framing triangle.
- Finishing nails (at least 1" long)
- A hand held circular saw (or an old fashioned wood saw)
- A sander or sand paper.
- And some wood filler or caulk.
- 1 X 2 trim (for supports and trim)
- 1 X 7 planks (your dimensions might be different)
- 1 large piece of plywood.
- Trim pieces that match your current counter's trim



Counter Top Extension Dimensions

The goal of the counter top extension is camouflage, we want it to look like it is a part of the existing counter top, that way if someone comes to take what you have they will hopefully look elsewhere.

Measure the width (how far out the counter top extends over the existing counter) height (from the floor up) and length you want the cabinet.

You might notice that this shelf unit does not go all the way to the end of the counter top and is not flush with the counter top. This is because of the 45 degree angle on the corner where I plan on building a small angled shelf unit to fill this area in, and I also need to finish the base for this unit to connect to the floor.

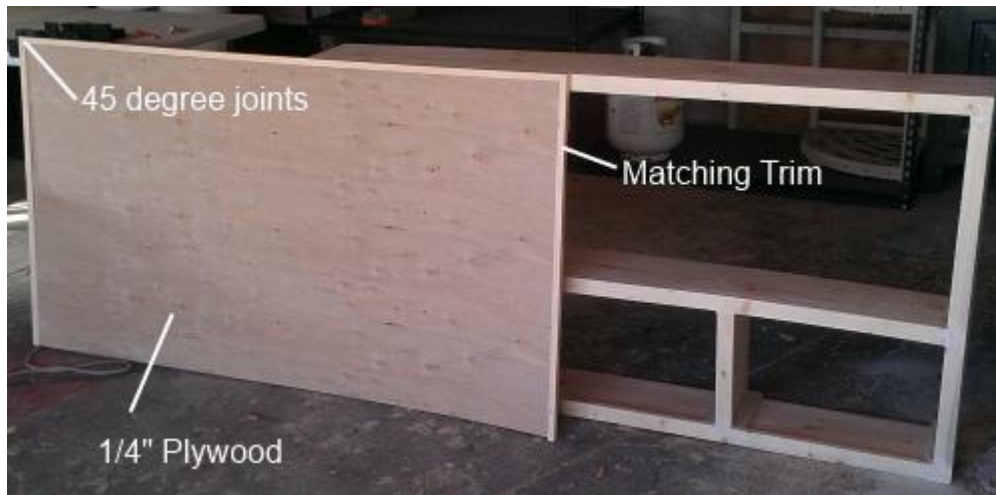


Constructing the Shelf

1. For the outside frame and shelves I used 1 X 7 planks, I used these because my counter top extends over the counter base 7 inches and I wanted to make it flush with the counter top, yours might be different.
2. After you get the frame built you need to add your shelves. You can do this any way you want, but I did it this way because the two boards below the long shelf add support.
3. For a little more added support you can nail in 1 X 2 supports on both sides of the the vertical dividers and under the main shelf.
4. Finish the front face of the cabinet with 1 X 2 strips of wood. This part is a little tedious and requires accurate measurement, but the trim is what gives it that quality look.
5. Fill in all of the gaps with wood filler, caulking or Spackle...just remember that it will need to be sanded and caulking can be a little tough to sand.
6. After the wood filler has dried sand the entire shelf with 180 fine grit sand paper (sandpaper comes in different grit levels, 60 is coarse and 180 is finishing level)



Build the Front Face



Now we need to make the front face of the shelf unit and makes it look like this shelf and the existing counter are one piece.

1. Measure the finished dimensions of the shelf you just built, you will need to be as accurate as possible to create a seamless fit
2. Once you cut the plywood (or whatever wood you use) trim around the outside of the plywood with some trim that matches the trim on your current cabinets.
3. You can glue the trim on the plywood, nail it on or do both like I did. But if you nail it on you will need to use a Dremel to file off the nails so they don't stick out of the back side.
4. Make sure all of the trim pieces fit together at 45 degrees, this can be a little tough without a miter box but you want it to match the current cabinet area as much as possible.



Connecting the Face to the Shelf

To connect the face to the shelf unit you can use magnets (like your current shelves) or even Velcro. I chose to use the magnets because I didn't want the shelf to have Velcro all over it and look ugly when the face is off of it.

If you use 3 or 4 magnets in the right spots you should have no problem putting the face on and taking it off very easily.

Painting the Shelf to Match

Now that you have everything built you can paint the shelf to match the existing cabinets. Try to find the same type and color of paint that is on the existing cabinets. Black is not just Black, paint comes in flat, gloss, interior, exterior, semi-gloss etc. so try to match it as close as possible...or you could just redo the entire kitchen while you're at it. We were lucky enough to have some of the same paint leftover that we used for the kitchen.

Hide it in Plain Sight, Think outside the box

This is just one way I have thought about hiding food and supplies in plain sight, but this is just another example of [thinking outside the box](#).

You could build a coffee table or end table the same way. I have also seen where you can take part of your floor and make a little hatch, put food below your floor and it is camouflaged to look like it's just part of the floor...that's a little trickier, and my wife wouldn't be too happy if I destroyed our floor, but who knows haha.



I believe we need to live life to its fullest and be thankful for everything we have been given on a daily basis, but we should do so with the understanding that it could all be taken away in the blink of an eye. As Benjamin Franklin said "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. By preparing while we have the opportunity, we can make life a little easier if and when we don't. Dale Goodwin [Survivalistprepper.net](#)

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The advertisement features a central logo for 'ENDLESS SUN SOLAR' with a green leaf and blue solar panel icon. Below the logo is the slogan 'Don't be left in the dark.' and the website 'www.EndlessSunSolar.co'. Surrounding the text are images of a laptop, a backpack, and two solar panels with associated cables.

The Sweet Spot of Frugal Gaye Levy

Without overtly saying so, a typical theme on my website at Backdoor Survival and others like it is saving money. Whether it is making your own household products, finding new ways to repurpose old things, or showing you how to build stuff yourself, saving money is something widely promoted on most credible prepping and homesteading websites.

The truth is, being frugal simply makes sense. These are uncertain times and regardless of how fat your bank account, even the teeniest economic calamity will throw our lives into turmoil.



Some may say that being frugal is being cheap but the truth is, being frugal is an important part of being [self-sufficient](#). Every prepper I know has the singular goal of taking care of their own needs with only nominal reliance on governments, politicians, Wall Street, supermarkets and shopping malls. That is my goal and if you are reading this, is undoubtedly your goal as well.

But how does it all come together? Surely there is a point where being frugal moves beyond being a burden and instead becomes part of an important quest for a better life. Finding this point – and mind you the exact point will differ from person to person – is what I like to call the **sweet spot of frugal**.

Frugal is a State of Mind

I have always maintained that living a frugal lifestyle means living a life without waste. It means being economical when it comes to utilizing resources (money, power, water, even words) so that those same resources can be spent on things that matter. And that is the crux of the deal: what matters to one person may be insignificant, excessive or even wasteful to someone else. It all gets down to choices.

You can be rich and be frugal. You can be poor and be a wasteful spendthrift. At the end of the day, frugal is a state of mind.

[Wikipedia](#) defines frugality as the practice of acquiring goods and services in a restrained manner, and resourcefully using already owned economic goods and services, to achieve a longer term goal.

Definitions aside, what does it mean to be frugal?

Six Ways to Be Frugal

1. Understand the difference between need and want.

There is not a darn thing wrong with wanting something. Where people get into trouble is failing to recognize and understand the difference between need and want. Needs are things that are required to live your life. Food, clothing and shelter, with all of their permutations, fall into the “need” bucket.



On the other hand, the want bucket includes a new car, a larger house, 20 different pairs of shoes and a vacation trip to Paris. There is nothing wrong with these things if you can afford them without sacrificing your needs or going in to debt.

2. Live Simply For the Sake of It

There is a special joy in living simply. That means eating , plain, wholesome foods (think soups, stews and garden fresh vegetables). It means creating your own household and personal care products. And it means pursuing family-oriented hobbies such as camping, fishing, hunting and even board games.

By choosing simplicity, you save money and are frugal by default. You live a life of doing rather than spending. Which gets us to the next point . . .

3. Do It Yourself

Whether you are you are growing your own food, remodeling your own home, or simply walking to your destination instead of driving, being frugal means you do things yourself, without reliance on others. Not everything, mind you. But some things. The important things. Things that give you satisfaction as well as the financial freedom you crave.

4. Use What You Have

Madison Avenue has bombarded us with gadgets and gizmos. Truthfully, do you really need that top of the line food processor to chop veggies when a solid chef’s knife will do? Do you really need a computer, a tablet, a Kindle, and an iPhone to browse the internet and jump on Facebook?

The 20th century spoiled us and now, well into the 21st century, our thirst for the latest and greatest has become part of our culture. Get over it!

Whatever you do, try not to get caught up in thinking that you need the newest, the biggest and the best. Sometimes the tools, gadgets and gizmos you already own are as good or better than anything new you can but. Just make sure that you take the time to learn how to use them. You just might be surprised at what they can do.

5. Repurpose the Old

When an item has served its useful life, look at it with new eyes. Can an old table be refinished? What about that old shirt? Can it be used while working outdoors in the yard or can it be cut up and used as rags?

No one wants to be a packrat, or heaven forbid, a hoarder, and collect useless old stuff, but give some consideration to the fact that the reason your discarded possessions are useless is that you purchased replacement items due to want and not need.

If that describes you, consider passing the useful but no longer needed items on to a family member or friend. Or sell them on Craigslist or Ebay, or donate the item to charity. Just remember that the right thing to do is clean up and repair your used items first so that they are serviceable. Don't foist garbage on others.

6. Don't Go Broke When Gifting

Gift giving is often a rote activity, mired in obligation rather than fondness and the desire to make someone happy. Once you jump off of the gilded gift-giving wagon, you might actually enjoy and look forward to the gift-giving process.

Make it a point to give gifts that are thoughtful and practical. Better yet, give the gift of memories or the gift of yourself. Ask yourself whether, in the big picture of life, will the recipient recall a special picnic you shared together or that expensive trinket that maxed out your credit card? Will they remember the time you took care of their children while they went on a much needed vacation or that expensive, but unwanted sweater that languishes unworn in the back of a closet?

When it comes to gifting, be practical and be simple. At the same time, ensure that your gift reflects your values and is not something that speaks of obligation rather than caring.

The Final Word - Embrace the Sweet Spot of Frugal

Are these the only steps towards becoming frugal? Of course not. On the other hand, they are easy things you can do now without adding complications to a life that is already too busy, too cluttered and too chaotic.

Before closing, I would like to share one last point. Never giving in to the wants in life – no matter how foolish and irresponsible it may seem to someone else – is stupid. Are you surprised by that?

Here is the deal. Life is for living in the here and now. That means that an occasional indulgence is okay. I give you permission for that. That said, most of the time, make your indulgences simple things that cost little money. But if you really, really want something and you can afford it, give in once in a while. Think about it, dream about it, and then do it.

Life is to be enjoyed. The secret is to find the ultimate sweet spot of frugal that is right for you.

Until next time, make every day a prepping day!

***About Gaye:** Gaye Levy started [Backdoor Survival](#) so that she could share her angst and concern about our deteriorating economy and its impact on ordinary, middle-class folks. She also wanted to become a Prepper of the highest order and to share her knowledge as she learned it along the way. On Backdoor Survival you will find survival and preparedness tools and tips for creating a self-reliant lifestyle through thoughtful prepping and optimism.*

To read more from Gaye, visit her website, [Backdoor Survival](#). You can also follow Gaye on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#) and [Pinterest](#).



Infected Wounds

Dr. Joe Alton M.D. a.k.a. Dr. Bones

As a physician, I have on occasion dealt with **infected wounds**, sometimes from injury and also after surgical procedures. In a survival setting, most wounds will be contaminated with debris, dirt, and bacteria. Therefore, anyone who will be medically responsible after a disaster occurs may expect to deal with wound infections. The ability to recognize and treat infected injuries will be an important one to have in times of trouble.



Recognizing a wound infection

The human body is a miracle of engineering. Our immune system probably nips many contaminations in the bud, but a body under stress sometimes can't effectively fight germs. This explains why certain people, such as diabetics, are so prone to wound infections. The elderly are especially susceptible.

Your skin is its own ecosystem, with bacteria that naturally live there, such as Staph. Epidermidis. When the immune system fails to recognize and fight an infection, even “normal” skin bacteria can invade deep wounds and cause serious damage. Delays in healing and even invasion of the circulation can lead to life-threatening conditions.

To identify an infected wound, look for these signs:

- Redness around the edges which spreads over time
- Swelling around the wound, sometimes appearing shiny
- Warmth in the area of the wound compared to other parts of the body
- Pain out of proportion to the size of the wound
- Drainage of milky fluid or pus from the wound, which can have a foul odor
- Discoloration of deep tissues
- Lack of healing over time



Red, swollen, warm skin around the wound is referred to as “[Cellulitis](#)”. If the wound is deep enough, the bone and its marrow can become infected, which is known as “[Osteomyelitis](#)”. Once the bacteria invades the circulation, the entire body is affected. We called this “[Septicemia](#)” or “Sepsis”. Septic patients or those with osteomyelitis commonly have fevers to go along with the above-listed signs and symptoms.

Preventing Wound Infections

Proper wound care and frequent dressing changes are the cornerstones to preventing wound infections. In the healing process, new cells fill in an open wound by a process known as “[*Granulation*](#)”. These new cells need a moist environment for rapid growth, and so any deep wound should have a sterile moist (not soaking wet) bandage.

A thorough flushing (using a 60 – 100 cc irrigation syringe) with clean water or a mild antiseptic solution will clear out debris and discharge. This should be performed before each dressing change.



Although iodine or saline solutions are often used to moisten the actual bandage, recent evidence suggests that sterilized drinkable water is probably as good or better. The moist bandage is then covered with a dry dressing.

Oftentimes, triple antibiotic cream is applied to the skin (only) before taping the dressing into place. Silver gel, a component of many of our medical kits, is another option. Mark the bandage with the time and date it was placed. Some advocate the use of honey due to its antibiotic properties.

Wound dressings should be changed at least once or twice daily. Sanitary precautions such as hand-washing, sterilized instruments, and glove usage will significantly decrease the risks of infection.

Treating Wound Infections

The most common cause of serious wound infections is the bacteria Staph. Aureus, although Group A Strep, Pseudomonas, and various intestinal bacteria are other micro-organisms commonly seen. An especially troublesome form of Staph. Aureus has shown resistant to the usual antibiotics used. This is called Methicillin Resistant Staph. Aureus, better known to the public as *MRSA*. Once only seen in hospital-based infections, this resistant micro-organism is now seen in the general population.

It's important to not let a wound infection become severe because these are difficult to cure without IV antibiotics. For mild to moderate infections, consider some of the following antibiotics (alternative antibiotics in parentheses below):

- Bactrim (Bird-Sulfa)
- Clindamycin (Fish-Cin)
- Doxycycline (Bird-Biotic)
- Cephalexin (Fish-Flox) - Note: 10% of people with penicillin allergies will be allergic to Cephalexin.

To find out more about these antibiotics and others, check out our 4-part series of articles on the subject at www.doomandbloom.net or check out a print or digital copy of the Second Edition of our book "The Survival Medicine Handbook", available at the website or Amazon.com.

One important point to remember is that you should **never** attempt to close an infected open wound. Locking bacteria into a wound is a sure recipe for disaster.

Joe and Amy Alton are the authors of the #1 Amazon Bestseller "[The Survival Medicine Handbook](http://www.doomandbloom.net)". See their articles in Backwoods Home, Survival Quarterly, and other great magazines. For over 400 articles on medical preparedness, go to their website at www.doomandbloom.net.

The opinions voiced by Joe Alton, M.D., and Amy Alton, A.R.N.P., aka Dr. Bones and Nurse Amy, are their own and are not meant to take the place of seeking medical help from your healthcare provider. The practice of medicine without a license is illegal and punishable by law. Seek modern and standard medical care whenever and wherever it is available.



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How to Make a Bug Out Plan

Chris

Many people who hear about the prepper lifestyle greatly underestimate the level of planning, practice, and organization required to truly prepare yourself and loved ones to survive an unforeseen disaster. Simply going online and buying a pre-made bug out bag is just not going to cut it when trouble comes knocking. Besides tailoring a survival kit for your individual needs and the challenges present in your local environment, having a detailed and realistic bug out plan is an essential component of being prepared. This bug out plan can take many forms but should cover a few basic points and be flexible enough to adapt in a dynamic environment. To help you make a bug out plan that is suited your YOUR personal survival situation we have developed a Bug Out Plan Template to download, fill out, and distribute amongst your bug out party. You can find this template in this issue of The Preparedness Review or [follow this link](#) to download it.

Any comprehensive bug out plan should include where to meet, where to go, ways to communicate, and alternate strategies should members of your bug out party run into any unforeseen obstacles. Here are a few basic steps that anyone can take to build a bug out plan to help their family maximize their state of readiness:

1. Identify and Assess Likely Threats and Scenarios

Gaining a thorough understanding of what threats you are likely to face is a big step towards building a realistic, effective bug out plan. Once you know the risks, you can start planning to mitigate them. Start by taking a look at what disasters have occurred historically in your area. Do you live near a river that is prone to flooding? Has your locality been targeted by terrorist attacks ever? Do you live near an earthquake fault line? Understanding what is likely to happen will help you form your plan. For example, if you live near a river that is prone to flooding, you know you have to evacuate in a direction away from the body of water and head for high ground. Performing this risk analysis will help you form your plan and will both eliminate some bad options and make good options more obvious. Keep likely threats in mind when building all the facets of your plan for maximum effectiveness.

2. Decide Who Is Bugging Out With You

This may be obvious if you are planning on bugging out with your family or friends but it is worth taking a look at for anyone who is absolutely determined to execute a solo bug out. After including essential members (family, friends) it is best to limit the size of your group as much as possible. Larger groups require more resources, make more noise, and generally draw more unwanted attention. Additionally, if your group is more than 5 people in size it is wise to break up into sub groups to speed decision making and movement. Designate specific team leaders of these sub groups and the overall leader of the entire party as part of your preparations so when time is precious there is no argument over who you will be following. It is useful to list and examine strengths and weakness of your party members so that you can best balance these teams for greatest success. In the event that you have to split up stick to the buddy systems to make sure everyone has a partner to watch their back. Our Bug Out Plan Template's first section has a worksheet to fill out to identify your party members, sub groups, and strengths and weakness of those individuals to help you define your bug out party.

3. Establish a rally point

Chances are, when disaster strikes you and your family are not all going to be sitting around the dinner table together. It may be that the kids are at school and the parents are at work. To avoid the panic and confusion of multiple family members searching for each other in the chaos, you must establish a meeting or rally point for all members to meet at. This may be your home, your office, your children's classroom, or any other location that is known to all members. A rally point should be accessible and safe to meet at given likely possible scenarios. Where is not as important as the fact that it is specific within the designated location. Saying that you are going to meet your kids at their school is not as effective as saying you will meet them in a specific room or office within the school. Make sure everyone knows *exactly* where to meet. Once you have all party members, you can begin your evacuation together. The second section of our Bug Out Plan Template helps you identify your primary and alternate rally points. Be sure your entire bug out party is familiar with these.

4. Have a specific destination

As a part of your plan you will need to pick a specific destination (or destinations to give you greater flexibility) to bug out to. You will not want to just go where the mobs are going and let inertia decide your direction. Use your risk analysis from above to determine where the safest directions to move in are. Knowing your risks is a large part of being prepared. Also consider if there are any locations available where you can store survival supplies such as a campsite, second home, or relative or friend's home. Some preppers even go so far as to purchase property in an area they perceive as being insulated from likely disasters in order to establish these locations as a bug out destination. Planning and preparing your bug out destination(s) is an essential part of your plan. Our Template's 3rd section helps you plan your bug out locations and has space to paste in a map of your route to them.

5. Plan Multiple Routes

Planning a single route to your bug out destination is a recipe for failure. If that one route option becomes unavailable for any reason, all your careful prepping will go to waste and your family will be in great jeopardy. Plan multiple routes and transport options to get there. If you are not able to actually do practice runs on these routes, make realistic estimates of both distance and travel time. If you have to climb or go around something, this will add to your journey and you will want to [plan your survival kit](#) to account for this extra time and effort. If you are not able to do a practice run, at minimum do a virtual hike using Google Maps. This will give you a good idea of the terrain and may let you see potential obstacles you may face. Our Bug Out Template's 3rd section also helps you plan your routes. Use the space provided for your map to highlight any routes and obstacles when making your plan so you are prepared if you need to evacuate.

6. Establish Communication Methods

Although we can assess likely scenarios it is never possible to fully understand the threats you and your bug out party members will actually be facing. It is important to establish communication protocols ahead of time so that you can pass information back and forth as required to adapt your bug out plan to meet your needs. This means designating both primary and alternate communication methods in case a cell network is unavailable or you are not able to meet face to face. This may be CB or HAM radio or a method of leaving signs at your rally points, routes, or destinations. Decide what works best for your party.

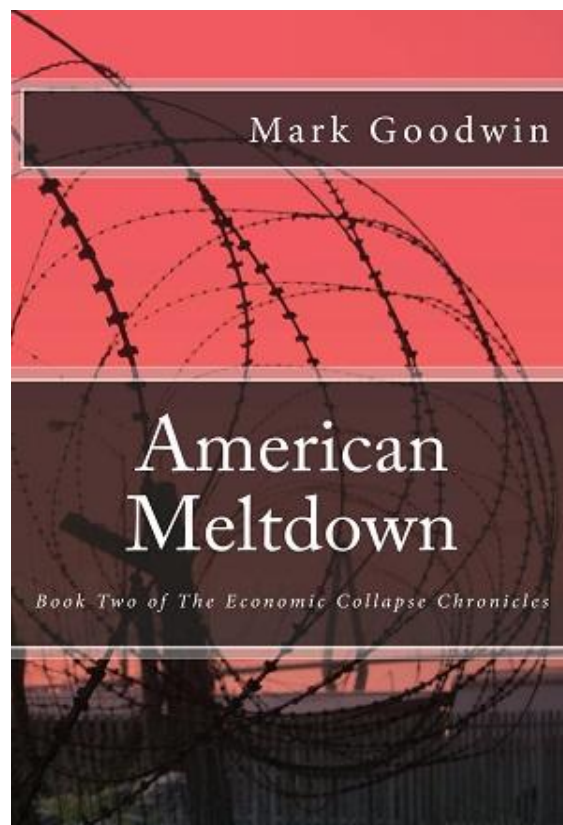
It is also wise to agree upon code words or signs to use to surreptitiously pass vital information. In our Bug Out Plan Template's Section 6 we provide several examples of these phrases to focus on such as "We are in danger", "All clear", and "I have been followed" to name a few. Feel free to use our suggestions or make up your own codes to fit your unique survival situation. Whichever option you choose be sure that your entire bug out party is familiar with the basic code words and communication methods.

Other Considerations

- It is highly useful to collect emergency contact information for all your family members and any relevant government entities in one place and distribute this list amongst all party members. Adding in emergency radio frequencies is additionally helpful. Section 4 of our Bug Out Template provides a worksheet to fill out with emergency contact information so you can keep it all in one place.
- If you have direct access to your bug out location and routes, seek to cache survival supplies such as clothes, food, and water. This will lighten the amount of gear you will need to carry and greatly help your evacuation.
- If you know your routes, you will be able to pack specific survival gear that will help along the way. For example, if you know there are multiple streams along your route, you can plan on carrying less water and collecting and purifying some as you move.
- Be honest about any limiting factors a party member may bring. If you are travelling with elderly or very young people, you will need to account for this when planning resources and especially travel speed. Plan your travel speed at the rate of the slowest person you will be travelling with to be safe.
- Section 5 on our Bug Out Template has space to paste in photos of the members of your bug out party. Some preppers may not wish to use this for operational security reasons. It is however highly useful if you are traveling with children to distribute photos to all party members. This is in case you get separated, these photos are a resource that you can show to other survivors to help with your search. Having a picture to say "Have you seen this child?" or "Have you Seen my Mom, she looks like this?" will make it far easier for people to identify the missing members and increase the likelihood of gaining information about their whereabouts.

As you can see here, it doesn't take much to make that next step up the readiness ladder from having a bug out bag to having a fully formed plan. Set aside some time with your family and talk about your needs and the best way to go about bugging out together. Forming a bug out plan using our Bug Out Plan Template will help you all understand how you will work together to ensure everyone's survival. You will all be better off for it and will be a tighter unit afterwards. Be sure that your bug out party understands what is laid out in your bug out plan and everyone has a copy in their homes and workplaces. If possible, actually practice meeting at your rally points and moving as a group. This will help you iron out any kinks in your plan before it is needed. Always remember, chance favors the well prepared.

Chris is a lifelong outdoorsman and has been interested in survival tactics and practices for many years. He currently helps people prepare for unforeseen disasters at The Bug Out Bag Guide. For more information please visit: <http://www.thebugoutbagguide.com/>



**Coffee Prices Hit Nearly Two Year High On C Market.
What Should Coffee Loving Preppers Do?
Scott Brill**

If you pay any attention to the commodity markets you're probably aware that Brazil, the world's largest producer of Coffee, has had an unusually dry growing season. The predictable outcome of course is a sharp increase, 80% or so since last November in the C market price of base coffee.

Coffee we consume is actually one of two Species of plant. Robusta considered a lower quality coffee is much less costly, easier to produce, and generally driven by the Quantity produced. Robusta is used for Instant Coffee, Coffee flavored drink mixes, and as a cheap Blend extender in large quantity coffees. Arabica Coffee the premium species is more difficult to grow, is grown more slowly at higher altitudes than Robusta, and on the lower end like some National brands is grown for Quantity.

Green Coffee is simply what we call RAW coffee beans that in most cases appear to be green, and will hold their flavor characteristics for many months or years until roasted.

Arabica coffee grown for the Specialty Coffee Market (the Only type Home Roast Coffee sells) is the top level of coffee Grown, Processed, Developed, and meticulously Tested for its **Quality** and **Flavor**.

Specialty Coffee prices that the fortunate among us drink consists of a cost dependent on the C Market base Plus a premium influenced by the Coffee Quality. Arabica Specialty Grade Coffee Is found in Coffee Shops, many Green Coffee suppliers (homeroastcoffee.com), and from high end Roasters.

Coffee is the second most traded commodity, second only to oil, so like all commodities the price we eventually pay is highly influenced by investors easily affected by bad or good news. Fortunately for us the retail coffee market is slow to follow the commodity market and we should not see a significant price increase for several months if the C Market does hold that long at current levels. If the effect of the drought in Brazil on output is much greater than expected a price surge could arise sooner or be greater than expected but it is too soon to predict.

More than likely, the commodity market will stabilize at a point below its current high but above the November 2013 low, at least until more is known about Brazil's crop output for this year and next. If conditions hold we may see retail prices rise by summer but I don't expect a repeat of 2010/2011.

What should a Prepper do?

As the label states you should simply be prepared. I believe being prepared should be accomplished on a budget, ok so I'm cheap I insist on good value.

Like almost anything with a long shelf life, such as green (raw)coffee, we should buy reasonably large quantities when prices are low and pass when prices are high. I only buy certain items when they go on sale, like soda and cereal, because they repeatedly and reliably go on sale. And, only buy the ones you really like, there is no sense in stocking up on products you won't use, no matter how cheap.

All commodity items, oil, coffee, sugar, wheat..., will rise and fall with whatever scare or glut comes about, this is nothing new.

Green coffee stores well for a long time and specialty coffee is the top grade.

If you are a coffee drinker and a Prepper it makes good sense to learn coffee roasting and save money by roasting your own coffee now. You can easily avoid price spikes and save by simply stocking and enjoying a half year supply of great Green coffee, then watch the price for low points to replenish.

Home Coffee Roasters actually spend less for better coffee than what is generally available in the grocery store. That Canned stuff you could get for \$5.99 is simply not a comparable product in quality or freshness, in fact coffee is only **fresh** about 2 to 3 weeks after roasting, and minutes after grinding. When was that Can or Bag roasted? Hint, you probably won't find a roasted on date, because it may have been months ago, Good Till dates are often a year or more after roasting. Yup a year, That's just not fresh, why drink that stuff!

Roasting coffee is as easy as popping corn even outdoors over a fire.

You can watch our Video [Roasting with a Whirley Pop](#) here.

Follow these Simple directions for Coffee Roasting at home.

Start by gathering a few essentials:

You can use a skillet and wood spoon or any container that you can put on a stove or shake over a fire without spilling the beans. Hand Crank popcorn poppers work well for roasting coffee, are versatile, and cheap at about \$20.

I prefer the Whirley POP (clean, no oil or leftover chaff or popcorn) and these instructions are intended for the Whirley but work for any manual roasting over a fire.

8 ounces of Green coffee beans, a half pound or more helps the beans move when stirred.

Colander or roasting pan to cool beans in, Stand up pouch or large zip bag to store coffee.

Hot pads, Pen and paper to record your efforts, timing device (watch with seconds).

Optional handy items:

Scale, measuring cup, funnel, small fan, wooden long handle spoon, stop watch, Infrared Thermometer, candy thermometer (metal 500 degree F minimum) drill hole by "W" in lid. Especially handy are the HomeRoastCoffee.com Roast Levels sheet showing roast levels by color and description, and our HRC Roast Log available on our [LEARN](#) pages.



Record weight and coffee used along with any details you may find useful later, including Temperature, date, time. Download our free HRC roast log for easy record keeping.

With Green coffee beans in Whirley POP set stove just over medium heat, start timer. Begin stirring at just about any pace that is comfortable, but move fast a few seconds of every minute, while regularly checking your beans for color, sound, and if you like temperature. Record your observations noting the time they occur as you go. You will want to use the vent fan on your stove or have an open window as coffee beans will produce smoke especially at dark roast levels.



As beans reach about 375 degrees F (4 to 6 minutes in) they begin to make a sound similar to pencils breaking known as FIRST CRACK. From this point on, your coffee can be removed from the heat and later brewed, however once removed from the heat it will not continue to roast if returned to the heat.

First Crack should last a minute or two with beans going from light to medium brown ending around 410 degrees F and producing a nice American roast. Simply watch, listen, and record the relevant data at the point you remove your beans from the roaster into a colander or roasting pan. Gently stir or shake the beans over a fan outside or over a sink to cool to room temperature and remove the remaining chaff from the beans. Pour beans into an air tight bag to rest at least 4 hours before brewing. **Or**, continue turning, watching, and listening for a **darker** roast.



The pace of the roast and smoke will increase while the sounds slow for a few seconds to a minute and the bean temperature rises to about 435 degrees F. The beans continue roasting quickly to Dark brown (Full city roast) as SECOND CRACK begins. Second Crack sounds like crispy rice cereal, lasts seconds to a few a minutes, bean temperatures rise rapidly, beans become almost black and shiny (450d F), watch close to stop before burnt. See homeroastcoffee.com [roast levels](#) for descriptions of relative taste profiles.



Scott Brill

Owner: homeroastcoffee.com

The Carver Method for Preppers

Andrew Jackson

The CARVER Method is an analytical anti-terrorism tool used by the U.S. Army for determining what assets are critical to a unit's mission success and how vulnerable those assets are. By utilizing the CARVER Method Army leaders are able to better protect those assets and mitigate the effects of the loss of those assets. This same tool can be used by preppers to accomplish their survival mission. Here's how I've adapted the CARVER Method For Preppers:

As mentioned above, The CARVER Method For Preppers is an analytical tool to help you determine the criticality and vulnerability of your preparedness assets. This tool aids in determining not only how to allocate your resources to protect your critical assets but also how to reduce your vulnerability to the loss of critical assets.



CARVER is an acronym used as a mnemonic device which represents the key features of this analytical tool. CARVER refers to Criticality, Accessibility, Recuperability, Vulnerability, Effect and Recognizability.

Criticality

Refers to how rapidly the destruction of the asset will lead to mission failure which in our case is survival. For example: If you live alone above the arctic circle your cabin is a critical asset because it protects you from the elements during the harsh arctic winter.

Accessibility

How easy is it for others to gain access to your asset. For example: A weapons rack visible in the garage when the garage door is often left open is easily accessible to any passerby.

Recuperability

How long will the loss of this asset take to repair or replace. For Example: the loss of water from a rain catchment barrel when the spigot is accidentally left open may be rapidly recuperable if there's a pond behind your house but may not be if you live in a desert environment.

Vulnerability

Is the asset resistant to damage or guarded, are there other measures in place to mitigate loss? For Example: A root cellar with a heavily fortified door is less vulnerable to fire or theft than a wooden food storage structure above ground.

Effect

What effect will the loss or discovery of this asset have on your family and community. For Example: The loss of a family pet left outside to a hungry neighbor might upset your children but the fact that you're sitting on a stockpile of food becoming public knowledge during a period of starvation could have disastrous effects on your family's safety and security.

Recognizability

Is the asset clearly recognizable by others as a possible target? For Example: The root cellar we mentioned above isn't very recognizable as a target for food thieves if it is completely below ground, has a camouflaged or hidden entrance and you only visit it after dark. The chicken coop in the backyard with your rooster crowing every morning will be very recognizable as a food source to the local starving masses.

When considering what assets to list on your CARVER analysis you should think of your survival 'systems' and a handy way to consider these systems is to use the 10 Fundamentals of Full Spectrum Preparedness Doctrine and identify the most critical, accessible, least recuperable, vulnerable, most disastrous effects and the most recognizable elements of each system. As you may recall, [Full Spectrum Preparedness Doctrine](#) includes:

- [Security Preparedness](#): Those items, knowledge and skills necessary for your family and provision's security. Includes all aspects of security including, but not limited to physical (barriers), operational (stealth, keeping a low profile) as well as self defense items and skills.
- [Shelter & Clothing Preparedness](#): Shelter, clothing and those items and skills necessary to protect you from the elements.
- [Health \(Personal\), Fitness and Medicine Preparedness](#): This fundamental includes everything needed to keep you and your family healthy that's not more appropriate to another fundamental. Including, but not limited to the skills and stuff related to first aid, necessary medicines, sanitation and of course fitness.
- [Transportation Preparedness](#): Those skills and items necessary to support your family's preparedness needs. This may be the wheelbarrow you require to haul water or the vehicle you plan to use to bug out.
- [Family & Community Support](#): These are the family and community networks and ties that keep you sane, focused and help you plug any holes you discover in your preps after it's too late.
- [Food Preparedness](#): Food storage, food preparation and the knowledge and skills necessary to acquire food and keep yourself fed.
- [Financial Preparedness](#): These are your savings, stored wealth and the skills that allow you to 'make a living' even in the toughest times (think barter-able skills in a worst case scenario).
- [Water Preparedness](#): Water storage, water purification and the knowledge and skills necessary to acquire safe, potable water as well as safe water for sanitation purposes.
- [Communications Preparedness](#): Those skills and items necessary to maintain communications within your family or group as well as with the outside world.
- [Cognitive, Mental & Spiritual Preparedness](#): This is the most important fundamental. This fundamental incorporates the 'will to live' the ability to adapt and the strength that comes from believing in a higher power.

Your CARVER analysis will help you to identify asset criticality, determine risks and prioritize security and protection. It is frequently expressed as a matrix where key assets, capabilities, and even individuals can be listed. In the Army we look at five different categories of risk in a CARVER analysis but for preparedness purposes I'm simplifying that to three levels and here's how they relate to each CARVER criteria:

Criticality:

1. Negligible Risk: No or insignificant damage to family or group survivability do to the loss of this asset
2. Moderate Risk: Measurable impact on family or group survivability
3. Catastrophic Risk: Significantly reduces the chances of family or group survivability

Accessibility:

1. Negligible Risk: Very difficult to access. Very well protected and/or protected by multiple methods such as guards, hardened structures, etc.
2. Moderate Risk: Accessible though moderately difficult to reach. For example well locked behind a steel door but not guarded.
3. Catastrophic Risk: Easily accessible. Not locked or poorly secured behind a hollow core door with no security.

Recoverability:

1. Negligible Risk: Easily replaceable or not necessary to survive.
2. Moderate Risk: Replaceable with moderate difficulty or reduces likelihood of survival but not truly necessary
3. Catastrophic Risk: Irreplaceable

Vulnerability:

1. Negligible Risk: Invulnerable
2. Moderate Risk: Moderately vulnerable to theft, destruction, etc.
3. Catastrophic Risk: Very vulnerable theft, destruction, etc.

Effect:

1. Negligible Risk: No effect or positive effect within the local population
2. Moderate Risk: Instills negative feelings from the local population towards your family or group
3. Catastrophic Risk: Turns the local population against your family or group. Draws the unwanted attention of groups of antagonists.

Recognizability:

1. Negligible Risk: Asset not easily recognizable as a target
2. Moderate Risk: Asset difficult to recognize as a target without specialized knowledge or difficult to see but recognizable as a target if seen.
3. Catastrophic Risk: Clearly recognizable as a target in most conditions and with no special training.

Once you populate your matrix (see sample below), assign a risk factor to each item with '3' representing Catastrophic Risk, '2' representing Moderate Risk and '1' representing Negligible Risk based on the CARVER criteria. Total up the Risk points and the highest total requires the most attention in the form of mitigation, controls and/or backups. Select appropriate actions such as:

- Reduce Criticality: Develop backups, duplicates some of which may be off site
- Reduce Accessibility: Control access by vehicles or pedestrians through the use of barriers and/or guards. Also consider alarms, motion sensors, locks, etc.
- Reduce Recoverability: Store replacement parts to rebuild critical components
- Reduce Vulnerability: Harden the structure and environment against penetration by potential adversaries
- Reduce Effect: Work hard to generate goodwill within your community beginning today to offset any potential negative effects that occur in future difficult times.
- Reduce Recognizability: Utilize cover and concealment as well as hiding easily recognizable targets inside buildings or under plant cover (make sure to plan for seasonal variations).

Remember that while the original military tool was designed to counter terrorist attacks, as preppers we're concerned with any potential loss including loss by seizure, theft, fire, [EMP](#), [CME](#), [weather loss](#), etc.

One interesting thing about the matrix is that the most important things don't always generate the highest priority. In the sample below family ends up as priority 5 behind Home, Garden, Food Storage and Seasoned Firewood based on our six criteria and the mitigation factors already implemented. This may sound wrong but consider that those items are not only more vulnerable to attack, but they also contribute to the safety, security and well being of our family. The ranking doesn't mean that family is less important, it just directs how we allocate resources to provide for our safety and survival.

While the CARVER Method described above is an especially useful analytical tool when completed in the formal manner described, it also can be used informally by running through the mnemonic CARVER while building or maintaining your preps.

Potential Target	C	A	R	V	E	R	Final Priority	Controls or Mitigation	
Security Preparedness									
Firearm Collection	3	1	2	2	1	3	12	9	Safe locked & bolted down
Ammunition Storage	3	2	2	2	1	2	12	8	Locked & Hidden
Driveway Alert	2	2	1	2	1	1	9	15	Camouflaged to look like
Shelter & Clothing Preparedness									
Home with Wood Sto	3	3	3	3	1	3	16	1	Locked, Guarded if faultz.
Stored Seasoned Wo	2	3	2	3	1	3	14	4	Smoke Alarm & Many Fire Stored under window in fenced yard with dog
Health Preparedness									
First Aid Kit	2	2	2	2	1	1	10	13	Accessible but out of sight
RX	3	1	3	2	1	1	12	7	Locked in safe
Septic System	2	1	2	1	1	1	8	18	Treat monthly to keep healthy/funking
Transportation Preparedness									
Vehicle	1	2	2	2	1	3	11	11	Locked in garage, keys secured
Fuel Storage	1	3	2	3	2	2	13	6	Safely stored away from building but camouflaged
Family & Community Support									
Spouse	3	2	3	3	1	1	13	5	Train OPSEC & Personal
Children	3	2	3	3	1	1	13	5	Train OPSEC & Age Appropriate Personal Defense
Food Preparedness									
Food Storage	3	2	2	2	2	2	14	3	Store partially off site, don't let anyone see/OPSEC, Protect from pests
Garden	2	3	2	3	3	3	15	2	Fence to Keep out Deer &
Financial Preparedness									
Stored Precious Met	1	3	2	2	1	2	11	12	
Water Preparedness									
Cistern	2	3	2	3	1	1	12	10	Protect from biological contamination
Water Purification E	2	2	1	1	1	1	8	19	Maintain for proper function
Water Purification S	1	2	1	1	1	1	7	20	Store safely and so that they maintain potency
Communications Preparedness									
Radio Equipment	1	2	2	1	1	2	9	17	Camouflage antenna if
Radio Coder & Parrr	1	3	1	2	1	1	9	16	Secure capier and train for
Cognitive, Mental & Spiritual Preparedness									
Survival Library	2	2	2	2	1	1	10	14	Store both digitally and in paper but commit as much as possible to memory

Andrew J. Jackson is the pseudonym of the editor and primary author of www.prepography.com. He is a field grade Army Reserve Military Intelligence Officer and former infantryman who works as a risk manager. Andrew can be contacted directly through his website.

DIY: A Guaranteed Fire Kit

Creek Stewart

Spring's a comin' and many of you are reorganizing your gear and kits for warm weather on the horizon. In this article I'd like to share with you how to assemble what I call a Guaranteed Fire Survival Kit. When it comes to fire, I don't screw around. I want guaranteed fire and I want multiple options to get it – no matter what The Mutha' might throw at me. Below is a photo of my current fire kit and one that I believe is fairly thorough. I've listed the exact contents just in case you want to build your own or modify your existing fire kit. For those of you who don't already have a fire kit in your Bug Out Bag or Ditch Kit this is an excellent blueprint to follow.



Below is a description of my Guaranteed Survival Fire Kit contents:

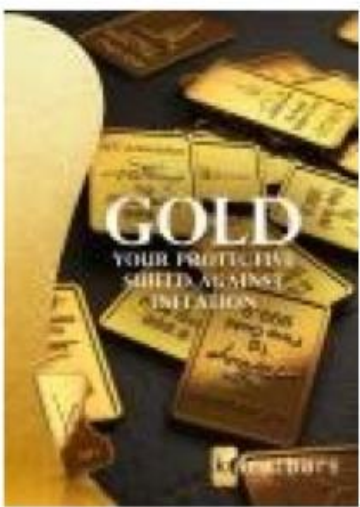
- QTY 1: Maxpedition EDC Pocket: The entire kit is packed in the Maxpedition EDC pocket. I love Maxpedition gear and this is a great little kit. It's a 5"x7"x.75" clam shell MOLLE compatible case with tons on interior storage pockets and loops for all kinds of fire implements. It's made from 105-denier water and abrasion resistant ballistic nylon fabric and is built like a little tank. It makes for a great packable fire kit container. It's also triple polyurethane treated for water resistance and has taped interior seams. Any water resistant container will work just fine.

- QTY 1: Char Cloth Tin: This is a 2 5/16" x 3 11/16" x 13/16" metal tin (Altoids size) with a hole punched in the lid. 100% natural fabrics like cotton can be made into Char Cloth, which is an outstanding fire starting material. When you have a fire, it's important to plan for future fires. This tin allows you to make Char Cloth and plan for future fires. See my article here about how to make char cloth: <http://willowhavenoutdoor.com/featured-wilderness-survival-blog-entries/how-your-underwear-and-a-pop-can-could-save-your-life/>
- QTY 25: 2"x2" 100% Cotton fabric squares. These can be used to make char cloth using the tin above. These are sealed in a water-proof resealable bag.
- QTY 4: Tinder Quik Fire Tinder: These are a compressed, cotton based, fuel impregnated fire tinder. They are also waterproof. Each of these will light with just a spark and will burn for a solid 2 minutes!
- QTY 15: UCO Survival Matches: These storm proof matches come in a sealed reusable plastic waterproof match case with 2 replaceable strikers. Each match will burn for 12 seconds. These are like matches on STEROIDS! They are also wind and waterproof!
- QTY 1: 9-Hour Candle: Whether using this candle to dry fire tinder or shaving off the wax to be used as a fuel extender, this is an often overlooked piece of fire kit. This sucker will burn for 9 hours!
- QTY 1: Light My Fire Mini Fire Steel: Light My Fire Firesteels are my favorite. They are made in Sweden and are a really great piece of kit. This one is good for 1500 strikes and produces sparks that burn up to 5,400 degrees Fahrenheit. This is without a doubt one of the best fire starting tools on the market. It is small, compact and effective. It will create sparks in virtually any weather condition on Planet Earth.
- QTY 6: FireStix: These compressed fiber and wax impregnated sticks will light instantly with flame or sparks. They will ignite even when wet and are odorless. Great source of kindling in a pinch.
- QTY 2: Fatwood Sticks: This all natural fire starter is one of the best I've used. These are harvested from stumps of pine (fatwood) from the highlands of Mexico. With their 80% pine resin content, these little guys are extremely easy to light and work even when wet. These burn long and hot and will light about any fire you can imagine. They ignite with spark or flame – must shave into shavings to ignite with sparks.
- QTY 2: 6" length of Jute Twine: These pieces of Jute serve as the lanyard for the Fatwood Sticks. Jute is one of the best natural firestarting tinders on Planet Earth. Buff up one of these 6" Jute lengths to make an instant tinder bundle. Invaluable fire-starter! Will ignite almost instantly with sparks!
- QTY 2: WETFIRE CUBES: This is a man-made fire starting tinder that will ignite even while floating in water – I've done it on national television! One cube can burn up to six minutes. I've even used one of these cubes with my Esbit Stove before to make Ramen Noodles.
- QTY 1: Solar Fresnel Lens: The sun comes up every day and no fire kit would be complete without at least 1 solar fire starting tool. I've used these little fresnel magnifiers to start fires countless times. They are lightweight and easy to use. Use it on char cloth, deer poop, punky wood, tinder fungus or any other fire tinder that will smolder. These will not produce flame. You'll need to create an ember and blow it into flame using a tinder bundle (like the JUTE TWINE).
- QTY 1: Punky Wood: I've hand gathered this punky wood from the forest here at Willow Haven Outdoor. This can be used to create a BIG FAT EMBER with the Fresnel Lens listed above.
- QTY 3: Cotton Discs: These cotton pads (make-up removal pads) are perfect for catching a spark or mixing with chap stick, petroleum jelly or pine sap to create a long burning fire tinder.

- QTY 1: Steel Wool: Steel wool is another one of those amazing fire tinders. It will smolder with just sparks and burns VERY hot. Use this to blow a tinder bundle into flame. This will ignite even after being dipped in water!
- QTY 1: 6"x11"x3" 5 MIL Barrier Pouch: This heavy duty resealable pouch can be used to keep extra tinder dry or to store more fire starting tools. I can also be used as a water container as well.
- QTY 3: 4"x6"x2" 5 MIL Barrier Pouch: These heavy duty resealable pouches are a perfect added layer of water proof protection for water sensitive fire materials such as cotton disks and punky wood.
- QTY 1: Disposable lighter: Uses are obvious
- QTY 1: Carmex Lip Balm: This can be mixed with tinder fibers (Jute/Cotton) to make the flame burn much longer – also known as a fire extender. Click here to read about how I make PET BALLS: <http://willowhavenoutdoor.com/general-survival/the-best-fire-starter-money-cant-buy-pet-balls-dryer-lint-fire-starter/>

Some may think that a fire kit this extensive is overkill. After years of fire starting experience in about every environment imaginable I would argue that you can never have too many fire starting tools when you NEED to get a fire going. In survival, FIRE = LIFE. Hope you've found something here that's useful.

Remember, it's not IF but WHEN,



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Are You Wired for A Survival Mindset?

Sharon Pannell

They say that survival is 90% mental. Would you agree with that? Or are you one of those that believe your stockpiles and arsenals alone will ensure your survival? Sorry to burst your bubble friends, but gadgets and tools alone will not save you!



It All Begins With The Mind.

The mind truly is a beautiful and mysterious feature of you. It has the capacity to absorb, learn, analyze, reason and store literally millions of pieces of information. How wonderfully made it is! So how does this brain of yours contribute to your survival?

How it All Works

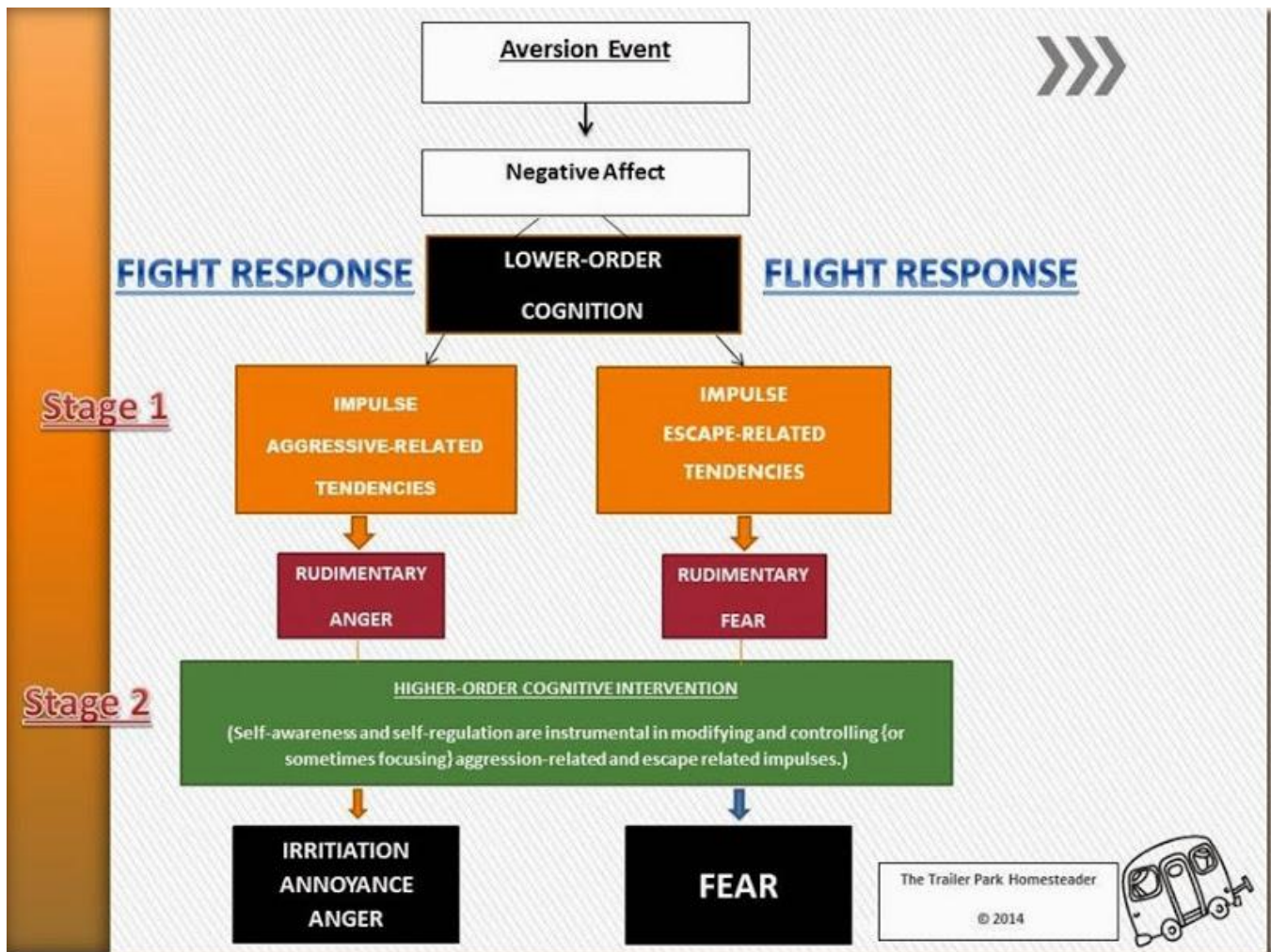
Within a moment of any event the brain instantly begins to analyze the situation. This is the body's natural 'fight or flight' instinct. Our nervous system responds in a way that it sounds an alarm. How our body reacts to this alarm depends on a few factors. The first of these factors is our own "biologically inherited aggressive tendencies". The second factor is our "prior conditioning and learning". Last, it depends on our own "attention to all aspects of the situation that facilitate or inhibit aggression" (Berkowitz, 1993).

Sorting This Out

Let's break this down a bit into a simpler explanation. The first part means that your reaction will depend on your own aggressive behaviors and characteristics. These are those that you inherited, not so much developed. The second is an important part, and one that is promising when it comes to your reaction in survival situations. It is all about the skills you have learned. If you have thoroughly practiced these skills, they have become ingrained in you. So much so, that they are almost second nature. The third factor speaks of your own ability to analyze and react to the situation with aggressiveness, *if* the situation calls for it. Your mind sees the problem and reacts as needed.

The Specifics

Okay, but how does all this actually tie into survival? Well, for that answer let's take a look at the following diagram for answers:



As you can see there are two stages of thought. The first stage is being driven by impulse and the other a higher-order cognitive intervention. When a disaster strikes, the first emotion people will feel is one of impulse, to either run from the danger or confront it directly. After this initial impulse stage the person will begin to focus and plan their response.

Conditioning vs. Instinct

We've all read about people that have done amazing acts of heroism in terrifying situations. These are accomplished generally through either prior conditioning or natural instinct. One example is of firemen who battle through infernos to rescue a person trapped inside. In this situation it is their conditioning and training that wins out over their natural instinct to run. Another example is of a parent, who alone lifts a vehicle off their child who is trapped beneath. Obviously this is accomplished out of pure instinct and not through conditioning or training. It is natural. It is ***primal!***

Berkowitz, L. (1993) *Aggression: Its causes, consequences, and control*. New York: McGraw-Hill

The Survival Persona

What is it and Why is it Important?

A persona is “the aspect of someone’s character that is presented to or perceived by others”. It is the part of yourself you represent to the world. Everyone has their own persona that they show to others, however many of them are not genuine.

Some people legitimately believe that when the stuff does hit the fan, they are going to transform into some super-human renegade who is a master marksman with ninja-like skills. Admit it; we’ve all seen these types of people. And what is also disturbing is that some of these same people have persuaded others to trust that they will! This can be a dangerous mistake and one that could ultimately cost the lives of those around them if they are unprepared.

The grim reality is that some of those people will not be as brave, brazen, or prepared as they boast to be. The average person, who has not been through traumatic situations or seen military action, has no experience in combat or the taking of another human life. To be clear, that in itself is not a negative thing by any means. The point is in a desperate and dangerous world after a major shtf situation, much more is needed than a delusional persona.

So What Should One Do?

That’s an easy question to answer: learn, learn, learn! **Knowledge is the number one prep, one can acquire.** This knowledge not only includes a multitude of survival skills, but communication and social skills as well. Learning to communicate will help to lead and influence others. Notice it says lead, not control. In a shtf situation the stress levels will be at an all-time high, and emotions will be even higher. A family will need a leader, a voice of reason and direction. Good social skills are also important to learn to interact with others comfortably and effectively. These will help to teach a person how to react nonviolently in conflict, and how to use and read nonverbal methods of communication. While it is true that instances of conflict *will* happen, it is also important to know when it is best to try diffusing a situation.

“When force is necessary, it must be applied boldly, decisively, and completely. But one must know the limitations of force; one must know when to blend force with a maneuver, the blow with an agreement.” Leon Trotsky



5 Tips of Good Communication:

1. The Ability to Actively Listen
2. Adapting to Differing Opinions (Open-mindedness)
3. Taking Responsibility For Your Own Message
4. Clearly & Concisely Conversing With Others
5. Willing to Collaborate and Ask For Clarification if Needed



5 Ways to Have Better Social Skills:

1. Maintain Eye Contact
2. Show Confidence (Body Language - Strong Posture)
3. Show Interest (Ask Questions)
4. Concentrate on the Task or Conversation
5. Echo (Summarize & Repeat if Needing Clarification to Address Concerns)

How Can You Use Both Sets of These Tips in a Shtf Situation?

- Building Alliances
- Bartering With Others
- Group Leadership
- Defense & Offense Scenario's
- Problem Solving

Sharon Pannell is a self-proclaimed "Prepsteader", both prepper and homesteader. She authors the blog [The Trailer Park Homesteader](#) and co-authors the [A Prepper Quick Tip](#) blog where she teaches others about the importance of disaster preparedness and self-sufficiency. Sharon believes every day the stuff can hit the fan, it is not one big epic event necessarily and it only takes one set back to create a hardship; so big or small prepare for it all! Along with her blog, Sharon can also be found managing her other social media sites including her Facebook Page [The Trailer Park Homesteader](#), [TTPH Pinterest Page](#), [TTPH Twitter Page](#), and co-admins the [A Prepper Quick Tip](#) Facebook Page.

Business Emergency Preparedness Plan

Linda Loosli

Those of us who enjoy reading through the valuable articles in The Preparedness Review are very aware of the need to be adequately prepared from a personal and family viewpoint. Sometimes I find I'm spending so much of my time focused on making sure the personal side of my life is properly prepared that I forget my husband and I are also running small businesses out of our home office. I recently had a challenge with a business based laptop and couldn't access the Internet to conduct my daily business chores. I was reminded of the time a friend of my husband asked how he could best put together a Business Security and Preparedness Plan for his business. After spending some time interviewing him and finding out as much as I could about how his business we were able to structure a plan that could be implemented over the course of a few weeks. I've tried to take some of the key aspects of the plan for this article and hope you find it informative and helpful as you review your small business needs.

You may not be home during an emergency/event, so having emergency items at your place of business would be helpful and possibly life saving. Helpful ideas or items to secure your office:

- Make sure you have a drawing or plan of your building/office--highlight with "red" all EXITS and have regularly scheduled drills for the proper efficient evacuation of all staff and critical records. Have a designated evacuation destination point that should be as safe as possible, depending on the type of disaster / emergency, like the parking lot, nearby park, adjacent building, etc. Have drills where you practice the evacuation and arrival at the related gathering place. Be aware that things might be so serious that an alternate work site might be necessary for a temporary period, or even on a permanent basis.
- Do training for evacuation plans, etc. Practice different scenarios for disasters and emergencies such as a fire, earthquake, general power outage, etc. Be ready for any unexpected situation. Have a "Plan B" in place.
- An up-to-date Employer/Employee/Patient/Customer list with names and family contacts/numbers that is readily available to key personnel. Have plans in place to account for each employee or others who may have been onsite when the emergency began, such as a head count when you started and one upon arrival at the assembly point.
- Local emergency numbers available at each desk/cubicle.
- Secure pictures, furniture, water heaters, computers etc. to be earthquake ready by using fastening straps, adhesive fasteners, or other securing devices as necessary/appropriate for your facility.
- Remember cell phone texts might go through when phone lines aren't working – try that as a means of communication if the "land line" phone lines and cell phone systems don't seem to be working.
- Have an emergency solar power source/generator available like Goal Zero YETI 400 which is good for charging cellphones and laptops and may run a desktop long enough to properly shut it down.
- Power-failure lights that will turn on and help light interior halls and stairwells during an evacuation of your building.
- Some companies may need to consider automatic sprinkler systems in case of fire. These can prove to be very expensive, but can provide that next step to make you feel comfortable that your assets are properly protected.



- Walkie Talkies such as Motorola Talk-A-Bout located in various key locations in the facility, and make sure those trained to use them know where they are stored. Be sure that batteries are kept charged. Note, some professional walkie talkies require licenses. Check your local area's policies/regulations. This particular unit was suggested as an option for communications from neighbor to neighbor by a local search and rescue group for So. Utah.
- You may want to consider purchasing a HAM radio and getting properly licensed, or consider a scanner. You can hear what's going on in the world even if there is no power, radio, or television.
- BEFORE an emergency, find out where any the emergency shut-off switches are located. Post a cheat sheet with this information in several locations throughout your building or office.
- Know where to turn off gas (only turn off if you smell gas.) Make sure you have the right tool handy to turn it off. I prefer the Emergency 4 in 1 tool.
- Find where to turn off electric power. Flipping the switches at the circuit breaker panel DOES NOT necessarily turn off the power as required. Find where the MAIN switch is to turn it off. Make sure all key personnel are aware of its location.
- Know where to turn off the main water line. Be sure to determine how it is shut off. You might need a water key.
- Make sure work areas are clear of clutter and pathways unobstructed.
- Have a backup plan for alternate suppliers in case your suppliers are the ones affected.
- Be sure to have a current list of all your equipment, both owned and leased. This will come in handy when you meet with the insurance adjusters. Make sure all property and liability policies are paid promptly and that coverage is sufficient for any new equipment acquisitions.
- Be sure you have smoke alarms in place and tested at least monthly. If not hard wired into the electrical system make sure to replace batteries at least annually.



Emergency List of items to have on hand:

- Water containers, water purification drops (I prefer Water Preserver.) Rotate water every 5 years. One gallon of water is needed per person per day. Heat/high temperatures would warrant more water per day per person. Have a plan with additional water that can be carried quickly should you need to leave your building. WaterBricks are a great option because they come in 3.5 gallon and 1.5 gallon sizes with handy carry handles. Note the functional spigot pictured with the units below.
- For large water containers, make sure you have the necessary item(s) to open the containers (like a Water Bung) and have spigots available for ease of use.
- Food: Decide how many people are typically in each building and how many calories per day per person are necessary to sustain the staff for a pre-determined period. Plan on MRE's and cold instant food types (a combination is best).
- Cooking: Two separate sources are best, such as propane, coal or wood. I prefer Camp Chef (uses only propane). For large groups I would recommend MRE's/or similar that only require heated water. It would be hard to "cook" every meal. A Volcano II stove with extra propane hoses would



be a great addition. Depending on the model, Volcano II uses wood, coal & propane. This way you could have some way to boil water for large groups. These would be for outside cooking only.

- Adequate paper products, plates, cups, silverware/serving utensils
- Fuel: I like Ozark Oak Lump charcoal. It lasts indefinitely if kept in airtight containers; use Gamma lids on 6-gallon buckets to make them easier to open. The Ozark Oak Lump charcoal has no chemicals like regular charcoal. You can store and forget about them until needed, and it is safer to store than propane. Again, you would use these outdoors.
- Fire starter/matches/emergency candles
- Personal Hygiene: items for men and women, package toilet chemicals, snap on toilet seat, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, hand sanitizer, gloves latex/non-latex
- Shampoo, shaving cream, shavers, toothpaste, toothbrushes, towels, wash rags, dish towels, kitchen soap
- Portable toilet with bags and hand sanitizer containers
- First Aid Kits for each building/office. OSHA recommended Kit-25 Person Emergency Ready First Aid Kit is handy and not too expensive.
- 3M/N-95 masks for everyone
- Plastic sheeting & duct tape/body bag
- Aspirin, Aleve, Ibuprofen, etc., Imodium (anti-Diarrhea), Vitamin C
- Bio-hazard Bags
- Emergency Blankets – Consider some foldable cots
- Safety Whistles
- Shake Lights
- Flashlights/solar/crank and battery varieties - (Batteries stored separately)
- Keep lots of batteries (all sizes-rotate)
- Radios/Weather Radios with Hand Crank
- Phone Chargers (multi use/size) you might not be able to leave your building. You can buy multi-charge units.
- Crowbar, 2 by 4's for cribbing
- 4-in-1 survival tool
- Fire escape ladder if you have more than a single level building
- Rope
- 12 function knives
- Insect Repellant
- Work gloves

Data and Other Critical Information Protection

Company records, whether stored electronically or by paper hard copy, are an essential part of every business' success. In today's environment every business and individual are subject to attack by unseen companies and individuals who want to disrupt our lives and business functions. These attacks can be very subtle and often hard to identify. The key is to have a plan in place to put every reasonable effort forward to protect information and computer functions that we rely on every day. This forum doesn't provide sufficient space to identify all possible security measures for every kind of intrusion, but we will try to highlight a number of issues to consider and a few alternatives available.

Backup Procedures: Whether you have small computers, servers or large mainframes driving your company, there needs to be a procedure in place to back up the data every day. In some cases businesses find having a tape drive or external hard drive sufficient and schedule the back up during late night / early morning hours when staff members are gone. The following morning the “media” is then taken to an offsite location. Many companies are now using services on the “cloud” to automatically backup data. One such company is Carbonite, but there are numerous others.

Office Access Procedures: It is vital that the physical premise is secure. You may just use the old standby lock and key method, but many companies install electronic access systems that can be monitored remotely. These can be based on a simple keypad password input to more sophisticated access cards and finger or handprint recognition. Large companies have gone to facial or retinal recognition systems. Budgets and even regulatory requirements may dictate how you approach this critical decision.

Data Protection Procedures: The world is full of people trying to gain access to private files and personal information. There has been much media attention to the recent breach of personal information based on shopping at various department stores and using a debit or credit card. Most major companies and even government agencies experience daily threats to computer systems. Make sure your PC’s, servers and mainframes have electronic “firewalls”. Evaluate the security systems implemented by your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Make sure you keep up to date with any anti-spam, anti-virus, anti-malware and anti-phishing software installed on your systems. Any if you haven’t investigated and installed this type of software protection you are just asking for problems. For small office and home use, there are reasonably good offerings that are fairly inexpensive or even free. You can research these offerings on the Web and read the reviews to help you make the right decision. Your ISP should be able to offer a good first line of defense, and they can advise what other steps you should consider.

As stated on our Food Storage Moms.com website, “Our goal is to help one family at a time.” We’ve tried to help our neighbors, church friends, and our own families be prepared as best we can. We’ve taught classes for local businesses, emergency food manufacturers, and helped a five county government agency determine how best to gear up staff and facilities to meet emergency needs. We’ve published a “Grab And Go Binder” that prompts the user to make sure they have the critical documents that will be needed if they are required to leave home / office and live elsewhere for a period. The binder materials are also provided as a download from the site for a very small fee. Although our name and focus is designed to teach individuals how to gather, store and use the food needed to survive an emergency or disaster, we also provide posts that go much further, covering water storage and use, self protection, emergency power, cooking options and much more. This list today is an effort to help support local business owners to also be prepared.

Special Needs Preppers: Single Moms

Lisa Bedford



Image by Monkey Mash Button

In the world of preparedness, most all information is aimed for an audience that includes a network of supportive family members, a spouse in particular. All of the tasks are daunting and the future scenarios gloomy beyond belief. Enter a single mom who is responsible for the welfare of her children. If her income is the only one keeping the family afloat and there are few, if any, close friends or relatives in the vicinity, she is truly on her own.

How can a single mom prepare for the future?

Moms, if you've ever been faced with a car breakdown on the side of the road, alone, and without a cell phone, you have an idea of what it would feel like to be a single mom facing an uncertain future. At some point in that scenario, you have no choice but to seek out help from strangers or anyone willing to help. Therefore, I believe that the first step for single moms (and dads) is to start creating their own survival/prepper web of supportive people. This is the most important step because it takes a lot of time to find like-minded people who are also trustworthy and with whom you are compatible. In the preparedness world people are often suspicious of others, which adds to the amount of time you'll need to create that web.

Single moms can start by:

- Checking out Meet-Up groups on topics related to preparedness and survival, such as camping, gardening, hiking, backyard chickens, organic produce, couponing. Some towns have groups labeled, "Survival" or "Preppers", so it's worth a search. Single moms, in particular, need to use a lot of common sense and caution when meeting with strangers, but these groups usually offer a safe way to get to know others who share your interests.
- Finding a supportive church. Maybe church hasn't really been your thing, but if you're looking for a large group of people who already have a lot in common, this can be a great avenue. Often their activities include childcare as well as single parent social groups, which immediately connects you with others. And, don't discount the importance of having a strong faith when faced with challenges that include the everyday frustrations of motherhood as well as potential worst case scenarios.

- Checking out the state forums at [American Preppers Network](#). Some states have very active groups, others not so much, but it's one resource that will have local people who can steer you in the right direction for joining prepper groups.
- Joining hobby clubs, such as ham radio or gardening clubs. The members of these clubs are already a little on the fanatical side and will probably welcome newcomers. (I base this claim on the number of ham radio operators I have met and who are active in their clubs. The dog club people were worse, maybe!)

Once your “preps” are pretty well established, consider joining [A.N.T.S.](#), a prepper network of folks ready to help others in the network in times of dire need. You need to be able to provide that help, if called upon, but then, someone will be there to come to your aid if necessary. As you connect with other people, there's no need to tell them whether or not you have food storage or firearms or any other personal information. If someone starts asking too many questions, then that person or group isn't the one for you. I've found that preppers respect the privacy of others and expect the same in return. Above all, trust your instincts. If a person, group, or situation seems to be not-quite-right, walk away. There are thousands of solid, trustworthy preppers out there who would open their arms to a single mom and her kids. You just have to find each other.

Training and knowledge on the cheap

Thanks to the internet, and YouTube in particular, there is no shortage when it comes to information and training of skills in the survival and preparedness niche. You could easily become Super Prepper, simply by learning from YouTube videos and then practicing what you learn.



Image by Daizy B.

Just a few skills to look for:

- Canning
- Pickling
- Sewing
- Knitting
- Fire starting
- Growing _____. (Name your fruit or vegetable.)
- Packing dry food in buckets.
- Sealing mylar bags
- Storing water correctly
- Purifying water
- And on and on and on

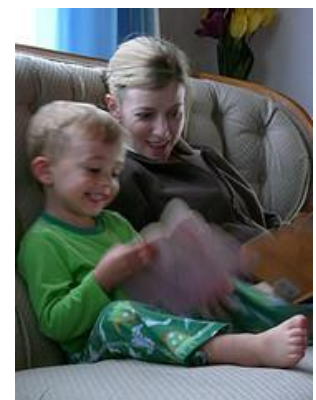


Image by Photogramma1

Include the kids whenever you can

A single mom's most immediate group of allies and support are her own children. At whatever ages they might be, start training them from everything from how to put out a small fire to calling 911 to administering CPR.

Fortunately, survival and preparedness involve knowledge and skills that are very easy to learn and lots of fun.

Stock up on supplies as you can

Right along with learning and connecting with others, is the need to stock up on the food and supplies you'll need to weather any storm. The best advice I have for you is from my book, [*Survival Mom*](#).

Stocking up on food, extra toiletries, good quality tools, and other supplies requires money. However, the good news is that a master To Buy list will help set priorities, keep you on budget, and even provide a shopping list when hitting the garage sale circuit.

Without a To Buy list, you may very well find yourself (a) spending money on things you later discover tucked away in a back cupboard or (b) snatching up purchases in a panic. This list helps save money as well as time.

If your income is limited, you'll need to become very creative. Estate sales, yard sales, going-out-of-business sales, Craigslist, Freecycle, and even programs like Swagbucks will need to become your new best friends.

An awful lot of survival supplies are extremely inexpensive. You can find used water barrels for less than \$20. Wash out empty 2-liter soda bottles and refill them with water for cheap and easy water storage. For more expensive supplies, establish a savings plan, even if it's just a few dollars per week.

The important piece, though, is to know what you need and then set priorities for your purchases, and that To Buy list will keep you on track and save you from impulse buys.

The prepared single Survival Mom

A single parent can be every bit as prepared as any other person in the survival/preparedness community. In fact, they have an advantage over a prepper whose spouse is not on board and might even try to prohibit any type of preparedness activities or expense.

Single parenting is no easy job, but when there are plans and supplies in place for various emergencies, there will be less panic and a lot more peace.

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Cheap by Choice: When Frugality Means Freedom

Daisy Luther

As a parent, sometimes I've asked my kids to do things they don't want to do. (Haven't we all?) The biggest key to their success in the endeavour is their attitude.



Scenario #1:

Me: *Kiddo, it's time to swap your winter clothes for your spring clothes. Please go through your closet, sort through your winter clothes and get rid of the stuff that's too small or that you don't want anymore.*

Kiddo: *I don't want to! I hate this! It's not fair!!!*

Kiddo goes through the closet, angrily shoving things in a garbage bag without taking a good hard look at things. She sulks, pouts and is otherwise miserable. She gets the job done but makes sure that it is unpleasant for all of us.

Scenario #2:

Me: *Kiddo, it's time to swap your winter clothes for your spring clothes. Please go through your closet, sort through your winter clothes and get rid of the stuff that's too small or that you don't want anymore.*

Kiddo: *Okay – this gives me a chance to see if there's anything I can re-purpose, too!*

Kiddo goes through the closet, eagerly sorting items into piles. She comes up with a good stash of 'new' materials for craft projects, a bag of donations, and 2 shirts that were buried at the back that she forgot she had. The job is done and the end result is its own reward.

Switching over to a [more frugal lifestyle](#) can be just like the above scenarios. You can embrace it and relish the challenge of it, or you can sulk, pout and be absolutely miserable.

Sometimes a reader comments on my website or sends me an email telling me that by preaching a frugal lifestyle, I am, in fact, giving in to the global elite and The Powers That Be. They feel that I should be recommending other types of resistance. They say, "Why should I have to do that when THEY have trashed our economy? Why should I do without?"

I understand, truly, where these readers are coming from. They're right – we shouldn't *have* to be thrifty because the "elite" have trashed the economy for everyday people. However, I *choose* to. I opt to live a frugal, non-consumer lifestyle because of my personal experiences. Disengaging from the uncaring financial machine has provided me with a freedom I never had when I was pulling down close to six figures.

The Story Behind My Advent into Cheapskatery

I suffered some great financial losses back in 2010. I lost my house, my car, and my business. We had been living frugally in comparison to many people, but not frugally enough to counteract that personal economic disaster. Looking back, I'm not sure if any amount of frugality could have really made a difference.

It was a devastating blow, and it came right on the heels of the loss of my dear father. We became even more thrifty of a necessity, and I resented the need to do so every single time I stepped into a mall, purchased groceries, or emptied my bank account on payday to keep the utilities on and a roof over our heads, with nothing extra left over for fun, or even secondary needs. It was a very grim time for our family.

When the depression began to lift, I saw that getting out from under that mountain of debt had actually provided me with a gift of enormous freedom. I realized that my life could take a different turn. I was no longer tied to *anything*.

And that's when I began to embrace my cheap side.

I realized that I no longer needed to buy into the system that had been the source of my economic collapse. By supporting *them*, I wasn't supporting *us*. By being as self-sufficient as possible, by cutting my spending, and by not needing "the system", I was winning. I was becoming truly free.

When an entity has nothing to hold over your head, all the options are your own. You can make your decisions based on what is good for you and your family, not on what terrible things might happen to you if you don't "toe the line."

Embrace your cheap side

Hard-core frugality is not just making a choice to buy the generic brand of laundry soap instead of a jug of Tide with scent beads. Hard-core frugality is buying the ingredients to make 5 times the amount of laundry soap for half the price of that name-brand detergent, all the while **LOVING** the fact that Proctor and Gamble are not getting your money.

When you can cross that line between resenting the fact that you have to strictly budget to embracing the fact that by being as frugal as possible, you have a freedom you never dreamed of before, then you have begun to embrace your cheap side.

Being a black belt in frugality takes creativity and an optimistic outlook. It should never be some grim, sad thing that you have to do. It should be something that you choose to do. By finding joy in your non-consumerism, you will be far more successful at it. It becomes a game that you win if you can do something for free that others spend money on.

When you feel like you require less, then you are happy with less. This means that you have to spend less time working at things you may not truly enjoy to pay for the things that you never actually needed in the first place. This means that the money that you have goes a lot further

You might be a cheapskate if....

Here are some surefire signs that you are embracing your cheap side:



1. Before throwing anything in the garbage you take a few seconds to ponder how it might be reused, and then either compost it, put it aside for a re-purpose, or you turn it into a homemade “log” for your fire.
2. You have an ice cream tub in your freezer nearly full of odd bits of leftovers, awaiting their reincarnation into “leftover casserole” or “leftover soup”.
3. It’s physically impossible for you to drive past an interesting-looking garbage pile at the curb during somebody else’s spring cleaning frenzy.
4. Your first stop at the grocery store is the “last day of sale” rack in each department.
5. Your kid looks at a necklace or pair of earrings at the “cool” store and scoffs, “We could make this.” Then she puts it back and asks you to take her to the thrift store for items to disassemble for the supplies to make her own accessories.
6. A day of yard-saling is planned out like a military invasion: you have a Mapquest route of at least a half dozen sales, a thermos full of coffee, a wallet full of small bills, and a list including measurements of all empty spaces in your home that need to be filled, kitchen items you are seeking, books your daughter wants to read, and upcoming birthdays. Your alarm is set the night before, a blueberry muffin is wrapped up and ready to go on the counter, and your comfy clothes are laid out.
7. If something must be replaced or purchased, you always look for a used version first before doling out the money for a new one.
8. You know how to darn socks....and you do it.
9. You wash and re-use sandwich baggies, and you’ve even rigged up a little drying rack for them beside your sink.
10. You are outraged at the idea of spending \$18 on a jug of laundry detergent because you could make a year’s supply for that amount of money.
11. You have recently advised your child to cut off that teeny bit of mold on the brick of cheese because the other side is just fine.
12. You don’t carve the Jack-o-Lanterns until the day before Halloween so that you can cook, puree, and can the pumpkin the day after Halloween.
13. You have (and use) a clothesline. Year round.
14. You know how to repair a plastic clothes hamper by “welding it” with a bread tag and a hot glue gun.
15. The dish soap beside your sink is actually 50% dish soap and 50% water.

How to Become a Happy Non-Consumer

Be grateful. An “attitude of gratitude” is the most vital part of embracing your cheap side. If you’re happy with what you’ve got, you will find that you “need” far less than you did before. That’s because you aren’t seeking some momentary hit of joyous adrenaline by purchasing something. That rush rarely lasts and you’re just left with more stuff and less money.

Be creative. How can you make something, save something, or repair something in a totally original way? Embrace the challenge and tap into your creativity – you may just discover that, in your originality, you’ve come up with something far better than the purchased alternative. (We’ve found this to be especially true with fashion accessories, home decor, and birthday parties!)

Give. Don't let your pursuit of frugality make you stingy. There are always people who are worse off than you. It's important to give a hand up to those people. If your kids were hungry, or cold, or without shelter, wouldn't you hope that some kind person would help them? Even at our absolute rock bottom financially, we donated one can of spaghetti sauce and a package of noodles to the food bank every week, which hopefully provided a warm comforting meal for someone who needed it. It isn't really necessary to debate whether people are truly in need or just milking the system. That is a subject for them and their consciences. Just give. You are responsible for your intentions, not theirs.

Spend your money where it really matters. We opted to move to a very small community into a drafty little cabin in the woods. We made this decision as a family, in order to reduce our monthly output. By getting rid of "city rent" and all of the bills that came with it, we cut our monthly output in half. This means that I can spend a little extra on high-quality meats and dairy, for example. When my daughter needs new glasses, it's not a problem to pay for them. It means my older daughter can get through college without crippling student loans.

Less need equals more time. Not only does a thrifty lifestyle mean that I can refocus where my money goes. It means that I can refocus where my time goes. I don't have to work quite as hard on stuff outside the home and can focus on farm and family. I have the time to make hats and scarves instead of purchasing them. I have time to garden and can the harvests. I have time to perform money-saving tasks like cooking from scratch, which goes into a big happy circle of having more money to put towards important things.

Stay home. When you [stay home more](#), you are tempted less. You aren't thirsty, requiring a beverage. You aren't hungry, requiring a snack. You aren't using the car, requiring gas. You aren't tempted by all the colorful and wonderful things in the stores.

Hang out with like-minded people. It is so much easier to embrace your cheap side if you don't have people telling you how deprived you are all the time, or berating you for being too cheap to spend \$27.85 on a movie ticket, popcorn and a soda pop. Most of my closest friends are thrifty. We swap clothing, we borrow and lend tools, and we cheerfully hang out without spending a dime. Instead of going out to sit in a boutique coffee shop sipping a \$6 latte with whipped cream, we sit in the garden at one of our houses sipping a coffee that one of us made, along with a nice fresh blueberry muffin. We enjoy the same conversation we would have had at that coffee shop too. Instead of heading to the mall, we chat on Skype. When your nearest and dearest are on the same page, life is a whole lot easier.

Turn off the TV. People go to school for years to study how to make people want what they don't need. That great big brainwash box sitting in the living room is a direct pipeline into your brain. From the beautiful homes on the TV programs, the fancy clothes and cars, and the ads for food, recreation and new cars, the whole racket is designed to make you feel you what you have now is inferior to what you could have. Kids are the biggest target of product placement advertising in popular shows. If you watch TV, limit it. Become aware of the scams and discuss them with your kids so that they can easily identify how marketers are attempting to manipulate them. (Confession: we do watch a little bit of TV in our home, and when we do, it's a big game to identify the hidden ads. While this may sound contrary to the advice to turn the TV off, I believe that some limited viewing coupled with an awareness of the marketing techniques inoculates my children against the sales pitch.)

The Two Week Challenge

Okay....do you want to get started on your journey to frugality, freedom, and fun?

Make a list of the things that you absolutely require over the next two weeks. This, for most of us, is the distance between one paycheck and the next. So, if you need some milk and other supplies, pick that up. (If you are already a prepper, you probably have enough food to get by for several months!)

Then – lock up your bank card, your cash, and your credit cards (if you use them). For the next two weeks, I don't want you to spend a dime.

(Obviously, the bills that must be paid, must still be paid – I'm not suggesting you stiff your landlord or skip a car payment!)

But for EVERYTHING ELSE.....put it off for two weeks.

Every time you have the urge to spend money, write it down. (You can cheer yourself along by promising to make this purchase when the two weeks are over, if you still want it.) You are going to be **AMAZED** at the things you spend money on, as well as the amount that you would have spent.

Come up with creative solutions for your “needs” and most likely, you will discover that they were actually “wants.”

So for two weeks you will NOT be purchasing....

- Additional groceries
- Drive-thru coffee
- Take out pizza
- Movie tickets
- New clothes
- Books and magazines
- That adorable pair of shoes – you know, the ones that are ON SALE!!!!
- Gasoline (unless this is absolutely necessary for work – but try to get by on one tank of gas if you aren't a commuter)
- A candy bar or a pack of gum (easy since you won't be at a checkout stand – *right?*)
- Music downloads
- Greeting cards
- Special ingredients for a meal
- A sweater for the dog
- A throw pillow for the sofa

You get the idea. If you cannot go for two weeks without spending money on any of the above, it might be time to take a critical look at how you're living your life. What will you do if you lose your job? If the economy gets worse? If all of your money goes to keep a roof over your head and you have nothing left for discretionary spending, it's going to be far worse to have that lifestyle forced on you by circumstances.

At the end of the two weeks, take a look at your handy-dandy notebook and tally up the money you would normally have spent. Are you surprised?

To switch over to a frugal lifestyle successfully, you really have to *want* to do it. If you're constantly bemoaning what you don't have, you'll be miserable. If you are resentful that you can't have "stuff" then you won't stick to your frugal plan. The most important thing of all is to switch off your personal "want" button. When you don't want or need the things that the ["elite" and the big corporations](#) ^[4] are selling, then you are suddenly free of their restrictions. You are no longer a slave to the wages you must earn to pay for the things they tell you that you should have. You don't have a lifestyle built on expectations, debt, and the never-ending search for happiness bought from a store.

Daisy Luther is a freelance writer and editor. Her website, [The Organic Prepper](#), offers information on healthy prepping, including premium nutritional choices, general wellness and non-tech solutions. You can follow Daisy on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and you can email her at daisy@theorganicprepper.ca

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Uses for Mylar: Less Than \$30 for All This!

Beverly Sandlin

For less than \$30 you can buy a 4' x 50' roll of 2 mil, flexible Mylar white one side or black one side on eBay from High Tech Garden Supply. Long term food storage bags are made of Mylar because it is moisture proof, air proof, absorbs oxygen and resists temperature changes. This is a stronger more durable version of the emergency blankets that reflect back 90% of the body's heat.

Why should every prepper buy a 50' roll of Mylar?

If an emergency blanket is the only thing between you and death, don't you want the best possible blanket that won't rip? With this roll of Mylar you can make your own emergency blankets that are stronger and more durable than any you can buy. You can make a Mylar sleeping bag with a hood by taping it or even sewing it! You have enough Mylar to actually build yourself a tent that is not only water and wind proof, but will reflect back 90% of your body heat, or face it shiny side out and it will keep you cool. You can use it as a reflective surface for signaling help.



Solar Applications:

1. You can actually start a fire with it by forming it into a perfect cone shape – think tin coffee cup or a small hole in the ground – with very easy to catch kindling in it.
2. It will hold water and can be used to catch condensation and dew – consider the solar still.
3. With a 3'x3' piece you can create an instant solar cooker just by putting a dark pot or glass pot with a lid onto it and facing it toward the sun. Use this tough, durable, weather resistant product to create your own solar cooker.
4. Or create a passive solar heating window box using it to reflect solar rays onto black aluminum cans or metal tubing, and using it on the back to reflect the captured heat back into the house.
5. If you purchase the black one side you can tape it over your windows leaving 2" open top and bottom and absorb solar heat. Cool air will be drawn up from the bottom and come out warmer on the top. At night just tape the flaps on top and bottom securely and all the heat you captured will stay in and be reflected to the inside.
6. You may be able to use it as a solar griddle, especially with a parabolic mirror that can be created with it.
7. How about creating a solar food dehydrator?

Insulation to keep warm and to keep cool:

8. You can cover your windows and unused doors in an emergency to keep heat in during cold weather.
9. You can cover your windows with the reflective side facing out to keep heat out in the summer.
10. By putting it over your windows, it can produce a 100% blackout effect – This Mylar is blackout, not all are. Many subdivisions have covenants that only white can show in window treatments. Buy the white one side and you have gotten around that.
11. Cold bedroom? Stay toasty warm by putting the Mylar under your sheets to reflect back your body heat and between blankets on top to do the same.
12. Line your attic with the reflective side out and you can keep your house at least 10 degrees cooler in the summer. Turn it around in the winter and you now have a 10 degree warmer house.
13. Or just buy the Mylar that is reflective on both sides. Be sure to leave room for any condensation to dry off.
14. Glue or silicone it onto insulation board and block off seldom used windows for energy savings.
15. Place under a sleeping bag to increase warmth and block moisture from the ground.
16. Line your sleeping bag with Mylar to increase its warmth.
17. Because you can sew it and wash it, you can use it to make insulating curtains, thin quilts, a tea cozy or to create a thermal cooking Wonder Bag, and even clothing.
18. Want toasty warm feet or have a leaky boot? Just wrap your feet in Mylar and slip into your boots. Or fit it around your boot liner or glue it onto a pair of shoe inserts or make your own shoe inserts with felt or cushioning foam and Mylar.

Light & Heat Reflective Value:

19. Using your rocket stove as an emergency heat and/or cooking stove inside? Mylar under and facing the back will make it safer and reflect the heat produced maximizing the burn. (**Safety Note: DO NOT** burn wood in the rocket stove indoors – use candles, Sterno, etc. instead)
20. Using candles for warmth, cooking or ambiance – Safety First with Mylar under and in back of them to provide maximum safety and lighting.
21. Radiating warmth from a fire? Wrap yourself in a blanket and face the fire. Because of its reflective value you will be warm on both sides.
22. The light reflective surface of Mylar is also great for maximizing the light from oil lamps and solar lights.
23. Want to keep your food warm while transporting it? Wrap it reflective side in with Mylar and seal with a twist tie. Average drop in temperature is only 15 degrees per hour.

24. Need to create a warm room or isolation room quickly? Mylar is very lightweight, tapes together easily and you can hang it with thumb tacks or a staple gun quickly.

Waterproof:

25. Do you have a water leak that you can't get to right away? Mylar is waterproof and will catch the drips and leaks.

26. A waterproof houseplant wrap.

27. Cut into a rain proof hat or poncho, just remember to reinforce with duck tape as once cut it will tear easily without reinforcement.

28. Drape and then tape a Mylar blanket over your umbrella for even more rain or sun protection.

29. Temporarily seal a leaky roof.

30. During flooding emergencies it can be used to seal up windows, in and around doors and even divert flood waters away from the house.

31. In a pinch, you could make a sail.

32. Create a raft or frame and cover a canoe with it. It can even be used as a temporary patch on a boat.

33. As a bag to haul water or food.

Gardening:

34. Do you have an indoor garden or want to start your plants indoors and make the most of your light? That is what this stuff is sold for – indoor gardening and hydroponic gardening.

35. Do you have a dark spot in your garden? Mylar is weather resistant and can reflect what light there is for warmth and magnification.

36. Under plant trays for added warmth and moisture protection.

37. Make a mini-greenhouse for starting seeds.

38. Under your tomato plants to increase the light.

39. Ideal for raised beds as an insect repelling mulch.

40. Cut the Mylar into strips and hang on fences or stakes as a deer deterrent. This can also work in the garden for birds and has been known to deter woodpeckers from pecking a house.



41. It can be put on the inside of a greenhouse or cold frame to increase light and warmth.

42. Line the bottom of your greenhouse with Mylar and you are maximizing the sun's rays to all of the plants.

43. Use it on your in-ground hoops in the garden to reflect the sun's rays down to the earth, warming it. Or shade your plants with the reflective side out.



Miscellaneous:

44. Create a personalized Faraday Cage that is impervious to solar flare with Mylar. Just use Mylar tape to secure it. It will not protect against a nuclear detonation EMP event. But with electronic devices such as computers, tvs, mobile phones, etc. with an advance notice of an intense sun flare these could be protected fast and easily.

45. Want to create a parabolic mirror for solar cooking, cutting or the dreaded death ray? Yup, it's as easy as covering a garbage can lid with Mylar and sucking the air out of it to create the bowl shape needed. It is dangerous, so don't let the kids play with it!

46. Professional drum sets often have a Mylar coating underneath. Put Mylar over a bowl, pot or can, rubber band it and you have an instant drum for the kids.

47. Want a shiny, mirrored surface for a craft project that is kid safe? Mylar can be glued and sewn into a myriad of shapes and forms.

48. How about an outside reflective tanning booth – or maybe just for your legs?

49. Off Grid and need to maximize the light hitting your solar panels? Mylar will reflect the sun's rays for optimizing your solar array.

50. Are you a photographer and need to enhance the light on your subjects? It is used all the time on movie sets as a lightweight, durable enhancer of natural light.

51. Kid's science projects.

52. Need to deflect the sun and keep a certain area shaded? Mylar is weather resistant and can reduce the temperature up to 20 degrees by deflecting the sun's rays.

53. Need a versatile, moisture proof tarp for under your tent? Whether you want to keep moisture out or heat reflecting back in, Mylar can do it and it is feather light for backpacking.

54. Because it is strong and tear resistant, you can use it in any way that you can use a tarp.

55. Need a sled for the kids or to sled out that deer you just bagged? This Mylar will do it.

56. How about a lightweight, water and windproof doggie coat, goat or horse blanket that you can just tape on in an emergency?

57. It's plenty strong so you can actually use it as a tourniquet or to stop bleeding. It can even be used to

hold a salve or poultice on and secure it with tape or vet wrap.

58. You can make your own custom food storage bags by heat sealing the colored side on three sides, turning the bag inside out, turning the colored sides on top into themselves and sealing the top.

59. Cut in thin slices it can be used for tying flies for fishing.

60. Cut in strips, braid, and it becomes an ultra strong rope.

61. Fold together, hang and you have a hammock that will keep you warm by reflecting your body heat.

62. Cover the inside of your pet's house to keep it waterproof and reflect their body heat to keep them warm.

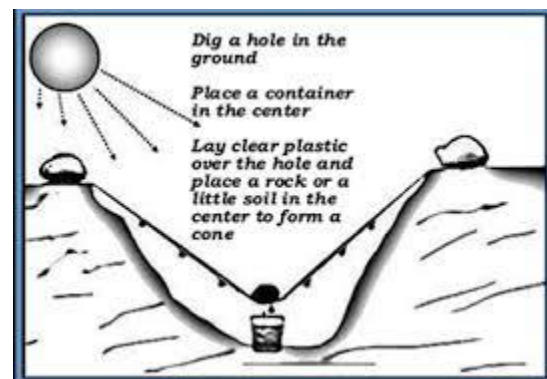
63. Raising chicks, ducklings or other baby animals that need warmth and a draft free environment? Mylar on the bottom and side of a box will give them additional heat, make the box easy to clean (Just lift, take outside, shake and put back in.) and draft free. Just be sure to keep a thermometer in there to monitor the heat so that it doesn't get too hot.

64. Need a place in the barn for a sick calf or baby goat that is warm and draft free? Mylar to the rescue! You can even lay a newborn colt on it that was born in a rain storm and can't get up and drag it to the barn for mama horse to take care of.

65. Need a Halloween costume that will keep the kids warm while trick or treating? Turn the reflective side in and create a ghost, super hero cape, or a Darth Vader costume just with tape! Just be sure to add light reflective tape to the costume so the little goblins can be seen by cars. On the theme of costumes you could wrap a cardboard sword or ax with Mylar reflective side out.

66. Make a water or dew catch by stretching out the Mylar and putting a pin hole in the center with a container underneath.

67. Make a solar still by digging a hole and stretching the Mylar across it in a bowl shape. Make a tiny hole in the middle and place a collection can under that hole. Moisture will be caught and drain down both from the surface and underneath the Mylar. Keep a long plastic tube handy that you can put in the cup or container and suck from the tube.



68. Changing a flat tire at night? Put a Mylar blanket on the back of the car to reflect light and make other drivers more aware of you.

69. Tie pieces of Mylar, reflective side out around you or tape to you for safety at night when walking on roadways.

70. Lay a Mylar blanket on the snow before you sit down or to work on a vehicle.

71. Stuck in a traffic jam and can't make it to a bathroom? A square of Mylar will contain and seal up the mess or a blanket will act as a shield by the side of the road.

72. After strenuous exercise wrap yourself in a Mylar blanket to prevent muscle cramping, chills and to keep you warm – great for marathon runners!
73. Use over insulation on water pipes as another barrier to keep from freezing. Or to prevent the drips from condensation.
74. Make a kite!
75. To create stencils.
76. It reflects radar waves... Think of an airborne search and rescue using radar. It will reflect the radar in such a way that they may take a second look and find you!
77. Wrapped in Mylar it will make you invisible to heat sensors.
78. Make a Mylar envelope to keep your credit and debit cards in when in stores so that they can't be scanned by a scammer, lead liners work better but Mylar is lightweight.
79. Spas use Mylar body wraps to relieve aches and lose water weight.

Two mil Mylar is a strong and durable product that has proven itself useful in so many ways that I consider it a prepper essential!

Beverly Sandlin is the Executive Editor of SeasonedCitizenPrepper.com, a web-based community devoted to the older prepper that believes in prudent, practical preparedness. Self-reliance, frugal living, and faith are the cornerstones of the site.

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What You'll Need to Know to Store Food in Mylar Bags

Angela Paskett

Mylar bags, the silver bags with food grade plastic lining, are an inexpensive and easy way to package dry food for long term storage. Want to store your food storage in Mylar bags? Here's how to seal your food in Mylar plus seven tips for using Mylar bags you'll want to know.

To pack food in Mylar bags, first gather your supplies. You'll need the product you'll be storing, bags, oxygen absorbers, and a method of sealing the bag. When you have the supplies you need and are ready to package your food, fill the bag with product. Allow enough room at the top that the bag can close around the food without puckering. Add oxygen absorbers suitable for the size of package you are sealing. As a general rule, a gallon size bag will require 300-500 cc's of oxygen absorption and a five gallon size bag will require 1500-2000 cc's of oxygen absorption.

Once the food and oxygen absorber are in the bag, wipe the inside of the bag opening with a dry rag to remove any food particles that may prevent a good seal, and seal the bag. Sealing a Mylar bag is easy with the right heat source. Commercial impulse sealers are ideal, but expensive. You can also use a clothing iron, hair straightener on low heat, or for smaller sized bags you can use the heat strip on a vacuum sealing machine like a FoodSaver.

Once the bag is sealed, label and date it before before storing. Store Mylar bags in a bucket, tote, barrel, or other container to protect them from damage and pests.

Now here are seven tips to keep in mind as you are using Mylar for your long term food storage.

1. Mylar bags are not rodent proof. Plan accordingly. After your food is sealed in a Mylar bag, put your bags into rodent proof containers like plastic bins, buckets, or metal barrels.
2. Mylar bags are reusable. Unlike a #10 can, once you use the contents of a Mylar bag, you can wash that bag out, dry it thoroughly, fill it, and seal it again. To make the most of bag size, seal near the top and cut the bag open as close to your original seal as possible.
3. You can use a large bag to make smaller bags and all you need are some scissors and a clothing iron or other heat sealing source. One 5 gallon Mylar bag makes 4 bags that are approximately gallon sized. Or you can cut them even smaller and store individual meals or small items like batteries.
4. Mylar bags are available in a variety of thicknesses, each with its benefits and drawbacks. The thickness is measured in mils, which is a measurement equal to one thousandth of an inch. A 7 mil bag is thick and sturdy, but not very flexible if you want to line a container with it. 3 mil bags are really thin and flexible and can be prone to puncturing. For storing my own food I use 4.5 mil or higher.
5. Bags thinner than 4 mil may let light through them in addition to being very thin. They'll probably need to be stored in a container.

6. You can make your own bags from recycled Mylar bags that held commercially processed foods. These bags are used for packaging chips, cookies, nuts, and more. Cut them open carefully so they do not tear. Once they are emptied, clean and thoroughly dry them before refilling.

7. Don't forget to label your bags with the contents, date packed, expiration date, and cooking instructions! You don't want a bunch of mystery silver bags in your storage. You can write directly on the bag with a permanent marker or use a stick on label.

Mylar bags are an inexpensive and easy way to package your long term food storage and can be purchased online at <http://discountmylarbags.com> or <http://mylarbagsdirect.com> or from most food storage retailers. For more about Mylar plus lots of other food storage options, check out my upcoming book, *Food Storage for Self Sufficiency and Survival*.

Angela Paskett is the author of the new book Food Storage for Self Sufficiency and Survival, the in depth nuts and bolts guide to storing food for your family. You can also find her writing at Food Storage and Survival (<http://foodstorageandsurvival.com>) and talking preparedness on her weekly podcast (<http://foodstorageandsurvival.com/podcast>).

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Silent and Deadly - My Answer to the Urban Hunting Scenario Ray Gano

There are two pellet guns I am recommending.

First is the "Crosman 1377 American Classic Variable Pump Power Bolt Action Air Pistol"



Vital Stats...

- Caliber .177
- Velocity Up to 600 FPS

This is my first pick for a stealth urban environment hunting weapon. This is a great single shot pump hand gun and in the BB / Pellet gun world the Crosman 1377 is considered the "VW Bug" when it comes to customization.

With it being a Crosman you are able to take parts off of other Crosman pellet guns and odds are you can add them to the pistol.

There are detachable stocks, folding stocks, collapsible stocks and even fixed stocks that you can add on. But one of the first things you will want to do is add a steel breech and once this is installed you are able to mount a weaver rail to your weapon. You can order one of these directly from the Crosman website (<http://www.crosman.com/airguns/accessories>) Once you have the rail, then you can attach a red dot or mount a scope.



The power of this is really good too. It will easily take down small game, even taking out a cat or dog with a well placed head shot.

If you utilize steel darts or pointed pellets, then you could feasibly take out game weighing about 80 -100 lbs. I recommend the Umarex 213-7509 Hyper Velocity Pellets. This is a BAD BOY of a pellet. You can easily take down game using a well placed head shot with this. This is where the steel breech & scope come into play because you do not want the game to suffer, so shooting small game, cat or dog you want to shoot them almost right in the ear canal. This will take the prey out instantly and not cause the animal any undue suffering.

You would be amazed at the following the 1377 has also. There are many hobbyists out there making custom parts from hand grips, back caps, even single point sling attachment points. If you can think it up, someone has probably done it.

The other pellet gun that I highly recommend is the Crosman 2100 air rifle. This is a multitasker in that it holds up to 100 BBs or you can also use it as a single shot pellet gun. This also is a pump action weapon and will also take down small game without any problems.




Vital stats ...

- Caliber .177
- Pellet Velocity Up to 725 FPS
- BB Velocity Up to 755 FPS

This was my first BB gun that I owned and I loved it. It performs really well. It has built in weaver rails so that you can attach a scope or red dot also. This is a really fun weapon, but for an urban use, I like the pistol better just because of concealment purposes the pistol offers, but due to the length of the 2100 it is harder to stick under a jacket if you are out hunting.

Both of these weapons sell for around \$65 - \$75 dollars and just about anyone can afford one.

Learn more about Crosman airguns at <http://www.crosman.com/>

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TODD SEPULVEDA	

How to Make Your Own Sour Cream

Tracy Bunker

Sour cream is a light or heavy cream which has been thickened and soured by inoculation with bacterial cultures. It is a condiment commonly found in Mexican and Russian cuisines, and it can be used as a substitute for mayonnaise, as a base for dressings and sauces, added to cakes and muffins for delectable results, and dolloped on top of almost anything as a delicious nutritional supplement. Sour cream is a great daily source of calcium, protein, Vitamin b-2 (riboflavin), Vitamin b-12, and phosphate. And, as usual, your home-soured cream will have higher levels of these nutrients in easier-to-digest forms than that of any sour cream you can buy at the store. Most factories make sour cream by souring pasteurized cream with cultures, and then re-pasteurizing to kill the cultures after they have done their job so that the sour cream retains only a specific level of “sour”. Your homemade sour cream will be filled with live, healthy and beneficial bacteria.

When choosing cream for making sour cream, there are some things to consider:

The thicker the cream you start with, the thicker your sour cream will be. You can thicken the cream before souring it in the same ways that you thicken milk before making yogurt- with dry milk, heavier cream, or miniscule amounts of rennet. If you don't mind thinner sour cream, you can use plain cream, or even half-and-half. Like yogurt, too, some people prefer to pasteurize the cream before souring it to give the good bacteria a head start, but again, this is not necessary. Pasteurizing sometimes aids in achieving thicker sour cream, as well.

There are many options when it comes to culturing your sour cream.

If you'd like to use a **direct-set starter culture**, then the directions for making sour cream that way will be included with the packet of cultures. If it isn't, then the general rule is 1 packet of starter for 1-4 quarts, then incubate at 70° to 80° F. for 16 to 18 hours. After the sour cream has been made, chill the sour cream until you are ready to use it.

Homemade **buttermilk or yogurt** can be used to start sour cream. Just add 1 to 2 tablespoons of buttermilk or yogurt to 1 cup of fresh cream and cover loosely. Allow the cream to sit undisturbed for 12 to 18 hours in a warm spot. (70° to 80°F.)

You can also start sour cream with small amounts of **cheese starter**- Mesophilic culture (Aromatic Type B) is the preferred type for starting sour cream. If you are making cheese, you will already have this culture on hand, most likely. Add the powder to the cream at the rate of about 1/8 teaspoon per quart and let it culture in a warm spot for 18 hours or until it is your desired level of sour. Chill until you are ready to use it.

Milk kefir grains are a great way to start sour cream, as well. All you have to do is place the grains into the cream and set it out on the counter for 12-24 hours or until you think it is ready. This will sometimes lend a bit more of a strong, tart taste.

When you use any of these methods to make sour cream, you will want to pay close attention to the cream during the souring period. Keep tasting it and checking consistency by tipping the jar ever so slightly. The cream should thicken and when tipped should not run up the sides of the jar, but rather pull away from the side of the jar. Once your sour cream is finished, cover the jar with a lid and cool it for 6 or more hours to halt the culturing process in the sour cream. If you like a thicker sour cream, a small amount of dry milk powder can be added and blended in well.

Keeping your sour cream can be a tricky business. If you are truly beyond off grid and you have limited refrigeration options, your sour cream can be kept on the counter. If you do this, it will get thicker and more sour every day. Sometimes this is good, but sometimes people don't like it. Making sour cream might become a twice-a-week chore if you use it a lot. If you do have a springhouse or other means of keeping it cold, it will keep souring but at a much slower rate. It may start to separate and if it does just stir it back together.

If your sour cream comes out thin, use it anyway! There are numerous ways to use thin sour cream - in gravy, for soaking grain, in place of buttermilk in recipes, drizzled atop an omelet, or even peppered and poured over a salad. Be creative and don't throw it out because it doesn't fit into what you think sour cream should look like. You may be surprised at how many ways it can be served.

Once your sour cream has truly gone off, you can feed it to the chickens, or you can make cheese balls out of it if it has separated. Just drain it in a cheesecloth sack, mix in some herbs and salt, and roll the cheese into balls. Place the balls into a pint jar and fill with olive oil to 1 inch below the rim of the jar. Screw the lid on tightly and place it into the cellar to be served with wheat crackers later.

If you have a recipe which calls for sour cream and you have none on hand, just 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar to 1 cup of cream, stir, and use it in the same measures as sour cream called for in the recipe. Sour cream may be whisked with milk to make it thin and added to recipes which call for only milk, too.

Once you get into the habit of making sour cream, you can save a tablespoon or two from the last batch to culture the next jar. This cycle can go on until you begin to dislike the taste you have developed, and then you will have to start anew.

Tracy M. is a 21 year old who lives and works on a little homestead in the heart of Texas where her family raises sheep, cattle, rabbits, chickens, ducks and pigs, and a very large kitchen garden. She is a freelance writer in her spare time for Cultures for Health and The Examiner, and you can find her adventures, and articles at her blog [The Yellow Rose](#).





Bug Out Plan Template

Welcome! If you are reading this you are well on your way to preparing yourself and your loved ones to effectively survive when disaster strikes. Use this template to form your Bug Out Plan and then review and distribute it among your Bug Out Party. There are sections left intentionally blank with placeholders for you to paste in items like maps and photos.

Please note that this Bug Out Plan Template is intended to be used as a companion to our article, [How to Make a Bug Out Plan which can be found here](#) for your reference. Please note that this plan should be reviewed and updated regularly as your situation or threats change. For instructions and a checklist for carrying out periodic Bug Out Plan Reviews, [check out our article](#).

Please also note that you are currently viewing our Bug Out Plan Template as a PDF. Feel free to print this out and fill it out with a pen or pencil. **To download a fully editable version where you can type in your plan elements please visit our site [here for a downloadable copy](#).**

If you have any questions or comments please contact the author directly at: info@thebugoutbagguide.com. Good luck prepping!

www.TheBugOutBagGuide.com

Section 1: Members of your Bug Out Party

Team 1				
Team Member Name	Phone Number	Emergency Contact Person	Emergency Person Contact Info	Special Skills/ Needs
John Doe	555-555-5555	Jane Doe	444-444-4444	Team Leader, first aid

Team 2				
Team Member Name	Phone Number	Emergency Contact Person	Emergency Person Contact Info	Special Skills/ Needs

Visit www.TheBugOutBagGuide.com for more info

Team 3				
Team Member Name	Phone Number	Emergency Contact Person	Emergency Person Contact Info	Special Skills/ Needs

Team 4				
Team Member Name	Phone Number	Emergency Contact Person	Emergency Person Contact Info	Special Skills/ Needs

Section 2: Bug Out Rally Points

Use this section to designate your rally points to use if an emergency occurs and your entire Bug Out Party is not present. This is where your Bug Out Party will meet to initiate your bug out. It may change based on the nature and location of the cause of your bugging out. Because of this it is best to have multiple rally points and give clear instructions on what scenarios would cause you to meet where. It is wise to have a code word to use when communicating this to prevent your intended rally point from leaking to unwanted ears. Use our example table below as a guide.

Our Example

Rally Point	Location Name	Specific Location Within Area	Code Word For Location Change To This Rally Point
Primary	Home	Parent's Room	Primary
Alternate 1	Child's School	Room 112	Bravo
Alternate 2	Mom's Work	Mom's Office	Charlie
Alternate 3	Dad's Work	Dad's Office	Delta

Your Copy to Fill in

Rally Point	Location Name	Specific Location Within Area	Code Word For Location Change To This Rally Point
Primary			
Alternate 1			
Alternate 2			
Alternate 3			

Section 3: Bug Out Destinations

It is important to have multiple bug out destinations in the event that your primary location is unreachable or affected by the disaster that led you to bug out in the first place. Use this section to define your bug out locations and various routes to reach these destinations. Please also use the spaces provided to paste in maps of these locations and your routes.

Click here to access Google Maps, then take a screen shot and insert the map into this document: <https://www.google.com/maps/>

Primary Destination

Name	Directions	Waypoints	Location of Supply Caches
Destination Name			
Route 1			
Route 2			

This box intentionally left blank to insert your map of your primary destination

Alternate Destination 1

Name	Directions	Waypoints	Location of Supply Caches
Destination Name			
Route 1			
Route 2			

This box intentionally left blank to insert your map of your alternate destination #1

Alternate Destination 2

Name	Directions	Waypoints	Location of Supply Caches
Destination Name			
Route 1			
Route 2			

This box intentionally left blank to insert your map of your alternate destination #2

Alternate Destination #3

Name	Directions	Waypoints	Location of Supply Caches
Destination Name			
Route 1			
Route 2			

This box intentionally left blank to insert your map of your alternate destination #3

Section 4: Emergency Contacts

Use this section to fill out emergency contact information for your party members and authority information sources. Be sure to fill out as much information as you can here, it may be the least expected channel that gets your vital message through!

Contact	Emergency Phone Numbers	Web Address/Email	Radio Frequency
Police			
Fire Department			
Medical			
FEMA			
Local Government Information Line			
State Government Information Line			
Child's School 1			
Child's School 2			
Child's School 3			
Team Leader #1			
Team Leader #2			
Team Leader #3			
Team Leader #4			
Optional			
Optional			

Emergency Broadcast Networks	Channel/Frequency
Local	
State	
National	
Optional	

Section 5: Members of party

This section is in the event that members become separated. The information that you will fill in here will assist you in finding them if you run into other survivors who may have information to share.

**Insert photo
of party
member #1**

**Insert photo
of party
member #2**

**Insert photo
of party
member #3**

Name:
Contact Information:
Height:
Weight:
Other Characteristics

Name:
Contact Information:
Height:
Weight:

Name:
Contact Information:
Height:
Weight:

**Insert photo
of party
member #4**

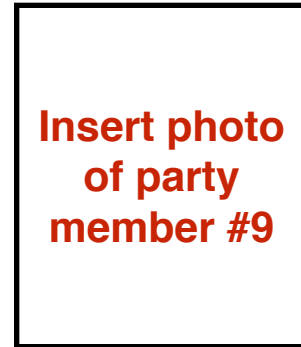
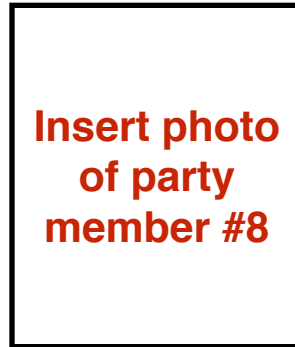
**Insert photo
of party
member #5**

**Insert photo
of party
member #6**

Name:
Contact Information:
Height:
Weight:
Other Characteristics

Name:
Contact Information:
Height:
Weight:
Other Characteristics

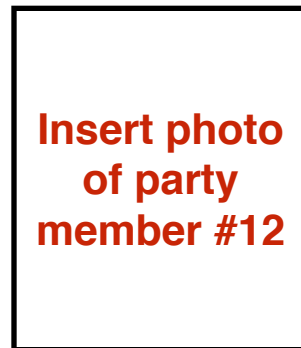
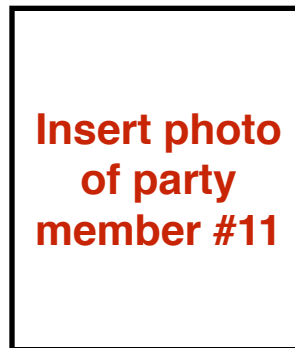
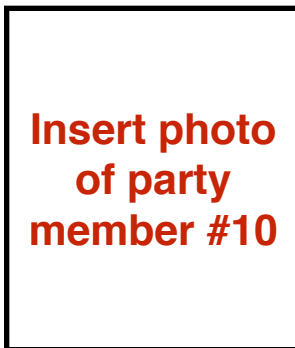
Name:
Contact Information:
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Other Characteristics



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Other Characteristics

Distribute these pictures among all your Bug Out Party Members.

Section 6: Code words

This section should be kept **TOP SECRET** within your Bug Out Party. We recommend destroying this page once your pass phrases and code words have been committed to memory. The codes and phrases listed below are for demonstration purposes. It is good operational security practice to replace these with your own in your copy of this document.

Situation	Code Word/Pass Phrase
Initiate Bug Out Plan	Revere
We are in danger	Franklin
All clear	Washington
I have been followed	Jefferson
We are near our destination	Hancock
Do not trust this person	Benedict
Bug Out destination compromised	Madison
Use an alternate route	Burr
Use an alternate rally point	Hamilton
Affirmative	Eagle
Negative	Bear

Conclusion

Hopefully our Bug Out Plan Template has helped you and your loved ones. Once this is filled out don't forget to:

- Review and share your Bug Out Plan to all Bug Out Party members
- Distribute copies to all party members, it helps to laminate your plan to prevent moisture damage in a Bug Out Bag.
- Keep extra copies in a safe location in your home, car, and workplace
- Practice your meeting up and evacuation as a group to familiarize yourselves with routes and obstacles
- Review and update your Bug Out Plan quarterly or more often if your situation or external threats change.
- Read our articles for more information:
 - How To Make A Bug Out Plan:
 - www.thebugoutbagguide.com/2013/11/20/bug-out-plan-survival-preparedness/
 - How Often Should You Update Your Bug Out Bag and Evacuation Plan?:
 - www.thebugoutbagguide.com/2013/12/01/update-bug-out-kit/

Once again, you are currently viewing our Bug Out Plan Template as a PDF. Feel free to print this out and fill it out with a pen or pencil if you like. **To download a fully editable version where you can type in your plan elements please visit our site for a downloadable copy here:**

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