



**NAVIGATING
THE WOODS TO
NEVER GET LOST**

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“The enemy is anybody who's going to get you killed, no matter which side he is on.”

JOSEPH HELLER

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE BEING FOLLOWED

Ever get the feeling you're not alone?

If you suspect someone is tailing you, you need to take quick and immediate action to avoid becoming a victim yourself. Especially in a crisis, when everyone is out for themselves.

But why would someone be after you?

Well, it could be a number of reasons.

Perhaps you crossed someone earlier in the day and they're holding a grudge, a road-rage incident they're looking to escalate. Or perhaps it's pre-meditated, an acquaintance or an ex-lover stalking you through the night, or it could even be random.

A criminal seeing an opportunity for an easy score, or you've just caught the eye of a certifiable lunatic.

It doesn't matter who is after you, with the right approach you can escape.

But before we get into the steps, I want to share the four most important rules you need to follow.

- 1. Be prepared for a fight, the person following you has bad intentions.**
- 2. Don't lead them to your home, or any important location in your life.**

3. Stay in public places with lots of people, using crowds as witnesses.

4. Never go anywhere that boxes you in, without a path to escape.

Right, now with that in mind, here's what to do next.

CHECK YOUR INSTINCTS

Now, your gut is an impressive thing, and often you'll get a sense of unease as a warning that something just isn't quite right.

If you ever get the feeling you're being followed, it's important to check your instincts and confirm what's going on.

Perhaps noticing the same person, or the same car following you.

Use your instincts, and do some testing.

This is when things get fun.

You could vary your pace, slowing down or speeding up, or do something completely random like dashing across the street.

If there's enough people around you could even pull a 180, turn around and head back the way you came.

In a car, make a series of turns in the same direction (four has you driving in a circle), and watch your alleged pursuer as you do, if they still come after you, it's highly likely you're being followed.

STILL NOT SURE

If you're still getting a bad vibe but you've not been able to confirm your instincts, there's one of two possibilities.

You're either paranoid, or the people following you are a team of professionals and they're working with

“you'll get a sense of unease...that something just isn't quite right.”

cont.

multiple operatives to remain unnoticed.

In this instance the best you can do is head to a crowded space and wait for reinforcements.

CALL FOR BACKUP

In everyday life, this is the police.

Let them know with as much detail who is following you, describe their appearance and what they're wearing, and if I was in your shoes, I'd start heading in the direction of the police station, or any other place where there are authorities present, like a hospital, fire station or any other government building with security present.

Even if there's no authorities around, now's the time to rely on your friends, family and survival group.

Let them know what's happening, where you are, and to come act as your backup. Trying to fight on your own should only ever be a last resort, because there's just too much at risk taking matters into your own hands.

I'd much rather a car full of armed friends backing me up, than trying to take down even a single opponent by myself.

LOSE YOUR TAIL

There are a few ways you can do this, but mostly it involves using the obstacles and structures around you to your own advantage.

If you can duck around a corner and have a few seconds being out of sight to your pursuer, that would be the ideal time to sprint and rapidly increase the distance between you.

Especially if you can make it out of sight a second time, because they simply won't know where you have gone.

In a car, this also works. If your tail gets stuck in a red light you can extend your lead, though you will have to plan this well.

If you're really in trouble you could run the light yourself, but you need to be cautious doing this as you're in the wrong, and you're also risking an accident with this kind of aggressive driving.



CHANGE YOUR LOOK

When someone is following you they're usually focused on something in particular. Your red hat. Your green jacket, or whatever it is. It helps them to focus and not lose you in a crowd of people, but it also creates tunnel vision.

They're scanning for something easily recognizable, so all you need to do is change it. Toss your hat and jacket, or if you're not wearing it, put it on.

Time this with a handful of seconds you're out of sight, and you may just pull it off. Then you can about face and slip right by them. Though this only works well if you're of average height and look pretty normal. If there's anything about you that's quite distinctive, be it your platinum blonde hair, your height, or even your weight, this may not work.

ESCAPE WITH A RIDE

This technique works well if you've got a transit pass already, but jumping into a taxi or an Uber is a viable alternative if not. Essentially your goal is to get a head start on your pursuer by doing something erratic, and they cannot follow. Like jumping into a train just before the doors shut so your follower is left behind. Or quickly hailing a cab and zooming off before they can find one of their own. Done right, and they'll be stuck scratching their head while you zoom off into the night.

STAND UP TO THEM

It should be obvious that this is your last resort, but it can work well, especially if you're in a public place. Because they're trying to avoid attention, you want to flip this on its head and make the biggest scene that you can. Stand up to them, shout, and tell the world that

“THIS GUY IS STALKING ME!”

The downside is this can escalate the situation, so be ready to fight, but it's leagues ahead of leading your follower back to your home.

And you never know, if you act psycho enough it may get them to back off.

Though it could also be the last straw they need to break before they start swinging, so be ready too for a fight. I'd only ever recommend this if you're not going to be able to escape on your own.

It's scary when you're being followed, but that doesn't mean you need to end up a victim.

By sticking to the rules and using these techniques, you can gain the upper hand and escape those who are following you.

Stay safe out there everyone.

NAVIGATING THE WOODS TO NEVER GET LOST

Getting lost in the woods is a scary thing. If you've gotten turned around and can't find your way back to camp, you could quickly find yourself in big trouble.

With night falling, and no shelter to be had, getting disoriented and separated from your group and your camp can be a death sentence when you're out in the woods.

Considering how much time we all spend in offices, it's no wonder these types of backcountry skills are fading fast. Apps in our cars and our phones give us directions with a couple of clicks, so it's not really a priority anymore to pay attention. Because Siri, or Google, or Alexa can jump in.

Unless of course, you're lost in the woods, your phone has long died, and there's no signal out there anyway. If you're alone in the woods, there are a couple of techniques you can use to keep yourself oriented, and find the path to follow back to safety.

LEARN TO READ A MAP

Back in my scouting days we were taught how to use a map and a compass, and it's one technique that's served me well in the wild. Heck, if you set me anywhere with a few large landmarks and I'll be able to navigate my way around.

So, make this a priority. You need to learn to read a map, and not only that, make sure you're carrying a compass and a map whenever you're headed out into the woods.

But what if you've got nothing?

LEARN TO LEAVE A MARK

Without a map and a compass, it doesn't mean you need to get lost. If you're wandering the woods, perhaps in the area surrounding your camp, are off on a hunt or even just foraging for food, one of the easiest ways to keep your bearing is to leave a mark.

It's far easier than it sounds, especially with a little practice.

Now, it used to be common practice to cut a notch or an arrow on a tree for this purpose, but that's not really recommended anymore, as you're doing quite a bit of damage to the woods and well, that's not good for the environment.

But there's a few ways you can leave a mark.

CHECK YOUR FOOTPRINTS

The easiest mark to make is your footprints. Learn what impression your boots leave in the ground, and ensure you're stepping in places that leave good footprints as you hike. Yep, that means right into some mud, or anything that's going to hold the shape. Snow is very good, as is mud that's already partially dry. Leave obvious footprints and retracing your steps will be simple.

On the flip side, if you're surrounded by sand or hard-packed dry earth, you need to exaggerate your footprints if you want to have any chance to find them again. What I recommend, is making it a habit to kick up the dirt with my heel every so often. Digging it in to gauge out the ground. It leaves an obvious trail (in pretty much all conditions), and makes it an obvious trail to follow back to camp.

FLAG YOUR TRAIL

If you know following your trail is going to be a problem, leaving flags is another option. You can use anything that's bright and obvious for this, though personally I like crepe paper streamers because they're not only lightweight, but also biodegradable and you don't have to feel bad if you happen to forget where you tied the flags and leave a couple out.

I just keep a roll in my pocket, and tie a new flag at eye level every 10-15 steps. Failing that, you could always use something natural to mark your trail.

A small tower of rocks is a pretty universal marker, though finding (or carrying) big stacks of rocks around isn't fun. Another option is to scrape arrows into the trail.

I'd do this in addition to another marking method, but remember that once night falls these arrows in the dirt are going to be near impossible to find. It's far easier to spot a piece of bright orange paper at eye level.



LOOK FOR DAMAGE

If you've forgotten to leave any sort of trail at all, not all is lost, but you are going to find it gets much harder. Sometimes branches, plants and the brush around an area is damaged from where you've walked through.

You need to identify these areas, and retrace your steps until you get back on the right trail. In days gone by, people used to intentionally snap branches as they passed through an area to make it obvious which way they'd gone. I wouldn't recommend doing this amount of damage if you have another choice, but if finding your way back to camp is going to be a life or death situation, a few strategic branches broken to point the way could make all the difference.

PAINT THE WAY

If there's a stream in your way that you need to cross, make use of the mud that's there on the banks to mark your trail. You will have mud on your boots, so scrape this off onto some obvious rocks, pointing in the direction you need to head, in a couple of key spots that are readily visible.

That way if you happen to hit the same stream on your return, you can simply follow the water until you hit your cross-over point, and use this as a trigger to get back on track.

Getting lost in the woods can be a death sentence, but with a little knowledge you'll be well on your way to navigating effectively through even the most difficult terrain. The key is to leave a mark, and ensure the signs you're making are easily visible, and show you the way to get back to camp.

Do it right, and you'll be exploring the wild like a pro in no time.



TIPS TO KEEP BEES ON THE HOMESTEAD

I've always been a big fan of honey. Slathered on some hot toast or over a pile of buttery waffles it's one of my favorite ways to start the day, and ever since we got our homestead I knew I wanted to set aside some space for a few beehives.

It's quickly become a nice little earner, as not only do I have more honey and beeswax than I know what to do with (we sell it in our local farmers market). But that's not even the best part. You see, bees are currently experiencing a crisis, and their population levels since 2005 have dropped 40 percent. And while the cause is still being argued (everything from pesticides to GMO seeds are blamed), setting up a hive on your property is a great way to help.

GET THE HIVE

First, you need a hive. You're going to need a stand to keep them up off the ground (and away from too much moisture). There are fancy stands, or you could do what I do, and just use a couple of wooden pallets. Then you need the body, the sections for your colony of bees to live in, store their food and produce baby bees. Then of course, the frames fit into the body, and need to be purchased along with the body (make sure the frames you buy are the right sizes for the particular brand and model of hive you're using).

GET YOUR EQUIPMENT

I don't know about you, but walking up on a swarm of bees still makes my skin crawl, and the first thing you're going to need is a smoker and a suit.

The smoker is a small tool that allows you to direct puffs of smoke inside the hive, calming the bees down before you open it all up. The suit, well that's pretty self-explanatory. It's a layer of protection to help you avoid being stung. Though I will say this, all the equipment in the world won't stop everything, I've had bees now for 3 years and I've been stung on four occasions. Not enough to stop me from keeping bees, I just want to ensure you've got all the facts. Then of course, you need all the tools to scrape out the honeycomb, specialized pieces of gear like a bottom board to keep the hive warm as the weather cools, supers to collect the honey the bees are producing, as well as any cover trays to keep bacteria out of your hive.

GET YOUR PERMITS

Generally, it costs about \$500 to set up a hive for your bees, factoring in the equipment and hive you'll need to buy, and securing the appropriate permits. Now, there are rules you do need to follow with your bees, and your local regulatory department will be able to

tell you how many hives you can add, whether or not an inspection is required, and probably the biggest rule, you can't keep hives within 15 feet of a property border or pathway.

GET YOUR BEES

The easiest way to get yourself a colony of bees is to order either a package or nucleus hive. You can get these from your local beekeeping association, they'll have recommendations of the best places to buy in your area. Package bees come with full instructions of how to properly introduce the queen to the hive, while a nucleus is a half-sized colony that gives your hive a jump-start in getting operational that much faster.

GET YOUR SITE

Once you've got your colony established it's important to choose a good site, as most bees will want to find food within about 10 to 20 feet of their hive, and you don't want to put two colonies too close together. The three on my property have more than enough space between them, it's around 40 feet, but at a minimum, make sure you've got at least 10 feet between hives to avoid any potential warring or fights for food. Our hives are set up close to our biggest gardens, so there's plenty of flowering plants for their food.

GET IT MAINTAINED

Looking after our hives takes roughly an hour a week inspecting the hives, and then a couple of hours more to harvest the honey from each. You may also need to consider moving sites during winter to keep the bees warm enough with plenty of direct sunlight, and make sure you're checking in on them regularly for any diseases or bacteria. Bees will also need water, especially during summer, and in winter you may need to supplement their diet with honey or even fondant icing to ensure they're getting enough sugar.

Finally, I'd just like to say that if something does go wrong, don't be too disappointed. Raising bees is hard, and I've lost a couple of colonies myself. The first to a cold snap when we were out of town a few nights, the second the following summer when one of my colonies overheated in the dry summer days. The trick is to not let it get you down and keep at it, while remembering mother nature is an unpredictable beast. Ensuring a steady supply of a sweetener like honey after the SHTF is far worth it, so keep at it.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER SURVIVALISTS

We've been on our homestead for several years now, and in that time, I've seen many close friends and neighbors start to struggle as they get older.

It's a simple fact of life. I don't need to tell you how hard it is working the land to sustain your family, but there will come a day when you're simply no longer able to manage it yourself.

I know, I know, I think of myself as "superman" too, but realistically, that won't be the case as the years pass.

Of course, I'm planning to extend my health as long as possible, keeping active and staying fit, but I've seen the troubles my own grandparents have had, and I also worry for the future.

Because when the SHTF there won't be hospitals readily available, pharmacies for all the medication, and you never really know how age is going to affect you.

With that in mind, I've started thinking already for the future, and in this article, I'd like to cover the key considerations older preppers need to make, to help you get organized as well.

SORT YOUR MEDICATIONS

Now this can be a tough one to plan in advance (you don't really know what

could happen), and it's going to be hard enough getting extra prescriptions for what you need.

What's scary though, is 25% of adults take 5 or more medications regularly, and the elderly (13% of the population) are using up to 30% of all prescription medication.

So, think about what you may need, and start stocking up now.

In addition to standards like antibiotics and everything else in your first aid supplies, you may want to consider medication and monitoring equipment for checking blood pressure, antidepressants, and even anticoagulants.

SORT YOUR MOBILITY

Something as simple as a fall can do significant damage as you get older.

It's important to not only make your homestead more accessible, but have equipment like canes, walkers and even a wheelchair in your stockpile.

You can often pick these up very cheap secondhand, and will greatly improve your quality of life if something happens and you can no longer get around the house unassisted.

Then of course, you've got to consider entry and access points to your home.

Because while a couple of steps now is no issue, if you're wheelchair bound that's an obstacle you won't be able to easily pass.

We've created a simple concrete ramp to our back door (it wasn't possible at the front), and we've also paved a small looping path around our home you can easily follow for a bit of sun, even if myself, or one of the people in my care end up in a wheelchair.

“when the SHTF there won't be hospitals readily available...”

cont.

SORT YOUR MEMORY

You've probably heard this before but as people get older they're often described as going "senile." Or seeing a reduced capacity to process and remember information, they're just not as sharp as they were before and can get easily distracted. Our goal has been to always stick to routines and habits, and we've got constant reminders and task lists on convenient places like the fridge, outlining the things that need to get done each day. Just in case.

SORT YOUR SENSES

Your vision and hearing are also going to start deteriorating, and you need to plan this in advance. Over 60% of American adults with vision problems are older than 65, and hearing loss is very common as you get older.

Have regular checkups now, and don't delay things like cataract surgery. I'd also recommend stocking up on your glasses so there are plenty of extra pairs, and some even with a slightly different prescription. We've also stocked up on hearing aids and extra batteries, though time will tell if these are still good in 30-40 years from now. To combat this, my family has started learning sign language, and while we're not all the way there, we've already got a few key phrases down and are working on more.

SORT YOUR BEDROOM

It's not particularly pleasant to consider this one, but it's important none the less. Think about things like adult diapers, rubber sheets, bedpans and anything else that may make your life more comfortable should you find yourself confined to your bed. Ensure you've got all the cleaning supplies that you need, and that there's also entertainment and comfort items in close reach. From a comfortable lay-z-boy to a small bookshelf, we've even installed extra handles and supports in the master bathroom just in case. Oh, and there's an intercom system we installed last year, that's part of our alarm. You can quickly and easily "buzz" the rest of the house, which will help enormously if there's someone who can't get out of bed.

SORT YOUR SUSTAINABILITY

While our homestead could potentially be far more productive in terms of the



fruits, vegetables and animals we have, I've tried to put a focus on the crops and animals that require the least work.

Not only does this free up my time now, it means in the future I won't have to work as hard either. Things like stocking our ponds with tilapia, growing perennial fruit trees, and wild-seeding different areas of our property with things like potatoes, garlic, onions runner beans and more, means that all we need to focus on is grabbing what we need each day, instead of heavy-duty farm work.

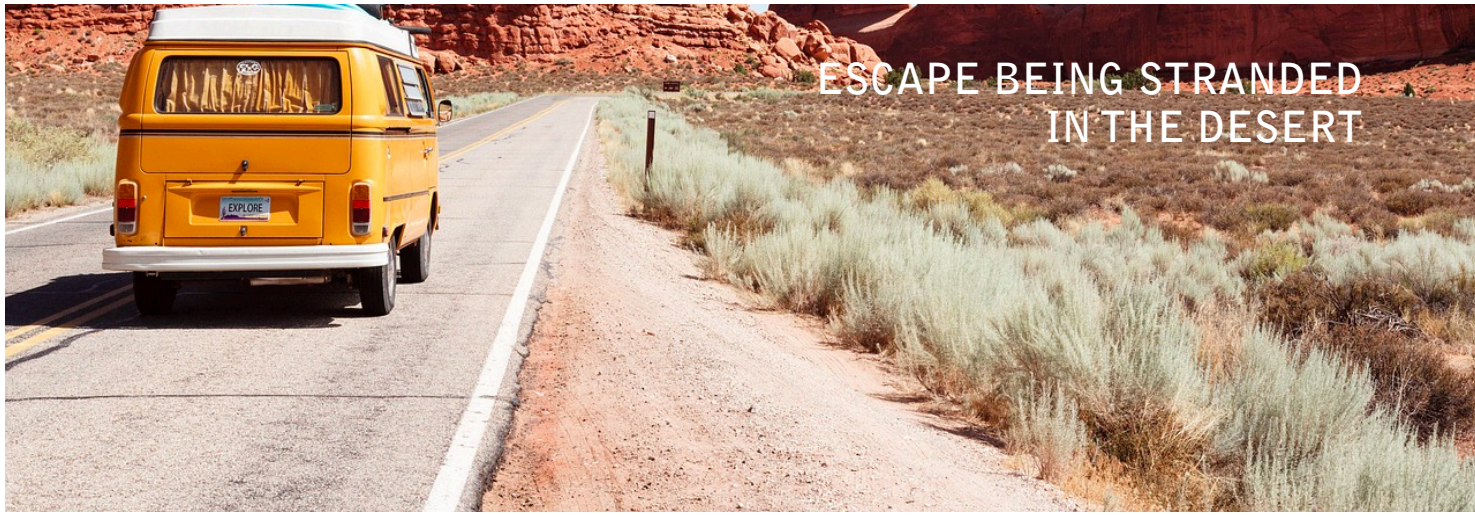
SORT YOUR GROUP

Ultimately, as you get older you're going to need to rely more on the kindness and help of the younger members of

your survival group if you want to have any chance of making it through a crisis. I've mentioned before about the importance of having a strong support group, but now is the time to start forming the friendships and relationships with the people you're going to rely on as you get older.

If you're planning to survive, it's important to ensure you've taken adequate time to address your survival needs as you get older.

Because while it's impossible to plan for every contingency, making a few small changes now will put you in the best possible situation to care for your parents, other loved ones, and hopefully get yourself looked after as you get older too.



ESCAPE BEING STRANDED IN THE DESERT

If there's one place on earth you never want to be stranded it's a desert. But there is some good news, with the right approach, your chances of survival increase astronomically, and you may just find you're able to escape.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR VEHICLE

It may seem counter-intuitive, but if there's any chance a search and rescue team is going to start looking for you, stay with your car. Cars are far easier to spot from the air than you are, and in many cases rescue workers have found the cars first. Stay with your car, pop the hood (it's a universal distress signal), and wait out for help to arrive.

COVER UP EVERYTHING

The desert is a place of extremes, and you want to ensure you've got a plan to avoid the scorching sun during the day and the beating cold during the night. It starts with covering up. If you've not got a hat fashion something that'll give you ample shade, making sure any key areas for sunburn are covered accordingly, like the back of your neck, shoulders, and arms. Sunburn will drain your energy reserves, and make survival that much harder.

RATION WATER CAREFULLY

It can be tempting to guzzle all of the water you've got. But if you don't know when you can refill it, this is a bad strategy. You're far better off rationing your water, drinking it a little at a time to keep your body as hydrated as possible throughout the day. Oh, and if you happen to find a spring or another water source, be very careful before drinking it, make sure to filter it, or at the very least boil it. If you get sick and start vomiting or diarrhea, you're in dangerous territory in the desert. You do not want to lose any single drop of moisture if you can help it.

FIND SOME SHADE

This is critical, especially in the hottest parts of the day. If you're stranded in the desert, shelter should be one of the top priorities in your list. Even staying a couple of degrees cooler will stop your body from burning your precious water reserves as fast, which could make all the difference. If you need to move, do it in the early hours or the morning or in the late afternoon so the sun isn't dehydrating you any more than need be. Your sweat is just as important as the water you're rationing.

One thing that works really well for shade is those mylar space blankets. I always carry these for shelters because they're waterproof and lightweight, but I saw some hikers using these in a trip to Utah a few months back. They'd fashioned what was basically an oversized "hood" above their backpack, using a couple of branches and some paracord, so they could keep their head, shoulders and neck in the shade while they were hiking. It looked a little strange, but it works a treat at keeping the sun off when you're on the move.

GET OFF THE GROUND

Because the sand has been baking in the sun all day, it's common for the ground to be 20 to 30 degrees hotter than the air. What you want, is a way to relax without resting on this hot ground (that'll just leech more moisture from you). Take the seat out of your car and use this, or you could even cut out the flooring and create a makeshift hammock. Staying elevated and in the breeze is the key to staying cool, and that's worth sacrificing some of the parts of your car to make this happen.

RESPECT THE HEAT

Everything in the desert is trying to dry you out, so don't help it out.

Avoid eating salty food like jerky, and refrain from activities like smoking or talking. Each time you open your mouth you lose a little moisture. In fact, you should use a bandana or something similar as a cover for your nose and mouth, to keep the dust out and the moisture in. Same goes for licking your dried lips. It may seem silly, but the small things build up to create a huge difference, and that's what it takes to survive in the desert.

RESPECT THE COLD

As soon as the sun starts to drop so will the temperature, and it's important you have a plan in mind to keep yourself warm when it gets cold. Generally, this is going to be a fire, which also doubles as a signal to anyone out looking for you. Take the time during the day to collect anything you can that'll burn; even dried animal droppings will keep a flame burning and you a little warmer in the night. And trust me, you're going to need far more fuel than you realize, especially the first night when you've not yet experienced what you're in for.

IGNORE YOUR HUNGER

While food is important to survival, you can actually go a heck of a lot longer without food than most people think. Forget hunting or foraging. In the desert, you're far better off staying put, conserving your energy and the little water you have, than trying to scrounge up something to eat in this arid landscape. It's just not worth it.

Surviving in the desert requires a different approach to most situations, the key being you need to conserve and protect what little water and energy you have, while waiting for rescue. Though, if you truly are stranded and no one is coming, you can escape yourself, but you need to be smart in the way you do it to ensure you make it out alive.



ADVANTAGES OF A SHED TO BUG OUT

It was almost 10 years ago to the day we bought the land I planned to bug out on. It's 120 acres, and has everything from running water to access into nearby state forests, just in case I wanted to expand my hunting range when the SHTF. There's not a whole lot else, and that's also part of the beauty of it. It's raw nature.

But the biggest problem we faced on day one, was shelter. We considered everything. But I didn't want to spend the better part of a year constructing it, and neither did we want a whole host of contractors knowing every single detail of our plans. But then a friend suggested an ideal solution.

Why not use a shed?

Over the course of the next month, we not only set a foundation, but we quickly put up our first bug out location. Completely off-the-grid, and away from prying eyes. Here's why we chose a shed for our bug out location.

EXTREMELY COST EFFECTIVE

Because of the size, you can get kits for under \$1000. That's quite a lot less than building a home, and if you're willing to put in a little effort you can construct a shed yourself, saving you hundreds and hundreds of dollars paying contractors for their labor.

It does require a bit of carpentry skill, but it's not rocket science either. And if you decide not to go for a pre-fab kit like we did, you could save even more money sourcing used materials and lumber, and preparing it all ahead of time before heading to the site.

EASY TO CONSTRUCT

For us, the bug out shed was the first structure we built, and I've got to say, it went together quite smooth. We put it together over a few weekends, and because we didn't want the headaches of heavy equipment and construction, opted for a pre-fab model. All we had to do on site was lay a foundation, then bolt it all together. It was incredibly easy to put up, and with some strategically placed camo netting, it's almost invisible to the eye.

ALLOWS HIDDEN FEATURES

Now, another key feature of doing-it-ourselves was operational security. Not only is our bug out location known only to my wife and I, we actually dug out a hidden cellar to lay the slab on top, giving us what's essentially an unknown survival cache that's all but invisible to anyone who happens across the shed. If they decide to break in, they'll find it rather bare, when in actuality our supplies are right under their feet.

MATERIALS ARE EASILY TRANSPORTABLE

Where we eventually decided to build was one of the most inaccessible parts of our property, and for good reason. We wanted it as far removed from civilization as possible, but that also means no road access. The good thing about using a shed was all the flat packs were small, and we could carry all the supplies to the site in a few round trips on the ATVs.

Of course, there are downsides to relying on a shed as a bug out location.

IT'S NOT UP TO CODE

Most sheds aren't built to be homes, and won't meet the residential code requirements in your county. For starters, the roof isn't braced enough, and the studs need to be 16 inches spaced instead of 24 inches (like most sheds). We had to pay extra for these inclusions in our pre-fab kit, and it was worth the investment, even though we plan to use this location only as a last resort. We wanted it to be safe.

COLD & UNCOMFORTABLE

At least ours was initially. The concrete slab was freezing, and we never seemed to be able to generate enough warmth inside during winter. It took the addition of insulation in both the walls and floor, and laying a set of internal walls and flooring before we could really call it a home. Last winter we added a wood heater and it's near perfect now.

NO POWER OR WATER

Finally, you need to consider running electricity and water to your location. We decided against it, not only for the extra cost but on the off chance this would raise suspicions that there's more to our bug out location than initially meets the eye. In the cellar, we've got a wind turbine for the roof that's ready to set up if need be, a portable water turbine, and over the next summer we'll be digging a pit latrine and tapping a well (in different locations of course), to ensure we're as prepared as can be.

If you're looking for a simple and effective bug out structure, using a shed is probably one of the easiest ways to get a quick shelter up, especially if you're working off the grid. And at the very least, it'll give you something to keep the elements at bay while you work towards something bigger.

HOW TO BREAK DOWN A DOOR IN YOUR WAY

Doors. The entry point to a home, they are potentially the weakest parts of most structures, but it doesn't always feel that way when they're locked. But with the right approach, you can break down a door that's in your way, whether you're on the run and trying to escape whoever is following you, or you're scavenging for supplies after the SHTF.

Once you know how to break down a door, the right way, you'll never look at a locked door the same again. But be warned, this information is for use in emergencies only, if you bust down the door to someone's home and they're still inside, you can bet they're not going to be very impressed with you, so be careful. The first step is to create an attack plan, so take a look at the door,

WHICH WAY DOES IT SWING?

First, you need to look at how the door opens, whether it's towards you or away from you. If it swings away from you, you're in luck, because these are some of the easiest doors to break. Often, applying enough force, through a strong kick can break the lock free. If it opens towards you, it's harder to break down. Because you're not fighting just the lock, but the entire frame the door is sitting in. It's almost impossible to kick down a door that opens outwards (i.e. towards you), so my advice would be to look for another entry point, or to start knocking the pins out of the hinges to remove the door that way.

“don't try to charge and barge through with your shoulder...”

WHAT'S THE FRAME?

Forgetting the door for a sec, take a look at the material that's surrounding the locking mechanism. Because this is what you're trying to break. Wooden doorjamb are notoriously easy to kick and destroy, often it only takes one solid kick and it'll crumble. You may find though if you're trying to break into a store, a commercial building, or a home that's had their external doorjamb hardened against entry, a kick won't be enough. Because the metal reinforcements are far stronger than your kicking.

WHAT KIND OF LOCK IS IT?

Most doors are going to have one, or perhaps two if they've got a chain or another secondary safety lock on the door, which means you're going to have to break through both of these. The locks aren't usually the hardest part of this, but it will require you take the time to destroy the latching mechanism of each lock before you can successfully break down the door. Right, so now we know which way the door moves, what kind of frame you're up against and what locks you're targeting. All that's left is to attack the door.

KICKING IN A DOOR

In the vast majority of homes, you will be able to kick in the door rather easily. That's because the doors normally swing inwards, the frames are rarely heavily reinforced, and there is perhaps one door lock and a chain. Both which can be easily broken with a strong and powerful kick. Remember what happened in the movie 300 when the king kicked the messenger in the well, that's what you're about to do on the door. Target the area just to the side of the lock, with each kick. When you can deliver enough force the door jamb will crack and the lock will break free, allowing the door to swing open.

Just be careful. Many doors are cheaply made, and hollow in the middle. If you kick the center, not only are you not going to accomplish anything, you're probably going to end up stuck with your foot through the door. Kick the lock, and for goodness sake don't try to charge and barge through with your shoulder. It spreads out the kinetic energy and because your shoulder isn't a particularly strong joint you can seriously injure yourself. All you need to do is give it a strong kick and you'll be able to break the door down.



BREAKING THROUGH A REINFORCED DOOR

But not all doors can be broken down by kicking alone. If you're trying to get into a warehouse, factory or any commercial space for that matter, it's very likely you're up against a metal door and frame, which will not budge no matter how hard you kick it.

You need to attack everything else. If the hinges are showing (though in many cases they won't be), you can simply pop out the pins, or if these aren't removable at all, use a hacksaw or a crowbar to destroy the hinges completely. Trouble is, this is going to take time.

If you can't get at the hinges, using your crowbar in the space between the door and the jamb is another option, working it in until you've got enough purchase to start levering the door open. It's easier than tackling the hinges, but it's also a tough approach.

Personally, I'd either switch targets at this point, or if I really needed to get in look for an alternative entry (busting through the roof may be quicker than working on the door), or if you're in a real hurry you could always crash a car through the door, and make your own entry point. Smash and grab is a popular technique for many criminals, and it works because it's fast.

Of course, breaking down a locked door is a skill that could just save your life in a crisis, but now you've got a better idea of how to do it, hopefully you'll remember should the situation ever call for it. And if not, perhaps you can use this knowledge to better fortify your home against those who want to kick your door down and take what you have.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A SURVIVAL DOG?

In addition to having the title of “man’s best friend” there’s many good reasons to add a dog into your survival plans. They’ve got a host of natural survival instincts, acting as not only a flesh and blood alarm system, but as another weapon in your arsenal.

A large, aggressive dog is a welcome deterrent to anyone considering your home or your family as a target.

Any criminal scouting you out is just as likely to move on to a new (i.e., less risky) location for scavenging, if you’ve got a big, scary dog patrolling your home. And that’s definitely a good thing. But there’s a few considerations you need to make when choosing a particular breed, and I’d like to explain the attributes you should be looking in a survival dog.

IS THE DOG INTIMIDATING?

Let’s be honest, there’s a remarkable difference between a Chihuahua and a

Pit Bull when it comes to scaring off a potential threat. Now that tiny dog may be 10 pounds of pure terror, but in my experience a smaller dog is only good as an alarm. They can be easily dispatched, and are not threatening at all. You want a large breed of dog.

When choosing a dog to supplement your survival planning, you want it to be threatening by its size alone. Big and broad, a tough-looking dog is going to have an outward demeanor and stance that’s the perfect deterrent to a stranger creeping up on your home.

IS THE DOG EASILY TRAINED?

It’s no surprise that some breeds of dog are easier to train than others. I’ve trained several dogs, everything from my border collies to our newest pit bull, and there are some key differences that do make it harder.

Do yourself a favor and choose a smart breed, that’s going to learn what you want in record time.

When choosing a dog for survival you want breeds that are noted for their intelligence.

The smarter they are, the easier they will be to train, and the more complex tasks you can get them to learn to supplement your disaster planning.

“choose a smart breed, that’s going to learn what you want in record time”

SO, WHAT BREEDS ARE GOOD?

With all of these points in mind, there are a few particular breeds of dog I'd recommend considering for your survival planning.

German Shepherds. There's a reason police use these large, intimidating dogs, because they're not only intelligent and loyal, they have incredible stamina.

Rottweilers. A common choice for guard dogs because of their size, they've got an incredible sense of smell and hearing, and are dedicated and loyal to their family.

Alaskan Malamute. A particularly smart breed that resembles its wolf ancestors, with a relatively long-life span (12 to 15 years), they'll be by your side for years.

Labrador Retriever. An intelligent dog that was originally trained for hunting, they're smart, train well, and have an excellent sense of hearing and smell.

Pit Bulls. Despite the bad reputation, these are an ideal guard dog once they've been trained because of their fierce loyalty to their family.



cont.

Whether that's to help you patrol or to bring in any game you've shot, without having to invest hundreds of hours in training.

HOW'S THE ENDURANCE?

In an emergency evacuation is a real possibility, and it's important the dog you choose has the stamina and endurance to keep up with you. If you've got miles to hike to your bug out location, the last thing you want is for your dog to give up halfway there, and then have to carry them with you the last few miles.

What I would recommend is looking for a breed of dog that's noted for not only their strength, but their endurance. That way I know my dog will make it with me, all the way to our bug out, and happily keep up at my side.

IS THE DOG A GOOD SWIMMER?

On a similar note, when a crisis hits you never really know the situation that you'll be facing. But I do know this, on my bug out there is two streams to cross, and there's a good chance we're going to need to get wet before we get to our final destination.

It's important that your dog is a good swimmer.

Whether it's crossing a stream or acting as a retriever bringing you all the ducks you've shot over the lake, you want a breed of dog that loves the water, and can comfortably swim unassisted.

HOW LOYAL ARE THEY?

With your dog, loyalty is key.

You want a dog that will quickly and easily fit into your family dynamic, where they know their place and are able to get on with the other dogs you may already have. Some breeds do get a bad wrap, but in my personal experience, our pit bull is one of the most fiercely loyal dogs on our property, and I trust her implicitly around my kids.

Plus, having a close companion throughout a disaster will serve to keep your sanity levels under control, and help watch your back no matter what's going on with the chaos outside.

CAN THEY CARRY THEIR OWN WEIGHT?

Finally, I think it's important to consider supplies.

Every member of your group (unless the young kids of course), should be able to carry some portion of supplies.

The same goes for your dog. Because every couple of pounds off your shoulders is definitely a good thing.

Look for a breed of dog that's big enough to carry at least their own food and supplies. All of our dogs have these kind of harness packs they happily wear now, that means I'm not having to cart around dog food in my kit. And that's awesome.

No matter what breed of dog you choose, to me, adding a dog to your survival plans is just common sense.

They'll provide compassion and friendship when the whole world turns upside down, and they're an asset as both a deterrent to potential criminals and an alarm system should someone try sneaking up on you.

Do yourself a favor, and get a dog.



SIMPLE TECHNIQUES TO HOT-WIRE A CAR

When the SHTF you're going to need a ride, but relying on your own wheels alone is far too risky. Your car may break down or run out of gas, or worse yet, you may have been jacked and have had your car taken from you. Whatever the case may be, knowing how to hot-wire a car gives you an alternative, because you can claim any abandoned car for your own.

Of course, I want to make one thing crystal-clear. Hot-wiring someone else's car is a crime, and even if you don't drive off, you can still be charged with attempted theft. This technique should only ever be used in a true SHTF scenario, where your very life relies on your ability to stay mobile.

Otherwise, stick to the laws people.

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

In the aftermath of a crisis there are going to be abandoned cars lining the highways. People will abandon them due to the blockades and traffic they cannot get past, and if you really need a set of wheels, this is going to be your best bet. The trick though, is to look closely at each car. You may luck out and find one with the keys in the ignition, or tucked behind the sun visor, or dropped into the center console. Then you won't need to hot-wire anything.

If not, your best chances of success are looking for older cars. Newer models use RFID chips in the keys to start the ignition, and if you've not got the key, well, you're not going to have a luck. Generally, your target cars should be older than 1998-1999.

DESTROY THE LOCK

Depending on how old the car is, you may be able to simply turn the ignition with a small knife blade or a screwdriver. We had an old truck on a property when I was younger, and the ignition was so dodgy you could get the engine to fire using a popsicle stick. It just needs something to turn. A screwdriver can help you here, just jam it in and see if you can get it to turn. If that's a no go, grab a drill and slide it in at an angle to destroy the locking pins inside the chamber (where you slide the key) and try again. Keep at it till the ignition turns.

If not, you may need to get a little more involved.

HOTWIRE THE CAR

Once you've determined the screwdriver trick is a no go, you need to hot wire the car. This is probably what you were imagining from the start,

simply tear off the plastic covering around the steering column and get at the wire's underneath. There're three bunches under here, one heading left, the other right, and the third up into your steering column.

That's the one you want. Inside there should be 5 wires. These are:

- Battery
- Starter
- Ignition
- Ancillary
- Ancillary

“knowing how to hot-wire a car gives you an alternative”

cont.

Cut these, and as you probably don't have a working diagram to go off, here's what you do. Strip the ends, but be careful. They're live and touching them can give you a nasty shock. You want to identify the ignition and battery wires. Touch the exposed wires together until the dashboard lights up. That's the connection you want. You're basically at the point now of inserting a key, and switching it "on" meaning all you need to do now is turn the ignition. Twist these two wires together.

Touch the remaining three wires to the two twisted together. When you touch the starter wire to these, the engine will turn over. You may need to pump the gas a couple of times to ensure the engine doesn't stall, and you're off.

Well almost, some steering wheels have a "lock" in place that prevents them from turning, but with a little force (a good kick usually is enough) you can break this lock which will allow you to drive the car like normal. Once you're done, just break the connection between the battery and the ignition and the car will turn off. Simple.

JUMP THE STARTER

Finally, there's one more trick I've got up my sleeve to recommend today. It's a heck of a lot faster than hotwiring, and perfect if you want to make a quick exit.

You're going to use a working battery to jump the starter. It works like this.

Pop the hood, and find the red wire running from the car's battery to the ignition (it should be the one headed to the positive terminal).

Connect this to the positive terminal of your battery (you can also use jumper cables to do this if you've got a second vehicle). You'll know it's working because the dash in the car you're jumping will light up.

Connect the other cable to your battery's negative terminal, and the other to the starter solenoid (the small starter motor) in the vehicle you're trying to start.

If you've done everything right, this should kick-start the starter motor, and get the engine going.

IT'S STILL NOT WORKING

Unfortunately, no method is absolutely fool-proof and knowing how to hot wire a car isn't going to help you if you're trying to start a car that's got a dead battery, is out of gas, or is a newer model that has a security system just too difficult to work around.

Check all of your wires, and all of your work, and if it's still not starting, move on to an easier target.

Again, I want to make it crystal-clear that hot wiring a car is a skill to use in a true emergency only, when the SHTF.

Because in the eyes of the law, you're stealing a car, and you will get in serious trouble if you're caught by the cops.

Of course, when doomsday hits this is probably going to be far less of a problem, though you may want to make sure any vehicle you're trying to hotwire is truly abandoned first.

Otherwise you may run into a very angry car owner.

