

**SurviveFoodCrisis Advanced Series**  
**The Ultimate Disaster Survival Guide**

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## Keep your eyes open and set your priorities

The facts are there in front of you. You just need to believe: anything can happen at any time, from a terrorist nuke to an earthquake, tornado, or hurricane. You could be anywhere - your house, the store, visiting Aunt Martha 500 miles east, or a stuck car in the middle of nowhere. Making assumptions can get you and your loved ones, killed.

What I truly believe is that there are some hard-earned lessons that may stop that from happening. And you can start by setting your priorities.

The first priority is a goal. It may be as nebulous as "We'll leave in this direction, then settle down and figure our options," or as definite as a spot on a map. If you know where you're going to start with, that's a big plus. It gives you a route, defines resources and potential problems, and gives you a defined "we are almost there," which can be as important to reaching your goal as any piece of gear.

The second priority is a plan, which (if you are bugging out) must cover four very distinct phases. The first phase starts after you come out of shock and realize "It is time to leave." This means you have to account for where you may be and what you will need to do to pull together last minute details before starting the journey to priority one, your goal. The second phase is short-term survival, what resources do you have, what obstacles do you face as you and yours try to leave the afflicted area.

Next is medium term survival, which is you (+) on the open road to the goal. Again, try to account for possible obstacles and assets. Fourth, once you reach your goal - what next? What do you have to aid your efforts to reestablish yourself?

One thing people leaving a city on foot, bike, or by other non - automotive means tend to forget is, even **you** have to plan for traffic jams and avoid them. How do you think people are going to feel watching you and yours tromp along, fully outfitted, *obviously* prepared, and equally obviously making progress, while they are sitting in a traffic jam, scared to death, with whatever they could scrape up at the last minute from their kid's cub scout days, plus a little more?

People in our culture tend to think they need what's on your back, not what's in your head. Some will kill for that "pack of gold." Avoid crowds when you leave, I strongly suspect they will be **highly** dangerous. Even if you are in a survival community, planning is still necessary. How do you intend to treat stragglers and strangers? How likely is it you will need to defend the community, and what assets do you have to accomplish that?

For that matter, what is the threat level (small groups of starving people, large groups, armed gangs, something else?) What items have you relied on that come from outside sources, and what substitutes are available? How well do you really know the surrounding countryside, and what it has to offer your community?

Where you are, time of year, current and expected weather, what kind of gear you have (especially how much water you can carry,)

who's with you and their amount of gear, everybody's physical condition (what kind of shape are they in, what injuries, etc.,) the local condition (riots, road blocks, military involvement,) local knowledge (location of farms, parks, small towns, rivers, roads, railroads,) available transport (car, foot, horseback [don't laugh - there are stables not 2 miles from my suburban house], bike,) all these things count, and many of them count for the first option above.

It's no fun to realize your destination is 300 miles away but you're on foot in the dead of winter (or for that matter, the heat of summer.) There are many factors to weigh and judgement calls to make here.

If you have no definite destination, pull out your map and look at it. You need water, food, fire, and shelter. It should be relatively remote from what's left of civilization (more than 150 miles from the nearest significant town or city, further (250 + miles) if near an interstate or main highway) and the route to it should avoid large metropolitan areas.

If you have skills, like paramedic, woodworker, chemist, or whatever, you can try to approach a small town - you have something to offer them, they *definitely* have something to offer you. I would, however, advise prudence trying to make contact - scope them out and make sure they aren't shooting people out of hand, for example. If you decide the towns are too dangerous, pick a location and head for it. It gives you a purpose, and that's the biggest thing going.

**DO NOT** assume forests are "the place to be," especially at first. *Everybody* thinks of them, and that's the problem - even if you only assume a 1% escape rate of unprepared, panicked people, that's 2.5 million people running around the countryside. Put 10,000 of them in a nearby National Forest, and consider what's going to happen in terms of water quality (Sanitation? What sanitation?), food supply (there just aren't that many squirrels, much less deer,) and local reaction (as a lady friend of mine once said, "Yeah, I was born in Paris, Texas. They shoot the umbilical cord off when a kid's born there.")

Do you *really* want to try to deal with ten thousand confused, manic, desperate people? Even one at a time? So be creative in deciding where to go. If the woods are your big thing, no problem. That ten thousand will probably be less than one hundred in one year. The statement is brutal, but it poses the opinion that leaving your home town behind is just the beginning, not the end. If you don't plan for both, you may make it to your destination, but you'll have difficulty surviving long once you get there.

Another basic aspect of setting priorities in a survival situation is "return on investment." If it costs you one ounce of sweat to get ½ ounce of water, or 1000 calories to get 800 calories of food, you're losing. You need to at least break even (OK, there are exceptions if you're trying to avoid a lynch mob,) and preferably improve things a bit. This means it makes no sense to load a pack with 100 pounds of gear, because unless most of it is food (which allows the pack weight to diminish as it's used) you are increasing your need for food and water (you need water to metabolize food.)

For survival on the road, less is more. More freedom of movement, more speed, more range. The more you carry in your head, the less paper and other "stuff" you carry in your pack or your pocket. You have to prune things down to what you **need** to survive in the conditions you expect to encounter, although one of the things you need is some stuff for morale.

Yes, that's right, you need some stuff you don't need for physical survival. Part of the "fun," of course, is figuring out what **you** (and, if applicable, yours) need. Do not fall to the temptation to see "needs" as short term physical survival only. If things go badly, you will need to give thought to short term needs (a few weeks,) medium term needs (a few months,) and long term needs. This means you need to plan for psychological, intellectual, emotional &etc. needs, as well as physical.

There is no sin in carrying a good book, or planning a journal. Don't shun others simply because you meet them on the road. If you want to meet these needs, it might help to spend some time thinking about who you are, rather than what you are. The fact you may not be able to carry everything you need does not mean you can't plan other ways to meet those needs. The body is not just a survival chamber for a brain. Remember that when you pick your gear.

Also remember, you aren't coming back, at least not for quite a while. If you can come up with a way to transport things more useful for the long term, like muscle power tools, do it. Even if you walk into a house that's in perfect condition, it's your home. You are going to be there a while, and that means you get to maintain it. Look

around, and think of what it will take to provide yourself with the basics for a week, a month, a year, longer....

The problems of longer term survival will be alluded to at various other places in this text. The equipment list later on will last you for about two weeks to two months or so for the consumable items. That's food, medical items, and so on. Face it - you cannot carry five thousand rounds of ammo on your back, or one year of food, or an indefinite supply of water filter elements, or whatever. That just ain't gonna be. What you **can** carry is knowledge, so keep learning.

## The importance of water

- ✓ **Drinking:** From two quarts/day/person under ideal conditions (cool, no travel, humid, no wind, with healthy people) to two gallons/day/person under adverse conditions (any of the above). Extreme conditions may require even more drinking water.
- ✓ **Preparing food:** plan on one quart/day/person
- ✓ **Washing:** At least one quart/person/day. Re use as appropriate on lesser tasks. Re distill or boil, or throw out on dry land if it becomes irrecoverable.

### Where you get it:

- ✓ *Homes:* Go to lowest water tap in house, drain water from pipes by opening highest taps one at a time (five to ten gallons/house).
- ✓ *Toilet tanks:* generally potable unless some kind of sanitizer in tank. Do not drink if sanitizing device is in tank, even if it looks

used up! Uncontaminated toilet tank water can also be used for food preparation. If "sanitized", use this water for washing, fire fighting, etc.

- ✓ *Toilet bowls:* NEVER drink this water! It can be used for washing (not wounds or open skin), fire fighting, plant growth, cooling, etc.
- ✓ *Hot water tanks:* This is generally safe to drink, but bad tasting. A tank can hold twenty gallons or more. Hook up a clean garden hose to the bottom of the tank, open the cock (faucet) and open the faucets on top.

*Cached water:* You should store as much fresh water as you can, ideally thirty gallons per person minimum. Store in clean, full containers of 1-5 gallon capacity. Dump, air dry, and refill containers every 90 days before the disaster, and you will have a month's supply of drinking water for your family. Some families will abandon their homes. Look for their stored water.

*Public buildings:* Generally same as homes, except that many public buildings will have higher pressures due to their height, so use caution.

**Note:** Many public buildings remove tap handles; you may have to bring a vise grip pliers or a hacksaw and other tools. If you cut off a tap, or cut into a pipe, you may get more water than you bargained for, so be ready to catch large quantities, and have a tapered plug ready for the hole(s).

*Outdoors:* Always purify the water before drinking or using it for food preparation (purification tablets, boiling at least five minutes, iodine, distilling).

**Note:** Surface water is usually more polluted than underground water. Do not be fooled by "pure" looking streams or lakes!

*Purifying water:* There is no safe way to remove some contaminants (e.g. nuclear fallout, some chemical agents). These procedures should be used for all cases when the water is not known to be safe:

**Distilling:** this is the best method to recover clean water, provided the equipment is clean. See figure 1 [*which is not currently available*] (creating a solar still), or build from available pots and pipes for more permanent installation. Tastes fine, and is as free of chemicals, bacteria, viruses, etc., as is the equipment used.

**Solar still:** Dig a hole 3X2 on a side and 3X2 deep. Set heavy plastic (4mil+) over the hole, anchor the edge with rocks, place one rock in the center over the cup, fill pit with wet leaves. Use drinking tube to avoid having to dismantle.

These methods will kill bacteria, but will not affect nuclear fallout, and will not generally affect poisons:

**Water purification tablets:** These kill bacteria, make the water taste funny. Use per directions.

**Note:** Do not open the package containing the tablets until you need them. These tabs deteriorate with age and humidity, and opening the original package "starts the clock" on deterioration. For better taste, treat, then filter the water, then shake it up. Let it stand fifteen minutes or so, shake, and drink.

**Boiling:** filter after boiling at least five minutes on a heavy rolling boil.

## Food Factor

Food is essential, especially for the mind's well-being. First, some hints for when you're hungry:

- ✓ Suck on a rock. Find a clean rock, close your eyes, and imagine a great feast. In your mind, savor each morsel of each course, turning the rock over and over in your mouth.
- ✓ Have a sip of water, with or without your rock. (Don't swallow the rock!) Imagine a different feast, or maybe a frozen treat.
- ✓ Graze. Try a little greenery, or some fiber.
- ✓ Remember that most Americans carry twenty percent or more of their body weight in fat. This will last a long time, generally a month or so (with zero food intake). You'll feel weak, and be grumpy without any food; and people with existing health problems (diabetes, ulcers, hypoglycemia) will be in a bad way, so it is best to stockpile and cache before the problem, and locate food as soon as shelter, water, and fire are attained.

### **Stockpiling:**

Pile up as much food as your cupboards will hold. Concentrate on non-perishable, non-processed, high calorie and high protein foods. It is OK to stock your refrigerator and freezer, but remember, when the power goes off, you will have a maximum of two days (maybe with no way to cook) in which to use your refrigerated food. Rotate your food stocks! Eat the oldest food first.

### **Caching food:**

In every food cache, include a large container (unopened) of high potency multiple vitamins. Take one every other day. Include a carefully wrapped container of salt. Not only is it good for cooking

and preserving, it may eventually make a good medium of exchange (money substitute). Foods for caching need to be capable of being left alone for extended periods (a year or more).

Make sure that these foods and their packages are of the highest quality, with no opened bags or containers, which will attract critters and allow molds to spread.

Cache carefully, where you think you will be able to retrieve the cache.

### **Locating food:**

#### ***In populated areas:***

Food stores will be empty within 40 hours of the disaster, and will be heavily protected. Even if you have money to spend, the owners will probably be unwilling to part with what's left. Go back in two weeks and see what's still there. Look for medicines, paper towels, aluminum foil, tools, plastic sheet and fuel. Don't count on this source.

Restaurants will be empty immediately, and most of what they have is perishable. Ask, don't take!

Public and business buildings, left unguarded, are good places to look. Vending machines will most certainly be empty, so look elsewhere. Desk drawers and file drawers often contain "snack food", which keeps a long time. Any fresh fruits should be eaten right away, even during the search. Make your food sweep at the same time you are gathering water from these buildings.

Apartments and private homes (abandoned only) may have quite a stash of foods. Empty and eat from the refrigerator and freezer, if

you are not too late. Gather all food from the cupboards, and pack according to shelf life.

Trucks which carry food are likely to be either empty or guarded, but it's foolish not to look.

Abandoned only, and pay for what you take!

### ***In rural areas:***

Treat buildings same as above. Always ask, pay or determine that it is abandoned before taking anything - the owners have a right to not starve, too!

In cultivated fields, try to locate the owner. If unsuccessful, gather only the best specimens, as inferior, infested, or infected produce will destroy other food, and can make you sick.

Livestock should be kept alive as long as possible, to provide fresh meat when you really need it, and possibly milk in the meantime. If you can get a breeding pair, so much the better.

In the "wild", game will become scarce rapidly. Make sure you know what you really want. (If you kill the squirrel, you won't be able to track him to his stash.)

High protein insects (most of them, especially grasshoppers) become tastier, the hungrier you get.

Insects are good food, either raw or broiled and mixed with other food.

Most plants are edible, and many show the way to water. The general rule is to eat first whatever is most perishable or nearly spoiled, and never waste anything!

Foods to stockpile, which have good nutrition, require minimal maintenance, and are readily available:

- ✓ beans (almost any type)

- ✓ lentils
- ✓ bouillon (for flavoring stone soup)
- ✓ candy bars
- ✓ foil wrapped "pop tarts"
- ✓ canned foods (but protect from freezing!)
- ✓ dried fruits
- ✓ dried milk
- ✓ fruit cloth ("fruit leather"): see section below on how to make this treat
- ✓ honey
- ✓ jerked or salt dried meats (essential amino acids)
- ✓ nuts (almost any type) - roasted in oil is OK (remember, we need the calories!), and salted is
- ✓ likewise OK
- ✓ packaged pasta
- ✓ pemmican: see section below on how to make this treat
- ✓ salt
- ✓ pepper
- ✓ other spices
- ✓ tea (for flavoring icky water, to make poultices)
- ✓ whole grains (wheat, rice, corn)
- ✓ water (use and re-fill every four months)

**Note:** You must pay attention that you rotate your stocks carefully. These foods have widely varying shelf lives, and storage can be affected by temperature and humidity. Do not open the packages until ready to use. Write the expiration date on each package in an evident location. Contaminated foods can rapidly ruin neighboring foods.

**Check often:** Store everything in plastic bags, jars, bottles, in coffee cans, or in other moisture proof containers. Sprinkle moth balls around the storage area (do not get moth balls in contact with food!).

*Caloric requirements (really rough guide):*

Plan on twenty calories per day per pound, for a medium build adult, ten to fifteen per pound of obese adult, thirty per pound of active pre-teen or teenager (even more for babies), and fifteen calories per pound per day for seniors, more or less. For example, a 100 lb. adult would receive 20x100 (2000) calories per day when engaged in active outdoor work.

Less is required for sedentary people or days, but you need to plan as though everyone will be active, moving things, building a camp, defending an area, retreating, gathering or hunting, etc.

Calories should be from as diverse sources as possible, and should be supplemented by as much water as is practical, along with "daily" multiple vitamins (taken at least every other day).

*How to make fruit cloth ("fruit leather"):*

Core, pit, etc., a large quantity of fruit (apples and dates work well; kiwi and pears, for example, are poor for this process) and run it through a blender until it is "mush". Spread this out on a pan 1/4" to 1/2" thick, and heat it until it is partially dried and rubbery.

Cut into strips about 4 6" wide and roll up tightly. Store in airtight containers. This keeps for about a year.

*How to make pemmican:*

"Classic" pemmican dates at least to Roman times. People would dry or jerk meat, chop it up into little bits, add fresh or dried fruits, nuts, and whatever else was handy, and mix this glop into fat, grease, or suet, and then push it into sections of intestine. Later, people loaded it into waxed rolled up paper, peeling it as necessary to eat the pemmican inside.

Modern pemmican is more palatable. The base for this is usually peanut butter rather than suet, and the mixture can be "thinned" with honey. Store this in heavy ziplock bags, squeezing out all the air before sealing. This keeps a year or more in sealed bags in the refrigerator, up to six months (sometimes more) at reasonable room temperatures. One "1 quart" bag, an inch thick, plus adequate water, will provide food for about two days of hard travelling.

### **Fire in a survival situation**

Have ready at least three different means of creating fire ready at all times. Several methods are mentioned below. You must practice with all these methods! Simply having a slick, rock, and a bow will not be enough, if you don't know how to use them under adverse conditions!

Getting a light will not be enough if you do not know how to shelter the flame and create a good fire lay. Practice!

- ✓ **Matches:** These should be in a waterproof container. Waterproof matches are a good idea, too. The "strike anywhere" matches, regular and extended ("fireplace") matches are a good idea.
- ✓ **Lighter:** Sealed lighters (non-refillable) are good because they're full (at least if you don't use them!). They're bad at

altitude because they are extremely flammable, even explosive. The fillable lighters (e.g., Zippo) are great if they're full. Empty, they are good flint and steel. Better than nothing, but not good.

- ✓ **Magnesium fire starters:** These are commercially available, and produce a hot flame by burning magnesium cut from a block, then sparked by striking flint and steel (flint included). They require a lot of shaving, and the flame is brief.
- ✓ **Steel wool:** Using 0000 steel wool and a 9 volt battery will always start strips of paper on fire, if you blow on it enough. (You can use an SOS pad and a car battery instead. Just have the kindling ready!)
- ✓ **Flint and steel:** Generates sparks. You must practice a lot with this method. Works well to light fumes.
- ✓ **Bow, stick, rock, and block:** This is the old Indian fire starting trick. If you practice enough, you can make this one work, too. Probably toughest of these listed methods.
- ✓ **Lens and sunlight:** This method is fairly easy, provided you can count on sunlight, and have plenty of dry tinder, when you need a fire. Many lenses can be used: binoculars, photo lenses, rifle scope.

**Note:** It is good to have accelerants (fire "cream", small quantities of gasoline, alcohol) available to use if your fire starting method is marginal, or if conditions are terrible, or if an unskilled member needs to start a fire on his own. A handy item to carry is a bunch of the "trick" birthday candles which are hard to blow out. These will remain lit under fairly bad conditions, until you can get other fire going.

## You will need Shelter

This can be vital. You don't want to sit in the hot sun all day or sleep with the rain falling on you. The ability to hole up with *some* cover can do wonders for morale at least, and it can save your life. Even the personal kits can carry one of those mylar plastic "survival blankets." They are not very durable, they make lots of noise, but they are *much* better than nothing. If you are contemplating having to leave in winter circumstances, adding a tent to the car gear can make all the difference. Just be sure to get a good-quality backpacking tent - it can cost some bucks, but it's lighter and more durable than the \$30 Sport City special.

Be sure to seal all seams, and **add a ground cloth**. Usually a piece of thick plastic tarp, cut it to be slightly **undersize**. You want the tarp to prevent things like gravel from destroying the floor of your tent (which is one reason you never wear boots in a tent.) You want it **slightly** undersize because I don't care what waterproofing they put on the bottom, a tent is not a boat. Even two inches oversize will collect enough rain to pool water under the tent, which will seep through and get things on the floor (like sleeping bags) wet.

A further note about tents - There are "3-season" and "4-season" tents, which are the step up from "bivvy sacks". Three season tents are lighter, have rain flies that are great for cold weather as well as rain, and are generally, in my opinion, far the best choice. Four season tents are bomb-shelters - designed to survive 100+ mph winds followed by burial in snow - literally. You see tents like this on K2, McKinley, and Everest.

They also tend to be hotter - sometimes *much* hotter - in summer and the strength adds weight. A good 3-season tent like a Sierra Designs Sphinx 2 was not cheap (~\$230,) but, **properly** guyed and oriented, can withstand 40-50 mph winds. A good 4 season tent, if you insist, is the North Face VE 25 or the SD Tiros 1, and there are others just as good or better. Sierra Designs, North Face, REI, and even Eureka have good three season tents. The Absolute Top of the Line, No Holds Barred tents, which are both stronger and lighter than any "stock" tent, are either Bibler or Stevenson - and they cost like it, too (\$500 +, for a two person tent.) I'll stick with SD, thanks.

One problem with cheap tents is ventilation - they don't have it. Not only do you cook in summer, it just so happens you give up about one pint of water every night from respiration. In cool weather, this will condense on the tent wall and rain on you, especially if it is humid outside. Makers like Sierra Designs, North Face, REI, and so on use what's called "double wall design."

The bottom and the lowest 6 or so inches of the sides are waterproof fabric, but the rest of the tent is light weight mesh. When it gets cold or rainy you put on the rain fly, a cover of impermeable fabric. Condensation tends to form on the fly and drip outside the tent proper. Bibler and Stevenson tents are the "dreaded" single wall design because that's lighter, but they paid serious attention to adequate ventilation.

One more point about tents, you have the choice of "free-standing" or not same. Free standing tents, like most dome designs, don't have to be staked out to work. You can install the poles, then pick the tent

up as a unit and move it about (so can the wind, so be careful,) shake out dirt and leaves, etc. Very handy.

Not-free standing tents are lighter, but have to be staked out to work at all. In forest areas, no sweat, but unless you want to carry the 16 oz. hammer to drive the toughened stakes, avoid this at most tent pad sites, and good luck on solid rock. Also, pitching such a tent in the rain is no fun.

Yet another point about tents, unless it has a **sizable** vestibule (a covered area provided by the rain fly but outside the tent proper,) de-rate the accommodation rating by 1 to allow for reality. I'm sorry, but my Sphinx 2 is a 2-person tent in name only. The vestibule is vestigial, and I like my gear near me. I suppose if I was with someone I really liked I could take it for a while, but two people confined in such a tent for any period of time is torture - basically, you would have the space allocated by your sleeping bag, no more.

Vestibules can be nice in snow or rainy weather, if they're big enough to allow cooking, and some are that large. Mine on the Sphinx is useless for that with an MSR stove (I have no intention of torching the tent and its contents as a burnt offering to anybody,) but it *could* work, WITH PROPER PRECAUTIONS, and **only** if necessary, with (drum roll please,) Hexamine tablets or the US Army surplus Trioxane fuel. The flame is not that large, the area affected actually quite small.

If you're stuck in cold weather for days on end, this kind of compromise may be necessary, but DO NOT TRY THIS WITH ANY TENT UNLESS IT **IS** NECESSARY. And that's not just boilerplate for

the lawyers, either. In areas where winter or malaria are significant survival considerations, jeopardizing your tent is jeopardizing your life, not to mention the fact plastic fires are **nasty** regardless of the season. A stove fired up *in* a tent is a disaster waiting to happen, be it fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Now about bivvy sacks. This is, bar none, the lightest tent concept about. It holds you, your sleeping bag and pad, and a water bottle, but not much (if anything) else. It will have a hoop to keep the net away from your head, but it will have to be staked out to work.

Better than nothing, and probably a very good idea for soloists, but you have to be Houdini to dress yourself in one.

Try to pitch any tent or bivvy sack in the shade if you pitch during the day. The UV in direct sunlight will attack the nylon fabric and, over time, it will start to fray. This isn't a one month thing, more like six months to a year in desert conditions, but it's advisable to think long term.

The first place to set up either a tent or a bivvy is in the back yard or, if it's free standing, maybe in the living room. Yes, I have set up a tent in total darkness at five in the morning with hands half numb with cold, but I learned to do it on a pleasant afternoon. It's always nice to have a good idea of what goes where and how it works when you have the instructions and the phone for customer service in hand, **before** it becomes a problem at the camp site.

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nice to have a good idea of what goes where and how it works when you have the instructions and the phone for customer service in hand, **before** it becomes a problem at the camp site.

Tent stakes seem a kind of "why bother" subject, but the aluminum wire stakes normally supplied with new tents, even good ones, tend to be (a) weak, so they tend to bend easily in rocky ground, and (b) have indifferent holding ability in soft soils, which is important in high winds. The plastic stakes are reputed to self-destruct easily, but the ten inch nail stakes survive rocky ground (and park tent pads) well, while there is an aluminum stake shaped like a quarter moon, available from REI, that is stronger than the standard stake and holds well in soft soil.

Be careful here, though, and be sure the stakes fit the stake loops on your tent **loosely**. If they fit tight, over time they will cut the stake loop, rendering it useless. About 2-4 nail stakes (they are heavy) plus some of the quarter moon stakes (for putting out guy lines for windy conditions) seems the best choice.

### **The necessary medical equipment**

You can now buy kits that will take you just shy of the ability to do minor surgery. For most people, this is a bad (and expensive) joke. The people can't do CPR, they've never even *read* a first-aid book, and their concept of the injuries they may encounter is limited to what's happened around the house.

Sometimes, especially if they have kids, they've encountered things like broken arms and such, but (1) the ER was a short drive away,

and (2) our society is so civilized you can't even guarantee people know basic things, like how to recognize a serious fracture.

Fortunately, there are some good books for starters and then there are courses at community colleges for CPR and First Aid. Be advised you will not be allowed to enroll in the advanced courses beyond this unless you are sponsored by a hospital - it is assumed you will not get enough experience to remain current unless you are a paramedic.

If you have any special medical needs, **plan** for them. Carry extra medication. The pharmacies won't be open after the city closes down. For longer term survival, knowledge of herbal remedies can be invaluable. Supplies, no matter how carefully hoarded, will not last forever. Nature offers many alternatives to the drugstore.

If you build up a small kit, remember the basics you need to address - lacerations (cuts), sprains and fractures, burns and blisters, infection, analgesics (pain/fever relief,) wound cleaning, "bodily dysfunction" (severe diarrhea or vomiting can cause serious problems, even kill you, beyond the embarrassment,) vitamins, Lite salt or some other electrolyte replacement, and accommodation for any special personal needs. Don't forget - wounds need to be cleaned before bandaging, so set some things aside for the purpose.

I added vitamins to the list because you **will** need dietary supplements at first, if for no other reason than to support your immune system. Stress of any kind - temperature extremes, dietary, psychological, you name it - is notorious as an immune suppressor, and you will need all the help you can get to avoid sickness.

Electrolyte replacement for small kits is never Gatorade powder. Gatorade does taste lots better, but there just isn't enough "bang for the buck" that you can get out of a film canister of Gatorade compared to the same amount of ThermoTabs or Lite Salt, which has a good balance of sodium and potassium.

One thing about sun blocks - you can't carry all of it you need. Let's face it, the number of office jobs in a "brave new world" will be quite limited, which means working outdoors, either some of the time or all of it. If you do not have very fair skin, getting a "working" tan early on is not a bad idea, in spite of current medical opinion. Your skin manufactures vitamin D from sunlight (currently we get most of it added to our milk) and a tan does provide limited protection from sunburn.

## **Clothing basics**

This can get interesting. Ideally, you should be dressed appropriate to the weather at all times, but what's appropriate for the weather and the situation is not often very useful if you have to leave. A professional is not really up to a five mile march, especially if you're a woman in heels. The problem is compounded if you are a train commuter in some place like the Northeast Corridor.

There are no easy answers here, but I can give you a few ideas.

1) Feet are your foundation. If you can't walk, you can't escape. This may mean that, as a train commuter, you carry some stuff in a sports bag "for the gym" or even just a pair of tennis shoes and socks in the briefcase. Car commuters have it easier, because you can put a

daypack in the trunk with some selected items, including real hiking boots and socks.

You want "real" hiking boots if possible because they have stiffer soles, which do a much better job of protecting your feet from rocks, roots, and uneven ground, and give better support when trying to ascend a steep face. Don't think mountains are the only time you'll have to climb a steep grade - think about trying to climb up the side of a dry riverbed. One thing, and this will be repeated - allow for the fact your feet tend to swell slightly if you are on them a lot. Rough terrain also calls for good ankle support.

2) Next to shoes, socks are **vital**. They pad your feet, preventing blisters. They keep moisture away from your foot to some degree, which is an absolute requirement in cool/cold weather especially. Remember to wear the socks you intend to use when you buy your boots - the sport socks tend to be thick, and can radically change the size of the boot/shoe you need. Avoid cotton socks - they make your feet cold in the winter, and tend to promote blisters in the summer, plus the difficulty mentioned in the next paragraph.

You can also use very thin polypro liner socks with the normal sport socks - this is handy to help prevent blistering.

3) A hat is necessary. In cold weather, most of the heat loss comes from the head, neck, and the tops of your shoulders. In hot weather a hat is your portable shade.

4) In cold weather you want more light layers, rather than two or three heavy ones. A shell (windbreaker,) sweater, shirt and polypro T-shirt is much better than a heavy jacket and a heavy shirt, because as you change activities your need for insulation changes. If you're bushwhacking (going cross country, not on a trail) you will be

working hard. Too much insulation means you'll sweat, which gets your clothes wet, which can make you feel miserable and increases evaporative heat loss when you stop. Take off the sweater and put it in your pack while you walk, then put it on first thing when you stop. As one backpacker put it, "If you're comfortable at the trail head, you're *way* overdressed."

From experience, I'll agree - start to reduce your heat retention capability **before** you set out. In camp I wore a balaclava, shell, jac-shirt (a very heavy, lined shirt), heavy shirt, and undershirt - and needed **all** of it. After less than one mile on the trail, the balaclava, shell, and jac-shirt were in the pack, the shirt and cuffs were unbuttoned, even the undershirt top buttons were open, and I still sweat some. This in mid-thirties weather with high (50%+) humidity and a light breeze on a cloudy day, which makes for a "to the bone" cold.

Remember, the outer layer blocks the wind, the inner layer keeps any sweat you generate away from your body and begins the process of trapping air for your body to warm. Everything in between is just an air trapper.

5) Hot weather clothing needs to cover you to prevent sunburn, but also needs to allow ventilation. Thin polypro briefs work well here (if you wear that sort of thing) because they move sweat away from the skin so you don't feel like you're taking a bath. In general, loose fitting clothing works best. Cotton/poly blends work reasonably well in this environment.

6) Your experience in the wild will probably be neither sanitized nor short. That being so, you have to account for the ability to repair

clothes, so get a small sewing kit together. Not necessarily one of those store bought "travel" sewing kits, which have a lot of brightly colored weak thread. If you get one, fine, but use it as a base to start from. Add a quantity of good thread so you can make lasting repairs to things like buttons.

7) Please be advised the wilderness is no place to make a fashion statement. Fit and function matter far more than color coordination. That does not mean it (whatever "it" may be) has to look bad, but it **does** mean you need to set your fashion consciousness aside, which some people can find amazingly difficult.

### **Learn from the best survivalists:**

1. Don't forget a thing.
2. Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured, sixty rounds powder and ball and be ready to march at a minutes warning.
3. When you're on the march act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer; see the enemy first.
4. Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. There is an army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the rangers, but don't never tell a lie to a Ranger or officer
5. Don't ever take a chance you don't have to.
6. When you're on the march, we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men.
7. If we strike swamp or soft ground we spread out abreast so it is hard to track us.

8. When we march, we keep moving till dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us.
9. When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps.
10. If we take prisoners we keep them separate till we have we have enough time to examine them so they can't cook up a story between them.
11. Don't ever march home the same way, take a different route so you won't be ambushed.
12. No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout twenty yards ahead on each flank and twenty yards in the rear, so that the main party can't be surprised and wiped out.
13. Every night you'll be told where to meet if surrounded by a superior force.
14. Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries.
15. Don't sleep beyond dawn. Dawn's when the French and Indians attack.
16. Don't cross a river by a regular ford.
17. If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you.
18. Don't stand up when the enemy's coming against you. Kneel down, lie down, hide behind a tree.
19. Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch. Then let him have it and jump out and finish him up with your hatchet.

### **GOOD TO GO KIT:**

Things you should always have within your reach, for any emergency which might arise:

- ✓ GI Canteen Cup (steel is better than aluminum)
- ✓ Knife (decent sheath knife 5" blade)
- ✓ Gold/Silver "space blanket" (carry 2; they're fragile!)
- ✓ Plastic sheet, 6'x10' at least 4 mil thick
- ✓ Matches (waterproof) and ever light birthday candles
- ✓ Alternate fire starter (magnesium, steel wool, lighter)
- ✓ Cold weather electricians tape (Scotch 33' or 44')
- ✓ Saw (folding buck/pack saw)
- ✓ 50' minimum of parachute cord
- ✓ Signal mirror (GI type with aiming device)
- ✓ Whistle (Acme Dog training recommended)
- ✓ Dental floss
- ✓ Trowel
- ✓ fishhooks
- ✓ Poncho
- ✓ Toilet Paper
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Compass
- ✓ First Aid kit
- ✓ Glasses
- ✓ dentures
- ✓ Soap
- ✓ Sunblock
- ✓ Maps
- ✓ Socks
- ✓ Water and purification tablets
- ✓ Snack (jar of peanuts, pemmican, etc.)
- ✓ ...and anything you can grab from the list below.

If you have your own car, it should contain:

- ✓ Sleeping bag
- ✓ Tent
- ✓ Ax
- ✓ Shovel or entrenching tool
- ✓ Bucket
- ✓ 100' of 3/8" or larger rope (nylon)
- ✓ Mattress pad
- ✓ Heavy coat
- ✓ Gloves/mittens
- ✓ Insect repellent
- ✓ Cheesecloth (first aid and insect screen)
- ✓ Multi tool (Leatherman's, Gerber, Swiss Army knife, etc.)