**Seven Tips for Surviving Disaster**

If the world as we know it were to collapse tomorrow morning, would you be ready?

Do you have a safe place to stay? Do you currently have enough food and water to sustain you and your family for at least three days? Would you be able to defend yourself against any dangers that might threaten you or your loved ones?

Do you have any knowledge of how to survive in nature? Do you know how to deal with life-threatening situations?

Think about these questions, and answer them honestly. If you answered mostly “no,” pay close attention to today’s lesson. It could save your life.

Today we’re going to discuss the philosophy of survivalism.

Survivalism is the ideology of being prepared for any disaster. Survivalists, or “preppers” believe that you must always be ready for catastrophe so that you are self-sufficient when disaster strikes.

These disasters can be brought upon by natural causes, such as earthquakes, tornados, or tsunamis. They may also arise from government or financial collapse, nuclear war, biological warfare, global pandemics, disease, terrorism, and more.

Survivalists prepare themselves for the worst. They stock up on necessary food and materials, scout out self-sustainable locations, and practice self-defense as well as emergency evacuations.

Many survivalists create fallout shelters. Some prepare their homes as bases. Others pick rendezvous locations where they can meet up with friends, family, and other survivors.

In general, it is understood that it will take at least three days to find or receive help. As a result, preppers often create “72 Hour Kits” that contain three days’ worth of food and water. Many survivalists store kits in multiple locations, such as their closets and in their cars, so that they are able to either bunker down or make a quick get-away.

Others follow the news and the Red Cross to learn about accidents. They want to remain informed about world events, weather, and disease so that they are prepared to survive on their own if everything falls apart.

Some people think that survivalists are radicals or conspiracy theorists. On the contrary, they are people who take note of what’s happening in the world and are concerned about the future.

Even Craig Fugate, the head of FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) believes that families should plan for the worst and create survival strategies in the event that there is a disaster.

In times of crisis, the government and emergency organizations can only do so much so quickly. Preppers realize that if anything happens, their lives and safety may rest in their own hands.

There is value in being prepared. As they say, “hope for the best, prepare for the worst.” You can always hope that everything goes as planned, but you also need to be prepared because you never know when a disaster will strike.

The worst thing you can be is complacent. Don’t assume that nothing will ever go wrong. If you do, you will be left totally helpless when an earth-shattering situation occurs. At that point, it will be too late. You’ll wish that you had planned ahead.

Unfortunately, when disaster, disease, or collapse happens, most of the population is completely unprepared. As a result, many people do not fair well under the unexpected circumstances, and this leads to additional fear and chaos.

At the very least, it’s wise to have a back-up plan for different scenarios.

For example, to save yourself from financial ruin, you can always pay for items with cash, instead of with credit cards. You can also hide some money away for safekeeping within your home, in case something goes wrong and you are unable to run to the bank.

You can stock your home with extra candles, lanterns, and bottled water, in the event that there is a blackout, power outage, or winter storm.

Preparedness might seem extreme or unnecessary, but it’s better to be safe than sorry. It’s easy to prepare before the fact. It’s much harder to scrape together food and supplies after a disaster occurs.

If you’re lucky, nothing bad will ever actually happen to you and your family. If nothing happens, you’ll simply have extra supplies around your house or in your car for whenever you need them. If something does happen, you’ll be more prepared than most of the families around you, and you’ll have an excellent chance of survival.

Here are a few tips and skills that you should know in the event of a disaster.

**How to Start a Fire**

If disaster strikes, you may be left without warmth or the ability to cook food or boil water. You will need to know how to start a fire In order to do both of these things, as well as to illuminate your environment, to signal for help or to lead others to your whereabouts.

There are several different ways to create a fire. Obviously, the easiest way is to use charcoal or light fluid. However, you may not have these items at your disposal after a catastrophe.

The most common way to start a fire without these tools is to use two sticks. However, this can be very difficult because you need to maintain consistent friction, which can be painful because you are using your bare hands.

Instead of using the “two stick” method, try using one stick and a piece of wood. Make sure that you find a piece of wood whose material is a bit softer than that of the stick.

Using a rock or knife, cut a small notch, or V, into the edge of the board. Create another small notch next to the V. This second notch is where you will insert the bottom of your stick.

Then set a small piece of bark on the ground below the notches. This bark will be used for kindling. Using your hands, rapidly rotate the stick in the groove, applying downward pressure.

The goal is to use wood-on-wood friction to create small flames or embers. These embers will land on the bark and ignite a small fire.

If, however, you happen to have matches in your survival kit, you can create a fire using just one match.

First, you will need to dig a small hole in the ground. Then, find materials to burn. Gather dry leaves, sticks, bits of cloth, and other items that might burn easily. Light a match, and apply the flame to several different pieces of tinder.

Increase the flame by gently blowing on the tinder. As the fire grows, you can add more sticks and materials to burn.

You can also create a small box for your fire. This is sometimes called “the log cabin” method. Stacking small logs and sticks, create a box that looks somewhat like a log cabin.

Then put paper in the middle of the box, and toss in a lighted match. In no time, you should have a blazing fire. The “log cabin” protects the flame as it grows, keeping it from blowing out.

**How to Properly Aim a Gun**

We see people accurately shoot guns in movies all of the time, and it appears very simple. However, to hit your target in real life, you must learn how to properly aim your gun.

Make sure your gun is loaded. Grab the gun with your dominant hand (keeping your finger off of the trigger). Support and steady the gun with your non-dominant hand.

When looking at your target, align the front and back sites of your gun. The sites should be evenly leveled, and you should be able to see the back site in the center of the front site. To get the most accurate view, it’s best to look with your dominant eye and focus on the front site.

Then, aim the front site slightly below your target. This will improve accuracy.

Take deep breaths and control your breathing. You don’t want the gun to bounce around due to nervous or jerky breathing.

Place your dominant index finger on the trigger. Then, gently pull the trigger back. Again, you want the motion to be smooth, not jerky. Any quick movements can disrupt your aim.

Lastly, allow the gun to “follow through.” Keep your finger on the trigger, and refrain from making any sudden movements or changes. Let the gun naturally recoil after the shot to ensure accuracy.

This should go without saying, but please remember that guns are deadly weapons. It’s important to learn more about proper shooting techniques and gun safety so that you only hit your intended targets. Guns can keep you safe, but can also be incredibly dangerous if used improperly.

It’s best if you can avoid shooting your gun. Guns should be used only for hunting and, if absolutely necessary, protection.

**How to Create a 72-Hour Kit**

If a disaster occurs, you don’t want to be left empty handed. There are certain foods and tools that you need to survive. Preparing a survival kit can help you make it through the hardest and scariest times of a tragedy.

There are certain elements of a catastrophe than you cannot control, such as power outages, fires, building collapses, or looting. But there are other things that you can do to give yourself a better chance of making it through those events (and others) alive.

A 72-Hour Kit can be a stock supply of materials within your home, or a bag that you take with you when disaster strikes.

An effective 72-Hour Kit should include several staple items. At minimum, you will need one gallon of water per person for each day and some food.

Any food items should be non-perishable, such as canned foods and juices, granola bars, beef jerky, dried fruit, or trail mix. It’s best if any canned items have “pop-tops” that don’t require a can opener, but if you can, bring one with you just in case.

Here are some other important items to add to your supply. If you can carry more, include whatever other items you think will be necessary for your survival.

Extra undergarments

Blankets

Batteries

A flare

Flashlights

Some candles

Wooden matches in a water-proof container

A pocketknife

Rope

Duct tape

Batteries

A tarp

Binoculars

A first aid kit

Baggies (to keep items dry)

A crank or battery powered radio

Moist towelettes and/or hand sanitizer (for hygiene)

Local maps

Important health and personal documents

**How to Build A Shelter**

Shelter is critical. You need a place to shield you from the elements. You also need something that will allow you to safely get some rest.

Before you start building a shelter, look and see if you can use wooded areas or a small cave for protection.

If you have absolutely no supplies to make a shelter, you’ll need to fashion something out of natural elements, such as sticks, branches, dirt, and debris. Try making a teepee using long sticks, vines (or rope), and leafy branches.

If, on the other hand, you have included a tarp in your safety survival kit, this can do wonders in terms of creating a shelter.

When you’re building a shelter, at the bare minimum, you want to protect yourself from the elements, such as sun, rain, and wind.

If you can, find or create a shelter near water, and avoid dangerous natural elements such as cliffs, falling rocks, or dead trees.

If you’re in an area with heavy foliage, you can use the trees for shade. However, make sure that you can easily get out from under the covered area if (or when) help flies over.

If you decide to remain within your own home, secure all locks on doors and windows. Limit the number of entrances and exits. Consider purchasing a back-up generator. It’s also important to have a lookout point, or way of identifying visitors.

There’s no telling what people will do if the world falls into a state of disaster. You may be willing to take new people in, but it’s important to make sure that you have enough food and water for everyone.

You also want to make sure that you can trust anyone that you allow into your home or bunker. Once you let others in, you may have a hard time getting them to leave peacefully if things go sour.

If you prefer isolation, head for higher ground or an island location. This will make it more difficult for strangers to reach you, and you’ll have a better chance of seeing anyone that approaches.

**How to Identify Poison Berries**

If you’re lacking food supplies, it might be tempting to eat whatever you find. But you must be extremely careful. Humans are not able to eat everything that’s found in nature.

Be careful when choosing berries to eat. One mistake could lead to illness or death. Before you ingest any berries, you need to be absolutely certain that they are not toxic.

Don’t assume that a berry is edible for humans just because you see birds or other animals eating it.

Avoid red or white berries. Also, look at the body of the plant. This can quickly tell you which plants to avoid. If the plant has shiny leaves, milky sap, leaves clumped in threes, thorns, or hairy vines, these are all warning signs that the plant is poisonous.

Look for berries that are black or dark blue in color. These berries are usually edible. Still, it’s important to approach any new plant or berry with caution.

Every time you discover a new berry, you must conduct several tests to ensure that it is non-toxic. Many plants and berries look similar. So, take your time and always examine each plant carefully.

First, rub various parts of the plant and berry on your skin, preferably on your wrist or elbow. Wait fifteen minutes to see if your skin has a negative reaction. If not, then you can proceed to the next test.

Now you must try several oral tests. Gently rub the berry on your lips, and wait to see if it creates a reaction. Don’t rush these experiments. Allow at least 10 minutes to see if your skin has an adverse reaction.

If no reaction occurs on your lips, then put the berry on your tongue. If there are no negative consequences, you can then proceed to chew one of the berries and hold it in your mouth. If you experience a bitter taste or a reaction of any kind, spit the berries out immediately. These berries may be poisonous.

If after a few minutes nothing happens, you can finally swallow one of the berries.

Before ingesting any more berries, wait to see how your body reacts. If you experience severe stomach pain or illness, you’ll need to induce vomiting to clear these irritants from your system.

However, if nothing happens, you will know that these particular berries are safe to eat.

If you plan on eating other parts of the plant, it’s important to conduct the same series of tests with each different part. Just because the berries are edible does not mean that the vines and leaves are, as well.

When dealing with berries, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Remember, under most circumstances, the human body can survive for at least three days without food. So, if you’re in doubt, refrain from ingesting unknown or suspicious fruits.

Look for berries that you know and can identify. If you can find them, this is the safest way to go.

If you are not confident in identifying the edibility of berries, look for alternative food sources. For example, if you’re near a body of water, fresh seaweed is both edible and nutritious.

Also, remember that bugs are a good source of protein, calories, and vitamins. They may not be the most enticing option, but you must do what need to do to survive, and it’s better to eat an icky bug in order to survive than to eat a tempting berry that might kill you.

**How to Make a Tourniquet**

After a disaster, you may be forced to live among the elements. This increases the chances of danger and sustaining injuries. If a major catastrophe occurs, you may no longer be able to count on cell phones, ambulances, or other emergency medical care.

If you or someone you know sustains an arm or leg injury that is bleeding profusely, you will need to apply a tourniquet. A tourniquet is device that restricts blood flow, and if applied quickly, can help prevent an injured person from bleeding to death.

Before using a tourniquet, make sure that it is absolutely necessary. Apply pressure to the wound. If the pressure does not stop the bleeding, then it’s time to create a tourniquet.

You will need to find some sort of cloth or item that can be tied around an arm or leg. Don’t use objects that could lead to additional injuries, such as strings, rope, or anything with wires.

It’s best if you use something that is wider and gentler on the skin, such as the arm of a shirt. You can also use a belt, a shoulder strap from a bag, a spare piece of fabric, or even a long sock. For the sake of example, let’s say that you’re using a long piece of fabric.

You’ll also need to find something to use as a torsion device to twist and secure the tourniquet. This device can also be any number of materials: a strong stick, the handle of a broom, a flashlight, or anything else that is one foot or longer.

Once you’ve gathered both items, you can start to apply the tourniquet.

Tie the fabric around the limb between the wound and heart. Do not tie the tourniquet over the wound. Doing this may cause additional pain and injury.

Similarly, do not place the tourniquet over a joint. This will not properly stop the flow of blood.

Tie the fabric and make a half-knot. Do not tie it into a double knot. Creating a double knot will make the next step difficult.

Place the torsion device over the half-knot, and secure the device by tying a double knot. Then twist the torsion device in one direction to tighten the tourniquet and stop the bleeding.

Lastly, secure the torsion device with the loose ends of the fabric. This will keep it in place.

**The Multiple Uses of a Knife**

If you only have one item for survival, a knife might be your best bet. There are seemingly unlimited uses for a good knife.

For starters, you can use you knife for hunting. You can kill small animals or even fish with a knife. A knife will also help you to skin the animal and prepare your meal.

You can use your knife to cut through thick bushes, and to gather sticks and leaves for fire or shelter.

Knives can also be used for digging or carving. You can use a knife to dig a small hole for a fire. You can also carve messages into trees, sand, or dirt. This can be helpful for marking your path so you can find your way back, or for signaling to others for help.

Having a knife greatly helps with starting a fire when you don’t have any matches. As I said before, you can use your knife to make notches in pieces of wood so that you can create a fire with sticks (See: How to Start a Fire). With the help of a knife, you can also cut thin strips of wood that can be used as tinder for lighting and maintaining a fire.

Knives make perfect stakes. Simply attach rope and stab your knife into the ground to secure your shelter or any other items that you need to stabilize. This will keep them from blowing away or falling down.

Knives can be used to make other weapons and tools. You can whittle wood into stakes. You can fashion sticks to make them more useful for other projects, such as starting a fire or spearing a fish.

A knife can also be used as a hammer. I know this sounds improbable, but if held properly, the handle of the knife can be used to pound items into the ground or trees.

Knives can also be used for self-defense from animals and other people. Unlike a gun, you’ll never run out of bullets.

**Conclusion**

As the Boy Scouts say, “Be Prepared.” The world can change over night. In these times, we constantly face threats such as terrorism, changing weather patterns, and financial collapse.

Most of us are used to living comfortable lives. We go about our daily business and assume that everything will always be the same. But what would happen to you if you suddenly lost all of those comforts? If you lost even the basics that help you survive and function in life?

If disaster strikes, we want to ensure that we can take care of ourselves and our loved ones. We want to be able to provide basic human needs, like food, water, and shelter.

If we are totally unready, we have no one to blame but ourselves. It’s important to prepare while we have both the means and the opportunity.

At the very least, take some time to put together a small survival kit, even if this means doing something as simple as putting some bottled water and blankets in the trunk of your car. Go to the grocery store and grab some canned items to store in your pantry. Purchase one good knife. You might never have to use it, but if you do, it might just save your life.

Survivalism is all about preparing yourself to easily adapt to sudden changes. It’s about giving yourself a chance to start over after everything you know has been destroyed.

Yes, some people might think you’re being neurotic or over-preparing for something that might never happen. However, your survival is not their business. If they choose not to prepare themselves, and are left with nothing when disaster strikes, they will realize that they also should have taken a few steps to improve their chances for survival. You can choose to talk about your preparedness with others, or you can choose to keep the discussions solely between you and your family.

No matter what, I hope you realize now that a small bit of preparedness goes a long way. Again, it’s always better to be safe (and alive) than sorry.

To learn more about all the different ways you can take care of yourself in any situation, please check out my newsletter!