



THE PREPAREDNESS ROADMAP



*A practical guide to family readiness in
disasters and emergencies*



FORREST GARVIN

The Preparedness Roadmap

Copyright © 2020 Forrest Garvin

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means – whether electronic, digital, mechanical, or otherwise - without permission from the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.

For permissions contact: info@forrestgarvin.com

The Preparedness Roadmap by Forrest Garvin

Editing and general word-smithing: M. I. Grey

Cover design goddess: Lady Grey

Voice over: Kelly Rhodes

Published by Forrest Garvin

P.O. Box 77888

Charlotte, NC 28271

<http://forrestgarvin.com>

Table of Contents



Introduction	1
Chapter 1	
Shh, Prepper’s Dangerous Secrets	7
Why Prep?	10
Going All In.....	12
Time to Prep	13
Don’t Get Cocky	15
Chapter 2	
Prepping Isn’t the Same for Everyone	19
Prepping by Region.....	21
Prepping by Disaster.....	25
Worst Case—And Then Some	32
Chapter 3	
A Family Affair	37
“I’d Rather Die”	43
Chapter 4	
Getting Ready	45
Organization is Key	46

Chapter 5
The First Sixty Days.....55
 What to Buy 56
 Learn and Train 62
 Mindset..... 66

Chapter 6
Months Two to Four69
 What to Buy 69
 Training/Actions 75
 Mindset..... 77

Chapter 7
Months Four to Six79
 What to Buy 79
 Training/Actions 83
 Mindset..... 86

Chapter 8
Months Six to Eight87
 What to Buy 87
 Training/Actions 90
 Mindset..... 91

Chapter 9
Months Eight to Ten93
 What to Buy 93

Training/Actions	96
Mindset.....	98
Chapter 10	
Months Eleven to Twelve	99
What to Buy	99
Training/Actions	101
Mindset.....	103
Chapter 11	
Going Public.....	105
Chapter 12	
Your Group	109
Chapter 13	
Storage Tips and Tricks.....	113
Are Expiration Dates the Gold Standard?.....	117
When Bad is Bad.....	118
Go Medieval with Root Cellars	119
Chapter 14	
Liquid Gold aka Water Storage	121
Water Sanitation.....	122
Vessels, Cisterns, and Bottles	123
Chapter 15	
Training, Training and More Training.....	127

Chapter 16	
The Big Stink	133
Chapter 17	
Getting Sneaky	137
Chapter 18	
Playing Doctor	143
Plants	144
Spices	146
Fish and Pet Meds	148
Chapter 19	
Baby It's Cold Outside!	151
Clothing.....	151
Keeping Warm without Electricity.....	154
Hypothermia.....	157
Frostbite.....	160
Home Preparation	163
Extra Stuff	166
Chapter 20	
Green Thumbs Matter	169
Heirloom Seeds.....	169
Harvesting/Drying Seeds	171
Wet Seed Saving	171
Dry Seed Saving	173

Flowering Plant Seed Saving.....	174
Drying Seeds	175
Storing seeds	175
Chapter 21	
Bug Out Locations.....	177
Characteristics of a Good Bugout Location	177
How Far Will You Go?	180
Getting There.....	181
Bug Out Vehicle (BOV).....	182
Bug Out Vehicle Alternatives.....	185
Chapter 22	
Can You Hear Me Now?	187
Two-Way Radios	187
CB Radios	188
HAM Radios	188
Satellite Phones	189
Solar/Crank Radios	189
Short Wave Radios	189
Secret Messages	190
Chapter 23	
When the Second Cousin Once Removed Shows Up	193
Chapter 24	
Don't Forget Fido	197

Picking the Right Dog.....	198
Prepping for Fido	200
Chapter 25	
Securing Your Home on the Downlow	203
Chapter 26	
Financial Freedom	209
Conclusion.....	215
Glossary of Prepper Terms and Acronyms	217
Terms	217
Acronyms	218
Resources.....	221
About The Author.....	223

In memory of my father-in-law,
James E. Greene, aka Dot Do.
A Godly man with a humble spirit.

Introduction



Change happens. Sometimes for the good. Sometimes for the bad. If you've watched the news, walked down Main Street, spoken with neighbors, or gone anywhere, you know the world is in bad shape. Everywhere you look, there is a serious threat looming. Each day adds new dangers to our lives. As time passes, we get more off-balanced. We have been thrust into a world very unlike the one we have been accustomed to. Threats come from anywhere and everywhere. Today, the news reports a foreign rift: tomorrow its political fallout. The day after, Mother Nature herself brings us to our knees.

How do we survive the constant onslaught of depressing news and pressures on our way of life?

Increasingly, people understand why a small percentage of the country is preparing. They are taking responsibility for their wellbeing and planning to survive the worst-case scenarios. For a long time, preppers have been made fun of and laughed at. For a long time, preppers have been labeled with derogatory terms.

Not to be deterred, preppers are less concerned with what skeptics think and more with how they will keep their families alive after a major disaster.

Detractors pooh-pooh prepping. “It is overreacting.” “It’s unnecessary.” “The Government will help.” “The community will rally.” Unfortunately, Americans are not nearly pessimistic enough. Presented with example after example, Americans still believe the Government will swoop in and take care of them during a disaster. The best-case scenario is that the Government mobilizes to secure a few hard-hit areas. Don’t kid yourself. It’s going to take days! And when it gets there, it won’t be enough!

In incident after incident, we have seen the failure of this model. Time and time again, the Government cannot meet the needs of those who need it the most as they help only those they can reach. It’s a game of numbers. They don’t have the means to help everyone. Therefore, the Government makes hard decisions and we suffer.

Emergency after emergency, we watch the support infrastructure fail. When aid arrives, it’s a fight - too little, too late, and people needlessly suffer. Conflicts arise over the scant supplies provided. It’s a struggle to get a case of water and another fight for a bag of rice. We make tough choices. Food or batteries? Another meal or the means to contact your family?

Serious misfortune strikes when you least expect it. This is why we have insurance on our homes, cars, and bodies. Doesn’t it therefore make sense to carry an insurance policy on your overall survival? In the event of a tragedy, isn’t it better to depend on yourself? Why then rely on others or the Government? No one is going to take care

of you and your family as you will. They simply are not as invested as you!

Insurance for preppers comes in the form of stockpiling food, water, and medical supplies. If you've ever wondered what it takes to build that insurance policy, this is the book for you. People disregard personal preparedness for a variety of reasons: It's too hard, it's too expensive, I don't have the means. You aren't alone. Assure yourself: it's all a matter of perspective. The only true barrier between today and being prepared is will. You must have the will to take the first steps.

Nothing is more difficult than taking that first step. The good news is that it doesn't have to be difficult. You need not feel you are facing a monumental task without the first clue about what to do. You aren't alone. We, along with all the preppers in the world, are here with you. You just need to have the will to act.

This book takes you through a guide on becoming better prepared - one day at a time, one month at a time, all while answering the questions you may have. It begins with taking the first step and accepting that prepping is a marathon, not a sprint. It isn't something you do over a weekend or even a month. It is a way of life. It's adopting a new mindset and making conscious decisions about practical things in your daily life.

Having gotten this far, you have already taken that first step. You can do it if you put your mind to it. A person's most powerful weapon is their mind. One of the old standards of survival is the

rule of threes. Your life is in jeopardy in three hours without maintaining body temperature, three days without water, or three weeks without food. We often forget mindset. If you don't have the proper mindset, you won't last three seconds. By opening this book, you have demonstrated the beginnings of the proper mindset. Keep reading and we'll cover the other rules. Remember the following.

- Every day, misfortune strikes someone, somewhere; with the proper mindset, despite overwhelming odds, they prevail
- Every day, someone goes without; with the proper mindset, they push need aside and keep moving forward

Nearly every tragedy has its hero. What do these extraordinary people have in common? Mindset! They were all normal people until tragedy struck. They were normal people, just like you and me, who dug deep and did what was necessary to take the next step and keep going forward.

Determination, will, mindset. They all describe what is inside you. First and foremost, this book will help you grow that spirit of faith within. With your mindset solidified, you can take the second step in becoming more prepared. To that end, we will provide the tools to make survival that much easier. We will also show you how to prioritize and select those items that will benefit you the most on your preparedness journey. With each step, the news won't sound as bad, and the tragedies won't loom as large. By the end of our journey together, you will understand and, I hope, embrace the prepper lifestyle and find yourself less concerned with what

skeptics think and more prepared to keep your family alive after a major disaster.

This book is a tool. Like any tool, it has a specific use. I dedicate the first section to the “Why” and the “What” of prepping. We tackle the reasons for being prepared and a few specific emergencies. As we’ve already said, every day bad things happen. We will boldly present those bad things and ways to discuss them with your loved ones. Prepping is lonely enough on its own. It’s better to make it a family affair.

This book then lays out a 12-month plan. We discuss each time segment regarding the required gear and knowledge to gather while adding a few activities to develop your mindset. Finally, it discusses several topics in depth. There is a lot of ground to cover in the field of survival. These chapters provide enough material to get you started and whet your appetite for more. Completing this book is in no part the end of the journey. It’s just the beginning.

Ready for the next step? Great! Read on.

Chapter 1



Shh, Prepper's Dangerous Secrets

There is a huge misunderstanding about preppers. Sadly, it is a misconception of our own making. The prepper community perpetuates the confusion itself. Like *Fight Club*, nobody talks about prepping. It's a more tightly-guarded secret than what's in Area 51 or who has Indiana Jones's Ark of the Covenant. For too long, preppers have been hiding in plain sight. It becomes all about Personal Security (PERSEC) or Operational Security (OPSEC), or whatever the current security buzz word is today

The idea that prepping is right up there with the *Fight Club* is a huge mistake. Prep Club *should* be talked about. Prepping isn't something to hide in the shadows. As we will see, it's a basic human instinct that should be nurtured and encouraged. Not concealed. That said, the key is not to talk specifics. **No one** needs to know exactly what you have and where you have it stashed. Spread the word. Grow your network. The more prepared people are in the world the better.

Think of it this way. Every prepared person is one more who won't need shelter in times of need. Every family that has food and water put away is one more not in line at a local, regional, or federal

supply point. The more prepared people are in the world, the fewer will want your stuff. Imagine a Wal-Mart on every corner. You'd never have to worry about a lack of luxury items or endure a long line for groceries. With so many options, demand is less. This is exactly what you want when the world goes to hell in a handbasket. Being more specific. Wouldn't it be better if we all had well-stocked pantries and an endless supply of water? Each house and home with a personal mini-grocery store.

In a time of emergency or need, everyone would then be self-sufficient. No more sleepless nights in Red Cross shelters. No more waiting in lines for a case of water. A little closer to home? With everyone prepared, *you won't have to worry about protecting your stockpile*. Reach out to your friends, families, and neighbors. Show them the benefits of being prepared. Make them your allies by making them better prepared.

Not so long-ago, prepping was *the* way of life. During the depression of the 30s and the rationing of WWII, families prepared. They did what they could on their own. They built up gardens, reduced waste, cultivated skills and exchanged the fruits of hard, honest work for food or supplies they did not have. Communities came together and traded from their abundance as per their needs. Together they persevered through the rough times.

Going it alone, or trying to survive as a lone wolf, isn't a recipe for survival in an uncertain world. It is impossible to meet all your food, health, security, and psychological needs without some level of assistance. Consider something as simple as security: you can't

have a 24-hour guard by yourself. When gathering food is a full-time job, when will you process firewood to keep warm?

You must find and foster a group. You can't do it alone. We'll talk a little later about several ways to reach out. Joining forces with people you trust gives you the support needed to keep going - support to take one more step forward when you think about quitting, colleagues to count on when you get sick or injured, and networks to share your concerns with. Without a foundation of friends or family around, you will get overwhelmed.

Likewise, it's easy to fall into a false sense of security. It's easy to think the Government has your back. Someone else will provide for your family. Unfortunately, it isn't going to happen. No one cares for your family as much as you, especially if something big happens. Look back at Hurricane Katrina. That "Charlie Foxtrot" is a prime example of why we all need to be preppers. The Government was quickly and completely overwhelmed. Their intentions were good: every aid worker gave 100%. Still, families were left without the necessities of life. Even in Government-run aid centers such as the Superdome, the conditions were a travesty. And this was where those with nothing came to get help.

You need to band together with like-minded people: those who will be your backup when you need a break—and you will need a break. People who will help with the mundane tasks. People who will help carry the load of the critical tasks. People who will fill for the gaps in your knowledge. You simply can't be everywhere, know everything, and do all things. You need a group.

In a post-disaster situation, the world will be a different place. Stores will not open, 911 won't pick up, sirens won't call out that help is on its way. When you sleep, who's going to keep watch if you are all alone? Who's going to keep the fire burning while you are out hunting or collecting water? Who's going to be there for you to talk to on those long nights when it's just your thoughts and the darkness?

You need someone, or several someones to help keep guard and to keep the fire lit, to bounce ideas off of and to formulate action plans. Two minds are better than one, even if you are a survival genius.

Another reason you need to get familiar with fellow preppers is community. After a collapse, the country will be reset. People will have moved on. People will have died. If you have bugged out to the countryside, you will need to join forces with others to create a new self-sustaining community. You will need people with skill sets that complement your own. Look back throughout history: humans have always formed tribes and communities to survive.

This isn't you against the world. It's us bonded together for survival.

Why Prep?

You will be asked this question at least a hundred times by non-preppers. It's a valid question and one you should spend some time thinking about. When you have a reason, you are more inclined to commit heart and soul.

So, let's talk about some of the more common reasons people get into prepping.

- ***Instinct:*** The most primal human instinct is to survive. Even those who think they are ready to die often strive to continue while staring death in the face. It's about doing everything you can to take another breath, to take another step, to see another sunrise.
- ***Family:*** Family is one of the strongest factors in prepping. From your child's first breath, you strive to keep him or her alive and in comfort. There are hundreds of stories of moms and dads performing miracles to save their children. Prepping is an act of love. Doing everything you can to protect your children from the horrors of starvation, no shelter, or a painful death are enough motivation for many. I would walk through the very fires of hell to save my children. No questions. No hesitation.
- ***Challenge:*** Some preppers prep because they like the idea of beating the odds. It's a challenge. It's staring at Mt. Everest and deciding to climb it. People need challenges and goals to keep busy. That in itself is motivation to stay alive. It's a rush to beat the odds. Surviving a major disaster is defying the odds.
- ***Normalcy:*** Comfort and security are reason enough. Some people like knowing they're going to be okay no matter what happens. It could be something on a small scale like having meals prepared for when you are sick and unable to

leave the house. It could be something large like being able to feed a group of friends in need or displaced family members. The idea of not missing a meal can help a person sleep a little better at night.

Going All In

Preparing to thrive after a major massive natural disaster, war, or global financial collapse is not a task to be taken lightly. The world won't rebound in a few days or even a few weeks. It is time to think on a much larger scale. To do that, you need to know you are in it for the long haul. This is going to be the hardest thing for new preppers to understand: you have to decide if you are in it to win it.

Putting a case of bottled water on the shelf beside several extra cans of food is not prepping. It's getting ready for a day without power. That's it. That's all. Prepping to support your family when warehouses are empty and bad guys have looted grocery stores is no joke. It takes commitment and devotion, and it must be a priority. It is one of the most important jobs you have. But in preparing for the worst, you must also achieve a balance. This is where prepping gets tricky. Stockpiling the necessary "beans, bullets, and bandages" takes time and costs money. However, you don't want to put yourself in the poor house trying to prepare for the end of the world as you know it. Nor do you want it to become an all-encompassing endeavor: again, you must find that balance.

A lot of new preppers go overboard in the first few months of their prepping journey. This is where the difference between a sprint and

marathon comes in. You can't empty your bank account and max out your credit cards. Purchasing in haste without research leads to lost time and money. You'll just end up buying things you don't need. In the following chapters, we will help you get what you need while still paying the mortgage.

This book provides a one-year plan that guides you along your prepping journey. Along the way, it shows that don't have to do it all in a single day. Slow and steady wins the race. This book will be a roadmap that helps you adopt a prepper mindset while setting expectations of what will come along the way. You need not feel overwhelmed. Knowing what to expect is power.

Time to Prep

We also need to talk about time. Time is money, and we need to discuss your investment in terms of hours and days. Prepping isn't something you do when you remember it. Prepping isn't something you do between games or while binging on Netflix. It is something you plan to do. You carve out time in your busy life and make it happen. Preparing to survive the end of the world as you know it isn't something you do during a commercial break.

Dedicating a few hours a week to prepping should be your expectation. There will be skills to master through research, reading, and practice. You may need to attend classes and learn from experts. You may need to get out into the forest, meadow, or desert to get some dirt-time. Hands-on training is by far the best way to learn anything. Reading a book or watching a YouTube

video is not the same as doing. You need to know what works and what doesn't. Before relying on a skill to keep you alive, you must build up muscle memory. Don't assume you can do it after watching a video. Here's a question: What if they did it wrong? How will you find that out without practice? This isn't to say THAT you must dedicate every waking moment to prepping. As with everything, moderation is the key. You don't want to burn out. Obsessing on the negative and envisioning a disaster around every corner leads only to anxiety. This is why some preppers have gotten a bad rap. They promote conspiracy theories or adopt THE attitude that the sky is falling! At the slightest hint of trouble, they take everything to the extreme.

Be vigilant but be realistic - Internally and externally. Don't let prepping for disaster consume you. Plan accordingly and treat it as you would a part-time job. It deserves your attention, but it is not something you live and breathe every single minute of your life. It is okay to walk on the dark side of life as long as you remember to step back into the light.

You need to be in a good mental frame of mind to have the clarity to see genuine threats. Spend time with your family. Hang out with friends. Take a vacation. Have fun and enjoy life while you have the chance. Budget your time wisely and enjoy life while prepping for whatever the future holds. You've heard it before, but life is truly too short to let it pass you while worrying about tomorrow.

Don't Get Cocky

Another major mistake preppers make is getting cocky. You must be careful not to adopt a false sense of security and believe you are invincible. This line of thinking blinds you to common sense. You'll take unnecessary risks as you assume you are already prepared for anything. Getting lazy and ignoring your prepping duties could cost you everything. You are going to learn more about what some of those duties are in future chapters.

You could have the biggest stockpile of food and not possess the skills to cook it with variety. Food fatigue is as real as starvation. You can have the biggest arsenal and not know how to maintain it. A malfunctioning gun is an expensive club. YouTube is a great resource, but it doesn't trump practice.

Maybe you've mastered a skill and have assumed you are now an expert at a related task. How hard can it be? "I did that and this is the same." Or you've practiced a skill in a controlled environment and assume you know it all. Can you still do it under duress or in foul weather? Your life depends on staying on top of the game, honing your skills, and getting better to the point that it is second nature under all conditions!

Don't assume you have enough supplies to last you for an entire apocalypse. Here's a hint! You don't. Oh, by the way. You can't. How long do you think you can survive on freeze-dried meals and MREs? A year is plenty long. Stockpiling food, water, and everything else you need to stay alive for five years (a better

number when thinking in terms of longtime survival) is extremely challenging.

There is always more to learn and more to do. Resting on your laurels and assuming you are ready for anything is a dangerous frame of mind. Even with all the prepping experience in the world, you are going to face situations you are not prepared for. Think about professional athletes and how much they train before they head out to a big game. Even Babe Ruth, one of the greatest, struck out almost 70% of the time. Our military runs drills across various scenarios, preparing them for anything that can happen. They don't get to be the best by just saying they're the best.

Practice, fail, practice, succeed, and repeat until you get it down. Do your best. Learn as much as you can and be prepared to switch up your plan at a moment's notice. Being flexible will keep you alive. Rigidity will get you dead.

Be prepared to learn from your mistakes—and you will make them. That's how we all learn. When possible, learn from the mistakes of others. Hear ideas and take suggestions from others. You might think you know better or more, but it never hurts to listen. A fresh set of eyes, and a second, or even a third opinion is a great thing. You never stop learning. You will never know it all, but you can try it!

Have redundancies and fail-safes in place. You may not master every detail, but you can certainly store the details in your library. Books, the authentic kind, are going to be an enormous asset to

your stockpile. In times of stress, you may not always remember every little detail of a specific skill. Have a reference volume or a cheat sheet for reference. It will be there in case you can't recall a step or remember an exact route. This doesn't make you any less skilled, it makes you smart.

As you go through this book, you will not find lists that tell you exactly what you need to pack in your Bug Out Bag (BOB) or how much or what kind of food you need to have on your shelves. Those lists are in abundance on the internet, and they are all essentially the same. This book is meant to give you a blueprint for long-term prepping.

Chapter 2



Prepping Isn't the Same for Everyone

If you've done any research on the internet, you've noticed it's all the same. Blogs parrot each other and their lists are redundant. They're alike because these lists and methods work. Their tone is general and written for the largest possible audience. Therefore, they cover common ground and make good jumping-off points for new preppers. Being general, they are good for some but perfect for none. They are just guidelines. Everyone needs to prep a little differently. Everyone will have their own needs and ideas about what is most important.

Your preps will differ from your neighbors'. Your preps will vary greatly from the family who lives in a different climate. What and how much you stockpile will change based on your family composition, size, needs, and tastes. There are no one-size-fits-all plans with prepping. You are taking the time to stock up now to store the necessities specific to your situation. You are making the choice to invest according to your "needs" and "wants." You are doing it now rather than trusting in fate and what you scavenge later.

Let's look at one basic reality—food.

No matter how hungry your kids are, they will not eat everything you put in front of them. Imagine dinner time, candles on the table, the kids a little dirty, and you're exhausted after a long day of manual labor. You bring to the table plain lima beans. You get a round of complaints from the kids. They then refuse to eat. You stocked lima beans because they were on the list. But you don't like them. The kids don't like them. Now you have a five-gallon bucket of lima beans taking up space. Oh, and hungry kids.

Scenario number 2. The same table with candles. Same dirty kids. Same tired you. This time you bring rice and beans to the table. The same rice and beans you have prepared for the last two months. You stocked rice and beans because it's the prepper staple. It's on all the lists. You never looked at spices or other variations. More complaints and more refusals to eat.

You followed the lists and didn't look at your specific needs. As a result, your kids are missing out on valuable calories and nutrition. They're going to bed hungry. Your stress level increases. All when you don't need any further stressors. Tomorrow, you get to do it again.

Stock what works for your family. Pay attention to what your family likes and doesn't like. Take notice of treats and special meals. Start working today to expose them to dishes that they will eat during a disaster.

Before we jump into the first month of prepping, you need to sit down and do some planning and research. Yes, there is a great deal

of thought that goes into determining what to put on your shelf. We're going to help you narrow down your prepping needs. Not that you can't have disaster-specific items on your shelves, but those will be a lower priority. Let's get started!

Prepping by Region

The exact composition of your preps will depend on where you live. Think of how you live your life today. If you live in tornado alley, you have a plan for when you hear the sirens. People who live up north have snow shovels, snowblowers, and ice melt to get through winter. Preppers in Kansas will look very different from those in Maine.

It may sound obvious, but you must tailor your prepping list by focusing on your region. Identify the items necessary for survival where you live and include them on your list. This is crucial and must be a priority. Know your area and plan accordingly. You also need to think about natural disasters likely to hit while you are prepping. Take care to protect all your hard work. Can snow, wildfire, flood, earthquake impact you? Maybe all four? Tweak your list with items and plans that get you through these hard times.

If you live in a sprawling city, you need to adjust your prepping lists with a bugout mindset. Getting out of the city as quickly as possible following a major disaster will consume some of your prepping efforts. Which makes more sense: filling your inner-city apartment with food and water for a year or preparing a few weeks of food and having a well thought out and practiced bugout plan?

The year's supply of food may prove counterproductive and a waste of time and money.

Here's an interesting tidbit of information. If a nuclear bomb were to hit New York this afternoon, 99% of Americans would go to work tomorrow. Americans have faith that we as a society could pull together and get through it. Most assume the Government is in control and there is no need to worry—life goes on. It has to—right?

Society has decided that maintaining normalcy is the best way to win against our enemies. If we don't flinch, then they haven't hurt us. We, therefore, keep our routines and pretend nothing ever happened. At least until that fails.

People in untouched cities will not see any immediate changes in their daily lives. If NYC is hit, people in LA will still go about their daily lives. Why wouldn't they? They need to work and get a paycheck. Their company may have no internet, phones, or the ability to pay bills; but they will show up to make sure they are putting in their hours for that paycheck. Besides, that disaster is an NYC problem, not an LA problem.

Humans need normalcy. Putting one foot in front of the other and marching on is how we survive. Their need for normalcy is your small window of escape. It is going to take a day or two for most of the population to figure out that things are bad. During the lull, you can expect the official rhetoric, "It's not so bad." "There's nothing to see here." "We have it all under control." That's because they

don't want mass panic. A noble concept, but the situation is still bad, and it's going to get worse. Again, referring back to Katrina,, most of the world did not understand what was happening in the city. Nobody saw the strife and terror in the Superdome. You don't want to be one of those people caught in the middle of a major disaster.

You will have about 24 hours, 48 hours max, to gather what you can and escape. Escape the city before chaos ensues. If you miss that window, you must hunker down until it is safe to leave. Heavily populated areas are not the place to be when it all goes sideways; you will deal with too many desperate people fighting for too few resources. Things will get ugly! It will happen faster than you realize! Escaping from the midst of a full-blown riot situation could cost you your life. Don't wait around to see if the situation improves. Plan to get out quickly.

Worst-case scenario: it blows over and you go back home. On the flip side, if you take the wait and see approach in your inner-city apartment, you have just put your life in serious jeopardy. This is why it is best to keep a BOB or Get Home Bag (GHB) in your vehicle. If disaster strikes while you are commuting, don't bother going home. Get out of town. You'll need plans in place to bugout. These plans (you will need more than one) will evacuate you and your family. Build them around each family member with the goal of reuniting at pre-selected rendezvous points.

If you have the means, you will need a bugout location (BOL). This retreat is where you store part of your food and other essentials. If a

permanent BOL isn't an option, then you should have an alternate BOL. This may be the home of friends or family. It may even be a familiar and well-known rural rental location. You must have a place to go after a collapse.

Hidden survival caches will facilitate movement to your BOL. Place and maintain several along your pre-planned bugout routes. Be careful with your caches. Choose areas where people won't find your caches. Don't select locations requiring trespassing during placement, maintenance, and access.

You may think you'll grab your BOB and head for the mountains. Simply put, this is not a good idea. You and every other city dweller have that same plan. Here's the thing, wilderness survival is no joke. Your ultimate goal is to either have a home outside of the city or have a cabin stocked and ready for you. Need an example? Watch the series "Alone" on the History channel. Some of the most experienced and skilled survivalists fail well before sixty days alone in the woods. More than one has tapped out after less than 24 hours!

Prepping correctly is preparing to survive for months or years after a disaster. Anything truly devastating will take years to recover from. Can you really live in the forest, through all seasons, and with only the contents and tools of your BOB for a month? How about five years? Don't kid yourself—you can't.

BOBs are designed to keep you alive for a few days. They are not intended to be, nor can they be, a means for infinite survival. They

are not your life support system. They are, however, a link in the chain.

Prepping by Disaster

We all have theories about the event that breaks the camel's back. The event that sends us spiraling into the dark ages. The event that starts, "The End Of The World As We Know It" (TEOTWAKI). No commerce, Government, or any of the luxuries we depend on. While we may not all agree on the what, most people agree there is something. Our entire world is a house of cards. The financial system is shaky. What will finally crash the economy? Mother Nature has been blowing some serious steam as of late, each storm seems bigger than the last. Will California drop into the ocean? Will Yellowstone blow sky high? Will the Pacific rim shake and shimmy? We don't know exactly what or when. Scientists, economists, and our gut tell us we are way past due.

In a perfect world without resource limitations, you can prepare for anything and everything. In the actual world, you can't. Not in a year. Once you have gotten an initial supply built up, then you can start focusing on one particular disaster scenario. For example, some people are focusing their preps on nuclear war or a nuclear disaster. They invest their money in Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) suits. They buy iodine tablets to protect their thyroid from cancer. That's not a bad thing, and if time and money allow, everyone should think about doing the same. Reality check: in almost every disaster scenario, one of the ripple effects could be the meltdown of a nuclear reactor or other radiological events.

That said, when just starting on your prepping journey you can't neglect the basics. Let's get into the specifics of some disaster scenarios you might want to prep for. Again, we all have our ideas. Don't be too quick to dismiss one theory because you think it's too crazy or far-fetched. Quite frankly, you never know. Anything is possible.

Financial Emergency

For those who remember 2008, it was not a good year. The economy retracted, millions lost their jobs, businesses closed, big banks folded. It looked like we were heading straight for a major collapse. As a result, the fear of God moved many to be become better prepared. That prompted a huge prepping movement. In this scenario, your only genuine option is to prepare financially. What would you do if you lost your job? How long could you survive before you were looking at bankruptcy? How long before you lose everything? For some, it's years. For others, sadly, weeks.

The national economy need not crash to put you in financial straits: job loss can cause a personal crisis. Medical expenses associated with broken bones, a back injury, or serious illness can easily put you over the financial edge. The following tips may not seem useful in the event of an apocalypse, and they aren't. They are designed to prepare you for it. Remember, not every disaster is global.

- *Cash buffer:* Build up at least two months, and preferably six months, of cash for expenses. Have the money in

savings and don't touch it, no matter how much you want that big screen TV.

- *Pay it forward:* Pay ahead on your basic utilities as a cushion. Most utilities give you 30 days before they shut things off.
- *Eliminate credit:* This may be difficult but keep a zero-credit card balance. In an emergency, credit can help until you get back on your feet.

Nuclear Disaster

We touched on this above. If the nuclear bomb doesn't kill you, the fallout will. It may not kill you straight away. The fallout from a nuclear bomb or radiation from failed nuclear power plants will have long-lasting effects. Fallout, nuclear winter (inability to grow food due to sudden climate change), and a litany of horrible side effects hinder recovery. Truthfully, all you can do is think of getting through one day at a time. The following items are specific to surviving a nuclear disaster.

- Geiger counter
- Full body HAZMAT suit
- Shoe covers
- Radiation meter patches (stickers that go on a person's clothes to measure radiation exposure during an outing)
- Potassium iodide tablets

- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal off your home to keep out fallout particles
- N95 surgical masks to avoid breathing in the harmful particles
- Homemade nuclear particulate air filter

Pandemic

As I write this, we are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. While not exactly Ebola, COVID-19 has brought the world to a standstill. While the death rate is relatively low, the next time we might not be as lucky. Dealing with an indiscriminate deadly virus is near impossible. When you think about any apocalyptic scenario, hygiene will be lax. This will increase the transmission of deadly diseases. It doesn't hurt to be ready for the pandemic that follows one of the other disaster scenarios.

- Tyvek suits remove and burn after use
- Heavy plastic to create a quarantine space in a home
- Heavy-duty trash bags for disposal of anything that has been in contact with an infected person
- Shoe guards, hair covers, isolation gowns
- N95 surgical masks (those with carbon filters are a plus)
- Nalgene gloves in various sizes—latex can cause allergic reactions

- Bleach (note, liquid bleach is only good for six months–stock powdered pool shock)
- Disposable emesis bags
- Goggles/safety glasses
- Adult and child diapers–human waste contains serious pathogens–handle and dispose of properly anything that comes into contact with human waste
- Thermometers, blood pressure cuffs, and stethoscopes

Super Volcano

The Yellowstone Super Volcano is on the radar of many preppers. While some say it is nothing but a fantasy, there is evidence that an eruption will happen. The question is will it be in our lifetime or in the lifetime of the generations to come. The enormity of this volcano will lead to devastation on a national scale. Volcanic ash will settle on fields smothering crops and disrupting our food supply. Roads from the east coast to the west coast will be blocked, which will halt all transportation of basic supplies and much needed aid. There aren't a lot of specific supplies related to prepping for a super volcano eruption. However, there are a few things you can add that will improve your life after the collapse.

- Plastic and duct tape to seal windows, doors, and vents
- Respirators and face masks
- Goggles/safety glasses

- Particulate air filters

Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP)

An EMP is one scenario that many preppers plan to survive. EMPs have two sources. EMPs can result from a massive solar flare or result from a nuclear detonation in the atmosphere. While there will be little damage to the surface of the earth, many electronics, and the electric grid will be disabled. The result is a paralyzed society.

The United States EMP commission performed a detailed study on an EMP attack. The failure of the electrical grid will cause transportation, communication, and widespread infrastructure disruptions. The result, they found, is that 90% of Americans will die in the first 12 months following an attack. If you prepare for this, then you are ready for 95% of all disasters. There are many things you can do to prepare for an EMP. Each gives you a leg up around your house, but it will not change what's happening in the world around you.

- Food storage to get you through the first year
- A faraday cage to store small electronics (walkie talkies, flashlights, small solar panels for recharging batteries, old laptop packed with resource materials, and an AM/FM radio)
- An old vehicle to give you a mode of transportation (1960s and older were built without the sensitive electronics affected by EMP)

Cascadia Earthquake

If you live in the Pacific Northwest, you have probably heard about the big one. Not the San Andreas Fault; the other big one. The Cascadia Subduction Zone is due to pop right under Seattle. Scientists predict that we are past due for more big movement of these tectonic plates. A tsunami may follow that massive earthquake, and the outcome will be devastating - 13 million people displaced with thousands killed. It isn't only the earthquake that will cause deaths. The tsunami, sinking coast, and isolation from destroyed roads and bridges will devastate lives.

- *Aid free:* Prepare to be without aid for two to four weeks—that means several weeks of water, food, medicine, communication, and other necessities
- *Have a boat:* If you are in one of the many areas only accessible by a bridge, there is a good chance the quake will take down most of this infrastructure
- *High ground:* Know where high ground is and prepare to get there. You won't have long to get out of the path of a violent wave of water or flooding, the routes that remain will be grid locked, you must have backups to your backups for getting to the high ground.

Extreme Climate Changes

Hollywood loves this scenario. There are a plethora of movies that sensationalize our current weather patterns. Severe storms are becoming more frequent. There is little you can do outside the

realm of standard prepping to get ready. The only advanced option is an underground bunker. These are expensive and not the best option for some emergencies (floods and fires). Tornadoes, violent winter storms, hurricanes, and extreme heat are events to ride out, better yet, move.

Worst Case—And Then Some

Each of the above scenarios requires you to have the basics on hand. The basics plus a few, above-mentioned, extras. Even then, I hate to say it, if you think you have a year's worth of food, it might not be enough. You have to account for extra people joining your group. Account for loss. You have to plan for additional layers of crises. No matter how much you have and how well you've prepared, prepare for it to be worse than you plan. It isn't your fault. None of us were around in the dark ages when everything was done by hand. We aren't used to life without power, running water, or flushing toilets. Post-disaster life will be a tremendous change and much worse than you can imagine.

However, it will be survivable: you can survive and even thrive. With time, you will develop a new cadence to your life. Activities like cutting wood with a handsaw will become less onerous. You will adapt and life will go on. As long as you prepare to accept the new world. Having supplies on hand will make your life easier, and this will mean all the difference in the world.

The following list contains commonalities between most disasters. This list helps you better understand why prepping is so crucial to

survival. It implies what you will need to live. Some of these things won't immediately disappear. As time stretches on, however, they will become scarce and eventually unavailable.

Brace yourself; it's ugly and more than a little scary.

- Money will have no value
- Banks will lock down with no way to use credit cards or withdraw cash from ATMs
- Gas pumps won't work (except old-fashioned hand pumps)
- Trucks won't deliver goods without fuel
- In most scenarios the power grid will fail, this means:
 - No lights
 - No refrigeration
 - No freezers
 - No life-saving machines
 - No convenient appliances
- Tap water will stop running, or what does come from the tap will not be safe to drink without treatment or special filtering
- No grocery stores, fast food, or convenience stores
- No new clothing available

- Medical facilities will be at max capacity and will probably turn people away
- Prescription meds will become scarce, then gone
- Convenient medications like Tylenol, antacids, and other OTC will become scarce then gone
- Schools and businesses will close
- The new monetary/barter system will be based on basic staples with the new luxuries (batteries, bullets, medications) trading the highest (electronics would be worthless)
- No law, no police, no jails—criminals will roam free
- Batteries go dead and won't be replaced
- We will communicate the old-fashioned way, pens, and paper (until those run out)
- Sanitation systems will fail, meaning, when you flush your toilet (assuming you had water) it isn't going anywhere, it is going to be a dirty, stinky, disease-infested world in populated areas
- People are going to get sick with dysentery, it is inevitable with a lack of safe drinking water—think third world countries
- Goodbye internet—no more Google, the world will no longer be at your fingertips

This should give you a general idea of what to expect. Now, looking at that list you might think, “so what, our ancestors survived.” And you would be right. The problem is this: today’s population doesn’t know how to hunt, build fires, build or repair homes, harvest wood from the forest, manage waste and sanitation, or heal without modern medications. Today’s population is too specialized, and mostly in skills that are a waste in a post-apocalyptic world.

Don’t get too worried though. You’ve already taken a step in the right direction. Let’s keep going.

Chapter 3



A Family Affair

This is a subject to handle with great care. For some, it can be a lot like navigating a minefield. Marriage and relationships are tricky enough without adding points of contention. Unfortunately, prepping is not something every person is on board with. Prepping is a serious time commitment, a cash investment, and a walk on the dark side. Not everyone immediately takes to the same level of commitment as you. Truly successful prepping only works when both people in the relationship are on board.

In this chapter, we're going to talk about how to ease a reluctant spouse into the idea of prepping. Before we dive in, let's talk about the kids. You are prepping to keep your kids alive; therefore, you need them on board as well. The younger ones aren't generally the issue. Mostly they already look up to you and idolize your every action. It is the older ones who might fuss and complain about spending time away from their electronics. They are the ones who are going to be a little more jaded toward your directions. They'll also have their own opinions about the state of the world. When you're young, you're immortal. There's nothing you can't withstand. It isn't until life really gets a hold of you or you have

children of your own that you realize just how fragile our world is. Try not to hold the naivety of your kids against them.

As I've tried to stress, you cannot be a one man show, or a lone wolf. If you have to bugout, you need your family to know exactly what to do and take directions immediately. Think of it like an escape plan from your home in case of a fire. Your kids must know what to do without you telling them every step of the way. And when you say Go, they need to Go!

Prepping is the same thing. En route to your BOL, each family member will have a job. Lookout, cooking, making or breaking camp. When you get to your BOL, everyone pitches in. It will be an all-hands-on deck situation. You can't carry the burden on your own. You'll burn out. You'll get frustrated. Carrying the full load, yourself is a recipe for failure.

Here are ways you can try to convince your family to buy into your way of thinking:

- ***Be calm:*** Try talking and explaining your reasons in a calm, rational way. You don't necessarily need to explain what you're prepping for. That might push them away. You know your partner. Use that to your advantage. Appeal to them on their level. Most people have flashlights, extra batteries, and candles in case of a power outage. That is prepping! Point out you are doing the same thing but on a slightly bigger scale.

- **Barter:** Offer to do an exchange. You go to something they like one weekend in exchange for them doing something with you related to prepping.
- **Take it easy:** Now, don't get crazy and drag them into the woods. No bathrooms, basic conveniences, and bugs are not a winning recipe. You need to ease into it. Start with glamour camping—glamping. Stay within walking distance of the car. Take a cooler with cold refreshments, plan to make smores and make it easy. Make the family camping trips a fun time. Make it a reoccurring thing. You can teach valuable skills on these camping trips. As the family gets used to camping, slowly leave the little things at home and make it a little “rougher” without going overboard. You don't want to make them miserable. They'll never go again.
- **Road trips:** Take road trips with the family. You know what the family is going to do while they are preparing for the journey. They're going to pack snacks, entertainment, maybe a pillow. This is prepping on a small scale. Talk about the trip and their choices. Ask why each thing is being packed. They're going to tell you because they might get hungry, cold, tired, and bored. That's exactly what you want to hear. This is a learning opportunity to introduce why you are prepping.
- **Reasonable events:** Talk about common natural events. Talk about what to do if they happened that moment. This is another way to get them thinking about how they would

handle a situation. Ask what they would need to make it a little easier and more manageable. Bring up stories that have been in the news. The hiker that got lost in the woods for two weeks but survived. Talk about the latest episode of “Alone.” Talk about the situation and the choices they made. Ask “what would you do differently?”

- ***Pick up extras:*** Add extra stuff to the cart and let them know it’s going in the pantry as an extra. Point out you keep extra toilet paper, toothpaste, and peanut butter so you are never without. Name items important to your spouse and family members. This will touch something within them and help them understand why it is so important to have those items on hand. No woman wants to go without toilet paper or shampoo.
- ***Get help:*** Ask for help with tasks: adding food to the shelves, checking dates on boxes, packing for a camping trip. Have them hold the bag while you vacuum seal your grains. It’s learning by osmosis. They can’t help but learn by watching and helping you. Even if they aren’t all that interested in what they are doing. Don’t shove it down their throat. Be nonchalant and casual. If you come off preachy, they are going to shut down.
- ***Garden:*** Start a garden. This may not be your spouse’s cup of tea at first, but no one can resist the taste of food grown right in the backyard. Quiet evenings spent weeding together or harvesting the garden’s abundance are worth

something. The reluctant spouse is going to get a feel for the garden and what it takes to make it be bountiful. If you're lucky, your garden will over-produce. This is a great time to show and learn home preservation. You're not necessarily prepping; you're simply not wasting the food you grew.

- ***Hit the sales:*** When you see a sale on something, stock up. Let your spouse know you are buying now because goods are getting more expensive. Anyone who has a budget knows it's a good idea to buy cheap. Prepping doesn't necessarily have to be for a zombie apocalypse. It can be building a food supply when you can afford it to help lighten the demand on your wallet a year or two down the road.
- ***Movie nights:*** Plan a movie night that includes some of those Hollywood shows depicting the end of the world. Sit down and watch a little reality television that revolves around surviving in extreme circumstances. Even watching Little House on the Prairie or, on the other end of the spectrum, The Walking Dead has benefits. Each show presents an example about what life would be like after a major disaster. Little House is an impressive look at the challenges of pioneer life. Ultimately, after an EMP or other collapse, that's where the world is headed.
- ***Spend wisely:*** Do not, absolutely do not, go out and drop a boatload of money on freeze-dried food or bunch of prepper gear and surprise your family members. This is one sure fire

way to push them away and cause major issues. Keep your purchases small, simple, and under the radar. Think about cutting back on your spending in other ways so your prepping purchases don't hit the monthly budget too hard. When you want to buy something a little bigger, like a generator, explain that you want to make sure you have a backup power source. Reference when the power has gone out in the past. Recall recent winter storms, hurricanes, or scenarios that apply to you. Don't make it about doomsday. Never make it about doomsday!

Those are just a few strategies you can use to bring your family on board. Don't be surprised if they aren't converted overnight. Some people are truly not interested in the idea of prepping, and you can't change that. For some, prepping is facing our mortality or acknowledging the world is an unstable place. Some people are not willing to deal with that. Feigning all is well is their sole survival mechanism. They have to pretend for their own mental health. That's okay. You take care of you and eventually, reality will strike.

That doesn't mean you stop prepping. Keep trying. Keep doing what is necessary. It's a hard pill to swallow, but know this, when it comes down to that moment you have been preparing for, your family will appreciate it. They will see you weren't crazy. If that moment doesn't come in your lifetime, well, consider yourself lucky. In the meantime, don't get discouraged. Don't give up. You're doing the right thing. Keep trying. We all have moments in

our life that give us a little perspective. Your family may get that “aha” moment later than you. Don’t lord it over them. Let it go and celebrate the little victories.

Think of it as someone insisting that you will like opera or sushi when you have no interest in trying either. You have preconceived ideas, and once your mind gets set on something, it’s hard to change. Your family member is likely in the same boat. They may have always been told that preppers are a little off. They may be convinced the Government will allow nothing serious to happen before intervening.

The older we get, the more set in our ways we become. When you have the chance, teach the kids. They are going to be far more accepting than someone who has already formed their own opinions. Give the kids the tools they need to teach their own kids. It may not happen in your lifetime, but teaching your children and them teaching their own kids is worth it all.

“I’d Rather Die”

You are probably going to hear this more than once from a reluctant spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend. It is even something many non-preppers say. This is their excuse for not wanting to prep. Earlier we talked about the basic human instinct to survive. Many people don’t know they have it until they are in a fight for their life. Then something clicks, and they have a change of heart. However, some people simply do not care. They don’t want to bother trying. That is a hard pill to swallow, as a person who wants to do everything

humanly possible to avoid dying, but you have to respect their opinion.

The fact of the matter is, a lot of the people who say they would rather die than survive an apocalypse do not understand how much they want to live. Some are looking at the worst-case scenarios and deciding right away that they don't want to know a world without electricity or clean running water. It's understandable to feel this way. No one is looking at a post-apocalyptic world, rubbing their hands together and getting excited. Of course, it sounds like an exciting adventure in the beginning. Then reality sets in and they find it's much harder and not as much fun as they planned.

For the people who say they would rather die, don't push them. You can appeal to their hearts and explain how you would hate to lose them. Be advised that you are walking into dark territory. Ideally, keep on prepping. Assume they will be with you on the day you watch your world implode and have a change of heart. It is devastating to think about surviving after your loved one's have given up or died. That will to survive deep down inside you is a powerful beast. You can push on and you can survive with the memory of them to keep you company. Don't give up! What you are doing is important! One day, your family will appreciate how much you have done to ensure their health, safety, and happiness in a world that is ugly.

Chapter 4



Getting Ready

This is it. What you have been thinking about for a while. It's time to pull the trigger and create a backup plan for your family that will carry you through tough times. It's exciting! So exciting that it's hard to take a step back and proceed in a slow, methodical fashion. Take my word for it. It is the best approach. Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint.

Make your plan. Set aside dedicated time to prep. Keep at it. Every day will get you a little more prepared. Attempt to do it all at once and you'll get overwhelmed. Put bluntly, you're going to need a lot of "stuff". Right now, it's hard to comprehend the magnitude of the 'stuff' you need to put on the shelves. At least, until you see it unfold.

Think about a full year's worth of supplies. For one person it can be about 500 pounds of freeze-dried or 2000 pounds of staples (beans, rice, flour, etc.). This should give you a vague idea of the sheer volume of products you are going to have stashed in your home or in a secondary location. Because you are spreading out the prepping over a year, it is going to be very easy to forget what you have on

hand and what you still need. For those with several locations for their preps, it can get confusing.

Organization is Key

If you are not an organized person, it's time to start. You cannot be an effective prepper if you don't stay organized. Throwing things on shelves or in any dark corner gets chaotic in a hurry. I know you're probably champing at the bit! But you can't—not yet. Give me one more chapter.

The Right Space

You need to dedicate a space to your preparedness storage. Ideally, you'll have a room in a dry basement or on the first floor. The room should be closed off so visitors can't accidentally wander in see the contents. If you can't dedicate a room to your prepping, clear out a pantry, closet, or section of your garage.

There are a few things you will want to keep in mind for your prepper storage place.

- ***Cool and even temperature:*** Foods and gear generally last longer when the environment is cool (50-70 degrees). Controlled temp is best, but go with what you have. If you need to put your supplies in a garage, shed, or attic, you must make sure there is a way to keep your food within a good temperature range. Below eighty degrees in summer and above fifty degrees in the winter. If you can't do that, consider putting the food in closets, under the beds, or even under the furniture in your house.

- ***No direct sunlight:*** You don't want the sun beating down on your food from through a window. Light brings heat and excessive heat is bad. Likewise, sunlight will also compromise plastics, rubber, and adhesives given enough time. If using a bedroom, use heavy curtains or sturdy blinds to block the sun.
- ***Dry:*** A damp basement will lead to mold, spoilage, and mildew. Food sealed in plastic may be okay, but gear will mold and metal will corrode. Have a dehumidifier set up in areas of high humidity to ensure your supplies don't spoil and go to waste.
- ***Pest control:*** Critters will always be an issue, so stay ahead of pest problems. Set off a bug bomb before you start, then wipe down as directed. Put out bait traps, mouse traps, or essential oils (great for insects). Apply barrier sprays at the perimeter or whatever else needs to happen to seal it up and make it safe. Protect your investment from little invaders. They can damage hundreds of dollars of food and equipment in a single night.
- ***Out of sight:*** You don't want everybody who stops by to know about your stockpile. For a variety of reasons, this sets you up for serious trouble. Keep the door closed to the room. Hang a curtain and hide the area in the basement. Keep the closets shut, and whatever you need to do to keep your valuable supplies from being seen by one and all.

Two are Better Than One

Earlier we talked about bugging in and bugging out. If you miss your window of escape or cannot safely leave yet, hunker down and shelter in place. If disaster strikes the day before you make your weekly visit to the grocery store, you're going to be in trouble. Therefore, you want a stockpile of food. Thirty days minimum, more is better. This ensures you are not tempted to get when you should stay at home. Your preps keep you out of danger. If you can safely hide out in your home for a couple of weeks while the dust settles, that is going to be your best option.

It's unlikely that you will load up your car with your full years' worth of food and gear. It's better to spread out your supplies. Some at home, some at or near your chosen BOL. You won't have to worry about any delays associated with loading before you go. Any delays may make your journey out of the city more dangerous. Simply grab your go-bag and go.

There's another reason why you should split up your stockpile. If one location is destroyed or looted, you still have the second. Expect the unexpected and that includes losing everything you have built up. It sucks! It's devastating! But it is always a possibility! Having a second secret bunker filled with everything needed to stay alive, while you figure things out, will be a huge load off your mind.

If by some chance, you and your family get separated, having two spaces stocked with necessities can bring peace of mind. Relax and

rest assured that your family has everything it needs either at home or your BOL. By dividing your supplies, they will have what they need to survive until you meet up again.

Shelving

Most of your supplies should be on shelves. This makes it easier for you to see and access all your food and gear. Secondly, it also ensures your precious supplies are not directly on the floor. This guards against dampness and flooding. Things happen. Bathtubs and toilets overflow. Water heaters break when no one is home. Keeping your food a few inches off the ground is one way to ensure a minor flooding issue won't cause thousands of dollars in damage.

- ***Sturdy:*** The shelves you choose must be sturdy. The white wire shelves often found in pantries and closets are not a good choice. They are not nearly strong enough to hold stacks of cans and bags of rice. You risk the shelves breaking and creating an enormous mess in your storage area.
- ***Plastic:*** Plastic garage shelving is an option: Select ones designed to support a few hundred pounds. These shelves are flat, so you can reinforce them with 1x2s or 2x4s. You can even place 1x2s across the front of the shelves, as a barrier, to ensure none of your cans/jars fall off when bumped.
- ***Hand built:*** Homemade wooden shelves do the job: research them on YouTube and the internet. Make them

strong and reinforced so they don't bow. You also need to prepare for cans that bulge and leak. If you don't catch this early on, the moisture will threaten the integrity of the wood and may cause another horrible disaster.

- **Wire:** Heavy wire shelving. Find the best in restaurant supply stores: they hold up under the weight of canned food. Secondly, the wire racks allow for airflow, which is important if you are combatting humidity.
- **Restaurant closures:** Pay attention to stores that are going out of business and selling their shelving units. This is a great way to get sturdy shelves at a fraction of the cost of new.

Keeping it all Straight

Now that you know where it all will go and you have your shelving, it's time to dig into the organization. A label maker will be your best friend. If you don't want to do that, get your kids involved by having them make cute signs for your shelves. How much labeling is up to you? Ideally, you want to have your shelves divided into sections, e.g. first aid, canned food, freeze-dried food, batteries/power, lighting, and so on.

Your stockpile is going to be your own little Walmart. As the months stretch on, you will fill the shelves. The only way to make heads or tails of the contents is by keeping like items together. Labeling benefits both you and your family, especially the ones who couldn't care less about your prepping. If you send them into

your storeroom to grab something, having labels and keeping things tidy will go a long way to make it easy for everyone.

Inventory sheets are another huge bonus. You can make your own or download free ones off the internet. They help you track what you have purchased and what you still need to buy. As your prepping journey gains speed, you won't remember every little thing you have purchased. Make sure you have good distribution and coverage of food types and survival gear on hand. You don't want to get to the apocalypse and realize you only have rice, but no meat, spices, or fruit.

Keep your inventory sheets in a binder along with other important prepping information. You can also put them on a clipboard in the area with the stockpile. Make it a habit to record what you add and remove. Stay on top of things.

Plastic Buckets

Plastic buckets will be an enormous help with storage, organizing, and prepping. You can buy them for cheap at a restaurant supply store. Even Home Depot and Lowes sell them new. Better yet, get them from multiple sources, each in a different color. My favorite is to get icing buckets for free at the local bakery. Take them home and wash them, then top with a new lid from Home Depot. You want buckets with lids that will seal tight. Look for that rubber gasket under the lid that provides the seal. There are a lot of uses for these buckets.

- ***Grab and go:*** Store “grab and go” items in the buckets. Imagine there is an imminent disaster headed your way and you can’t grab all the items you have stockpiled. You have precious minutes to grab a few things and that’s it. You need to get as much as you can without getting all of one thing. Create a few buckets with priority emergency gear, peanut butter rations, crackers, and anything else that will help sustain you.
- ***Vary the colors:*** I have white, orange, and blue. The blue buckets are the first to grab (complete freeze-dried meals). Orange buckets are next (mixed staples and more freeze-dried). White contain bulk materials (rice, oats, pasta, etc.).
- ***Extras:*** Keep extra empty buckets on hand for emergencies. When you have to grab and go but have a few extra minutes to pack up a little more. Toss them into your empty buckets. The handles make carrying the buckets easy with a backpack.
- ***Car storage:*** Fill a bucket with emergency supplies and store it in the trunk of your car. The bucket can help retrieve water in an emergency. They can even be a seat when you don’t want to sit directly on the ground.
- ***Toilets:*** Use Empty buckets as toilets. When you are in a shelter in place situation, you may not have the choice of location. That location may not come with a proper bathroom. Adding cat litter or lining the bucket with a heavy-duty plastic trash bag works in a pinch.

- ***Mylar bags:*** Buckets combined with Mylar bags are ideal for bulk storage. This includes grains, beans, and other loose food items. The sealed buckets are bug proof. Rats and mice aren't getting inside. They seal your food in an air-tight container, prolonging the shelf life.
- ***Floods:*** In the event of flooding, the buckets are going to keep your precious supplies dry. The rubber seal and the locking lid go a long way to keep the contents dry. Adding a layer of duct tape around the lid adds another layer of protection.

Always remember to label your buckets. You do not want to open them continuously to check to see what's inside. This introduces air, introduces moisture, both contribute to spoilage.

Chapter 5



The First Sixty Days

This is the moment you've been waiting for. You're primed and ready to hit Amazon with your credit card in hand. You've got a long list of things you are absolutely certain you need. You also assume bulk is the best way to go.

STOP

This is not a one-stop shopping list. This is a way to get you started. As mentioned, every family prepares a little differently. You do "you". They do "them". Only you know your exact needs. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed. Don't get the items outlined here and consider yourself fully prepped. Don't get disappointed when you look at the list and wonder why you don't see a year's worth of freeze-dried food. Prepping like any skill takes time to grow, strengthen, and master. Rest assured; your pantry will grow along with your skills as a prepper. These things are best done over time.

This guide will take you through one-year of prepping. Along the way, you'll want to stay organized and know what you have. Imagine going to the toy store with your child who has a thousand-dollar gift card. The kid is going to go wild, filling carts with too many toys to count. By the time he gets home, he has forgotten

what he even bought. It's overwhelming. There will be a few favorites while they forget everything else. The non-glamorous items get pushed to the wayside. Unfortunately, these never get sampled, reviewed, or used until it is too late.

You don't want that to happen with your preps. Every item you add to your shelf is valuable. You need to know it intimately. How does it work? How often can you expect to use it? Is it good enough for what you need?

The next six chapters will break your prepping into 3 sections. The first section is what you need to buy. The second consists of what skills you need to learn that month. The third and last section contains books or movies you need to review to prepare your mindset. Mindset is key during any event when you have to make decisions fast. Also, these books and movies put the reader or viewer in situations you will need to think through now before something like that really happens.

I have a downloadable cheat sheet for you. This downloadable PDF has most of the items listed in the next six chapters with links to where you can buy or learn more about them.

Go to <https://forrestgarvin.com/resources/> to download this PDF.

Let's get started!

What to Buy

You're going to see a slow buildup as we move through the months. You may feel as if you're not getting anywhere, but you

are. You are starting with the most basic and essential items. If the apocalypse happens in three months, you're set up pretty well. Even if you don't have a year's supply of food yet.

Double Your Pantry

Look at your pantry right now. You probably have a couple of boxes of mac and cheese, peanut butter, and some canned foods. That's the stuff your family eats. That's what you want to buy. The next time you go grocery shopping, buy an extra of several items. Start by doubling your standard food pantry. This is going to carry you through a few extra days in case of a minor emergency.

Preppers know this as "copy-canning." Every time you go to the store, get one or two extra of a few things in your cart. Make sure you are copying long term items. These include canned fruits, canned vegetables, and canned meats. Also, copy-can dry staples such as rice, beans, and oats. Don't go outside what you normally eat. You just want to have a deeper pantry than you currently have.

Copy-canning like this will not break the budget. Skip your fancy coffee every day that week to afford it. The tradeoff is a little cushion in the food department. If you normally buy two boxes of mac and cheese, buy four and so on.

Magnesium Fire Rod

These are dirt cheap, maybe a couple of dollars each. Buy several, just in case one gets misplaced. You can reuse your fire rod over and over to start a fire—think a modern version of flint and steel. Do yourself a favor and take one of these out of the package and

familiarize yourself with its use. They have a learning curve, but once you get the technique, you won't struggle with it. Remember, YouTube is your friend. Search, watch, learn, and practice. There are various brands, but they are essentially all the same. Getting the kind with an attached striker is a superb choice.

Sawyer Water Filter

Water is one of the most important elements of survival. It even ranks higher than food in the rule of threes. Life is in jeopardy in three days without water, and in comparison, three weeks without food. But water can kill you if it is harboring viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens. Any one of these will take you out of the fight with serious intestinal issues. You can almost guarantee you will find water, but you cannot guarantee that the water is safe to drink. This is why a Sawyer Water Filter is a must-have. A filter is an instant way to make water safe to drink. Running water through the filter removes 99.9999 percent of harmful bacteria and parasites from human or animal feces.

You'll find several types of Sawyer water filters. Choose one that best fits your family's needs. If you are a one-man show, go with the Sawyer Mini filter. If you have children, the Sawyer bucket adapter may be best. You can also buy a personal filter for each member of the family. They are cheap insurance.

Tub Water Storage Bag

These are handy tools. The most common brand is the WaterBOB. WaterBOBs are perfect for urban survival situations. The bags are

tub-sized plastic bags that hold up to 100 gallons of water. Set the bag in the tub and fill it from the tub spout. The bag includes a drain pump and hose that you can use to fill other containers with potable water. At the first sign of emergency, fill the bag. Don't fill it hours later—the water may be compromised. Worse yet, it may no longer be there. If the water isn't potable i.e. safe to drink, use your filter.

Pool Shock

Buy Pool Shock at the end of the season if you can: you'll get a killer deal on clearance. A few notes on this. Only buy calcium hypochlorite. Also do not buy pool shock that has other ingredients. These include clarifiers, pH balancers, or anti-foaming agents. You want straight calcium hypochlorite.

Buy a bucket of granules or tablets. Pool shock is essentially powdered bleach. The shelf-life of liquid bleach is approximately six-months. Pool shock won't weaken in a few months or become useless on your emergency supply shelves. Mix the powder in with water to make standard bleach. Add the resulting liquid bleach to questionable water, making it safe to drink, wash your body, and wash dishes. It only takes a tiny amount of the powdered bleach to purify a gallon of water. Again, the internet is your friend. Print out pool shock water purification instructions and store them in your prepper binder and with your pool shock. One bucket is plenty.

5 MREs Per Person

Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), are thought of very fondly by anyone who has served in the military. MREs have come a long way in recent years and are quite palatable. The meals include high-calorie portions requiring no heating. Simply open the package and eat. You can technically get by with one MRE per day. Five on hand per person gives you a week's worth of food. Buying in bulk is your best option. Look around and check out the different meal options available. Start with purchasing a few as samples. Try them to see what your family likes then purchase them in quantity. You will be quite surprised to see it is a lot like reviewing a restaurant menu.

Trash Bags

This may seem silly, because really, who's going to worry about taking out the garbage in an apocalypse? You are. You must. Garbage is filth. Filth breeds disease. You don't want to be dealing with a filthy environment when sanitation is limited. Waste management will be one of your most important jobs.

Trash bags aren't just for garbage. There are hundreds of different ways you can use them to aid in your survival. Buy several bulk boxes and stash them away. Focus your purchases on sturdy, outdoor bags first. Select larger and more durable bags rather than flimsy kitchen bags. Get them in a variety of sizes including drum liners (largest) to kitchen bags (smallest). Save all the plastic grocery bags you get too. While not as durable, they have a multitude of uses. In most areas, grocery bags are completely free.

SAS Survival Guide

No matter how much you think you will remember, it doesn't hurt to have a backup guide. Your life may rely on a tiny, pocket-size book that contains valuable information on what to do to stay alive. Start your prepper library with this well-known guide.

Flashlight

This may seem like a simple decision, but not all flashlights are created equal. LED flashlights are best: they are brighter and sip, not gulp, battery power. With LEDs, batteries will last longer and you won't need to store as many. It's a good idea to have one flashlight on hand for each member of the household. Have at least one set of spare batteries for each light. You need not drop a lot of money on a flashlight, but you will pay more for a high-quality flashlight. Buy once, cry once. Unfortunately, the dollar-store lights are not ideal for a survival situation. They don't last and have poor quality batteries. You can have some on hand for barter but focus on the better quality, slightly heavier, and more durable lights for your personal use.

Batteries

Take an inventory of your critical battery-powered equipment. Based on their use, purchase one or more sets of batteries for each. A flashlight without batteries is just a small club—useless for its intended purpose. Avoid cheap batteries as they are prone to corrosion and may ruin the device. If possible, purchase lithium batteries. Their shelf life is long and they do not corrode as easily as the other types. I've ruined more equipment (remote controls,

GPSs, UV water purifiers) with cheap batteries. I now solely purchase lithiums. The cost savings in the long term are worth the upfront expense. Try to stay with AA and AAA for electronics.

Leatherman Multi-tool

This is a survivor basic. Leatherman tools come in all shapes and sizes. They are easy to slip into your pocket and extremely useful when you've had to evacuate with only your knife in hand. If you've never seen an episode of MacGyver, go back and watch a few, and you will understand why one of these multi-tools is an absolute necessity.

Learn and Train

You can't win a gold medal in a marathon if you've never learned about running or trained for it. Survival is the same thing. Dumb luck only gets you so far. You need to have the knowledge and skills for everything you do. You must know how to do it without having to think. Envision basketball stars who can score a basket while looking in the opposite direction. They can do that because they have practiced enough. They know their position exactly. They know how much push they need on the ball and where to aim: it comes naturally. Survival skills need to be second nature to you as well; that only happens with a lot of practice.

Two Ways to Start a Fire

This is tough for some people to understand why it's so important. Today, when you want a fire, you crumble up newspaper and light a match. If you're in a hurry, add a bit of lighter fluid. Easy peasy,

one and done. Think of survival situations. You won't have a match. You won't have tinder. All your wood will be wet. You need to know how to use that magnesium fire rod. Now, imagine you had to leave everything behind during a hasty evacuation. You need fire to survive, which means you must know how to use a bow drill, hand drill, or a fire plow. Anyone who has ever tried to start a fire with a primitive method will tell you it isn't easy: it is brutal, painful, and downright frustrating. Know how to do it and know the expectations. When you find yourself in that situation, you don't give up hope. Hope is the key to staying alive.

Two Ways to Purify Water

Same scenario: you have escaped with your life and nothing else. You didn't grab your filter or your purification tablets. What else can you do to make water you harvest safe to drink? Study up on making a filter from charcoal, sand, and rocks. Read up on safe water sources in your area such as springs and spring fed ponds. What sources are drinkable without filtering or boiling. Water is life—period.

Put Together Important Documents

Not every apocalypse ends with the entire country falling apart. When the devastation is local to your area, the rest of the country will come to your aid; their help will enable you to pick up the pieces and recover. To do this, you'll need proof of who you are and where you live. Keep important documents like your birth certificate, social security card, marriage license, passport, and a copy of your driver's license accessible for a quick bugout. These

will get you back on track a lot faster than those without. Along with these documents, deeds to property you own, insurance policies, latest utility bills, and wills are a good idea to keep together in a safe place like a fireproof safe. Grab your safe on your way out the door.

Plant a Small Garden

This is too easy not to do. It can be a container garden on your back patio or peas and tomatoes in a flower bed. You don't need acres at your disposal to supplement your food supply. By starting with a small garden, you get to learn by doing. You'll experience the importance of water and how to combat weeds and pests. These are all things you want to know now before your small garden is all you have to eat.

Create a Family/Personal Emergency Plan

You must have an emergency plan in place. When disaster strikes, you have to know what to do quickly and completely. Planning now allows you to rehearse various scenarios and come up with the best options. You don't want to debate the best way out of a burning house when it's on fire. Seconds count in an emergency. Every family member must know exactly what to do when they hear the tornado siren. When they hear the emergency broadcast for real, each member must act with a purpose. With a plan, you can worry less about telling them what to do and just do it. See the section outlining how to come up with an emergency plan in a later chapter.

Using Your 401K For Preparedness and Self Reliance

Most American workers have access to retirement accounts that let them set aside money monthly/yearly to plan for their eventual retirement. These funds, outside the Social Security network, provide income once you are no longer working. Traditionally, you put your retirement savings into the Wall Street Casino with promises that it will grow into a sizeable nest egg. History is replete with success stories of people who retire with million and multi-million dollar IRA and 401k accounts. However, recent history has shown workers losing half or better of their retirement savings in a market downturn. This happened in 1999, 2004, 2008, and the most recent downturn of 2020 due to COVID-19.

There is another option to the Wall Street Casino. You can put your retirement funds into a solo 401k provided by Survival 401k and invest in hard assets such as precious metals that you hold in your possession. This includes land, rental properties, storable foods, self-defense items, water filtration, solar power, and a litany of other SHTF products. The dirty little secret is if we have a SHTF moment, you can use all the supplies you invested in with your 401k. You then will not pay the taxes until after the Continuation of Government proclamation has ended.

Interestingly enough, the solo 401k product has been around since 2002, but only 2% of the American public know anything about it. The reason is that if you can manage your own money, why would you need wall street brokers and financial advisors? They charge you to manage your money inside a casino (rigged against you)

regardless if you make money or not. With a solo 401k, your investment options limited only by your imagination. Take positive control over your future. Survival401k.com

Mindset

Mind over matter is real. It is what makes the difference between dying and surviving. Your brain is your most valuable tool. Everyone has one: it is yours to do as you please. It is the one thing that cannot be lost or taken. You need to know how to use your brain to control your mindset.

Let's first talk a bit more about what mindset is before we get into the homework portion.

Mindset: the established set of attitudes held by someone

As we know; attitude is everything. Attitude influences your mood, be it happy, sad, mad, or stressed. When staring at the end of the world as you know it, you can understand why it is important to choose a survival mindset. Giving up, feeling hopeless, or simply getting mad at the situation helps nothing. Live and fight. Look at the situation as a challenge you can handle. If you climb out of the house that toppled around you and look at the devastation and focus on that alone, you won't make it. When you climb out, you must focus on what you can do to stay alive. What can you scavenge? Who can you help? Be grateful you are alive. Don't get sucked into that pit of ugliness that only gets you killed.

If you have a family depending on you, falling into that trap isn't an option. Be positive even when those around you are crying and

convinced it's hopeless. Change their mindset. We talked earlier about people who think prepping is stupid because there's no point in surviving an apocalypse. That's their mindset. It's not yours.

There are a few things you can read and watch to help you get into the proper mindset:

- Read “One Second After” by William Forstchen
- Check out SouthernPrepper1 on YouTube
- Listen to my podcast – Prepping Academy podcast
- Watch the movie “Panic in the Year Zero”
- Read “Survival Theory: A Preparedness Guide” by Jonathan Hollerman
- Join a PrepperNet group, a quick internet search will find one in your area

That is the first two months of prepping. You'll find it is much easier to get into when you take it slow and easy.

Chapter 6



Months Two to Four

Congratulations! You've gotten your feet wet in the prepping world. You're now a more familiar with how this works. Let's keep up the momentum! For the next sixty days, everything on the list still remains vital to your long-term survival. Remember, you are continuing to build the most important gear. As you proceed through these two months, you'll add items that will make life easier. You'll add those critical to your immediate survival. These efforts focus on the days following a major event. Not that the items on the next lists are any less valuable; it is about the build-up.

What to Buy

Now that you've encountered some of the gear out there, you're probably pretty excited. There are some outstanding gadgets to be had once you know what to look for. Did you browse Amazon or any of the internet prepper stores? You probably had a hard time holding yourself back. Be patient. The cool stuff is coming.

5-Gallon Gas Cans

Gas is always the first thing people rush out to buy in any emergency. If you own a portable generator, you'll need gas. Your car needs a full tank too. You don't want to be stranded with a

working vehicle and no gas. Is there anything as helpless as being stuck in harm's way because of an empty tank? Avoid the last-minute miles-long lines at the pump. Buy six 5-gallon cans, fill them up, and add some fuel stabilizer. Make sure you use the fuel and are replacing it every three to six months. Better yet, number the cans, 1-6. Top off your car every other month with one. Then refill it and set it in the back of the rotation.

Fuel Stabilizer PRI-G

Long-term storage of gas requires a stabilizer. Gasoline naturally degrades with time. Added to fuel, PRI-G stabilizer gas's shelf life. Gasoline stores for about 3-6 months before it breaks down. A fuel stabilizer can extend shelf life beyond three years. Now, think about the apocalypse. Pull gas from every car you find to use at a later date. You'll want some stabilizer on hand to extend the life of the gas you scavenge. Bad gas can make it hard to start and run an engine and causes major damage to your vehicle. When you need your portable generator to pump water or are running for your life, you'll need that insurance. It's cheap, so buy plenty.

2-Month Supply of Freeze-Dried Meals

Food is fuel. Food is survival. Freeze-dried meals are light, compact, and easy to prepare. Several companies sell bulk packs designed to last a week, a month, or more. A single food bucket can contain as much as a 30-day supply for a single person. Variety is the key. You'll want several options available. Spaghetti and meatballs every night for sixty days will take the wind out of anyone's sails. Shop online for good deals. Be frugal. Shipping can

be expensive. If you have met another prepper, split a large order and you might get free shipping. Avoid buying single meal packages. These cost a small fortune and take up a lot of room on shelves.

DIY First Aid Kit

There two things that, when needed, are needed right now. A first aid kit is number one. A means for self-defense is number two (more on that are in the next section). Save yourself a small fortune and put together your own first aid kit. Medical supplies are cheap, especially when you buy in bulk online or at the dollar store. Don't get stingy here; survival is tough. You are going to be dealing with many cuts, scrapes, blisters, and burns. Be ready to handle those situations. Managing an initial injury can take more supplies than you think. One deep gash will take a box of 4x4s within the first minutes. Keeping a wound clean takes even more. Plan on three dressing changes per day for two weeks for a serious injury. Bandages, gauze, etc. are too cheap not to have a ton on hand. Check out several of the free lists on the internet. Compare, contrast, and make your own list. Having several specialized items like suture kits, slings, and even casting material is good planning. Finally, don't forget diagnostic equipment. Stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, thermometers, pulse-ox meters, and blood glucose meters all have a place in your complete medical kit.

Handgun Glock 19 9mm

Number two on the list of things you need now when you need them is security. You must be able to protect yourself, your family

group, and all the supplies you have gathered. Some of you will be hesitant to buy a gun. Consider this: is it better to protect yourself and your family or be at the mercy of an attacker? Post-apocalypse scenarios are dangerous. It isn't because of the disaster—it's because of the survivors. People desperate for food, water, and shelter will go beyond today's social norms. Most of all, some will be desperate for power. People who would, during normal times, never hurt someone else are going to change. Think of it this way...What would you do to feed your starving child? They'll do it too. Be ready.

Ammo 500 rounds of 9mm

A gun is useless without bullets. Make it a point to buy bullets every week and store them for the long term. If stored in a safe, make sure they are airtight and moisture-free. You can't afford damp and damaged ammunition. Ammo isn't just for defense; it will also be a high-value barter item. Purchase several metal ammo cans. They are cheap at your local gun store or Harbor Freight. They'll keep your ammo dry, trackable, and organized.

Rocket Stove

Rocket stoves are easy to make and effective to use, especially when you are on the move or hunkering down. They use less fuel and burn hotter than a fire. More efficient than a fire, they create less smoke and a visible flame. When you can't (or won't) fire up the grill, pull out a rocket stove. You can find them online from several manufacturers. You can also make them from bricks, a stovepipe, or a tin can. Make one now. Not only is it a valuable

skill, but it builds up your storage. Make one and put it on your shelf. Having one at the ready saves valuable time. You won't have to run around looking for tin snips or risk getting a serious cut while making one when you are desperate.

Tarps: Large and Small

In a survival situation, a tarp has a hundred different uses. It can serve as shelter, a gurney, and a means for carrying or concealing supplies. Tarps are cheap. Purchase several to cover a variety of uses. Improvised shelters are one of the most common prepper needs. You should not draw attention to your shelter. There are times to announce your presence, like a wilderness survival situation; however, this is not one of them. Think concealment. Look for brown tarps, forest green, or even camouflage - a color that blends in with your environment. Avoid bright blue tarps.

550 Paracord

Ah, paracord: cheap, easy to use, and so plentiful. You can buy Paracord key-chains, dog collars, bracelets, and lanyards. Every basic survival kit includes cordage. Use cordage for fire bow drills, shelters, or even holding up your pants. The versatility doesn't stop there. Each length of paracord consists of multiple smaller strands. Cut a length, strip off the outer layer, and you have seven smaller cords to work with. Stack them high and deep.

Knife

Have a knife. Period. A good full-tang knife is your best choice. Skip the "survival knives" with cheap junk stored in the hollow

handle. In a quality full-tang knife, the handle and blade are forged from a single piece of metal. You won't have to worry about the handle separating from the blade or snapping off. The knife material is up to you. Stainless steel or high carbon steel, each has its benefits. Plan on using your knife for protection, food preparation, cutting rope, and processing firewood. Spend a little more and get a knife that feels comfortable in your hand and is durable. Internet reviews are your friend.

Survival Medicine Handbook

Mentioned earlier, but worth saying again, you are not a human-computer. You cannot possibly remember all the survival minutiae that it takes to survive. This includes first aid. The book, "The Survival Medicine Handbook: A Guide for When Help is Not on the Way", by Joe Alton and Amy Alton is the survival medical reference of choice. It focuses not only on traditional "western medicine" but also on herbs and other natural remedies. Breaking your reliance on pills and pharmacies is critical when doctors are no longer available. The Survival Medicine Handbook introduces and covers the basics. It also takes you through advanced procedures like stitches and even setting broken bones. This book will be critical when you can't run to the emergency room and the pharmacies are closed. Joe and Amy are good personal friends of mine, and you can check out some of my past interviews on PrepperNet's YouTube channel.

Training/Actions

If you remember, the first two months have focused on learning skills. This month builds on those skills and gets even more physically involved. Survival is both emotionally and physically taxing. If you're a couch potato, pay attention.

Start Building Your Bug Out Bag

You are going to hear a lot about BOBs. The more you get into prepping, the more they are discussed and dissected. They are the single most talked about pieces of gear in the survival world. Everyone has one or more. Now it's time for you to join the ranks of preppers around the world and build your own. There are hundreds of free BOB articles and content lists. Grab a few and make one that fits your own needs, skills, and use. Get to work. Keep in mind your BOB is always a work in progress. Revisit it often and improve upon it when possible.

Practice Shooting

Earlier in this section you bought a gun and ammo. Now you need to put that gun to use. If this is your first firearm, take a class. Shooting is not a self-taught skill. There are too many nuances in terms of safety and accuracy. You don't need to learn bad habits. Take a class! Once you are comfortable with the basics, head to a shooting range and get a feel for your gun, and hone your accuracy. You may only get one shot, so make it count. It will also save ammunition when you can't run to the store and buy more.

Work Your Garden

Get out there and work in your garden. If you've never pulled weeds, built a trellis for peas, or trimmed tomatoes, now is a good time to figure it out. Get familiar with the problems every gardener faces. Whether it's yellow leaves or an infestation of beetles destroying your crops, learning the signs of trouble and how to solve those problems is critical to success. Do this while Google is still available. Learn what it takes to keep a garden healthy. You never know when the food you harvest is all you have to eat. Keeping the garden going also ensures that you are working the soil and building it for the following growing season.

Cook a Meal on Your Rocket Stove

In the last section you bought a rocket stove; now it's time to put it to use. Yes, all that handy gear you are adding to your shelves needs a workout. Learning the little nuances of cooking on a rocket stove is essential. Learning now ensures you don't scorch the only meal of the day later. You need to know how much fuel to add and how quickly it cooks. Make your mistakes now when it isn't crucial. It'll be a fun learning experience with the entire family.

Take a CCP Class

In most states legally carrying a firearm requires a Concealed Carry Permit (CCP). Few states have open carry laws, otherwise known as constitutional carry. Check your local laws and get a permit. Some states require CCP class for a permit application. Regardless, they are a great idea. They teach and enforce the safety skills you

must always practice when firearms are around. Keep your permit up to date and with you at all times.

Physical Fitness Plan

You cannot, absolutely cannot, be out of shape and still survive the apocalypse. How can you expect to hike twenty miles uphill to your retreat when walking upstairs to your bedroom leaves you winded? Survival after a major disaster is going to entail a lot of walking and a lot of hands-on work. Chopping wood, hunting, and carrying water are all grueling tasks that will become a part of your daily life. You must prepare to do those things without feeling like you are going to pass out. As a bonus, good physical shape decreases the risk of medical problems. Remember, you won't have access to doctors. You need to be in the best shape possible and as healthy as possible to pull off this survival thing.

Mindset

Let's talk mindset again. Last month's exercise gave you a glimpse of life after a disaster. I'm preparing you for the worst possible scenarios. You should always hope for the best but prepare for the worst. There is a good chance it won't be as bad as Hollywood makes it out to be. Think of the birthing classes you attend before giving birth to a child. It is not an experience for the faint of heart, which is why there are so many books and classes on the subject. Think of prepping in the same way. You need to watch it and see how others pull it off. Study how others have responded and how they overcame their trials and tribulations.

These are your mindset prepping tools:

- Read “One Year After” by William Forstchen (the follow up to the first book)
- Follow Zerohedge.com to stay abreast of current news topics that could signal a financial collapse or other significant events
- Watch “The Twilight Zone: The Shelter”
- Watch the movie, “Prepper” - 2016 version

As you are checking off the items on this list, make sure to stay vigilant. Pay attention to the news and listen to what is happening around the world. Global warnings aren't likely before things to go bad. Watchful preppers keep their heads up and pay attention. They will know when it's time to go to ground, so to speak. Get one step ahead and stay one step ahead

Book companion PDF download:

<https://forrestgarvin.com/resources>

Chapter 7



Months Four to Six

Ready to get seriously into prepping? Let's go! You now walk like a prepper. You now talk like a prepper. You now keep an eye out for good deals on anything with value after a major disaster. Hopefully, you've even connected with a few like-minded people. With your prepper friends, you can toss around ideas, cross-train skills, and interpret the problems of the world. Learning how to build a bow drill is always much more fun with a partner. Embrace your new prepper lifestyle! Let's keep up the momentum and commitment!

What to Buy

We're moving into bigger purchases now. These are going to help round out the supplies you've been putting away over the last few months.

Rice 200-pounds

Rice is **THE** versatile ingredient. Use it to thicken soup into a stew. Cook it low and slow for a breakfast porridge, add vegetables, spices, and a little meat as a main meal. You can even add milk, fruit, and a sweetener to create a dessert. A surprising percentage of the world lives on rice and beans, and for good reason; it's

nutritious, filling, and cheap. White rice is your best option. Properly stored, it lasts for decades. Unfortunately, while brown rice is more nutritious, the healthy oils in it go rancid after a year on the shelf. Check out the chapter on storage tips and tricks to extend the life of your dried grains.

Beans 200-pounds

Beans are high in fiber and protein. Be sure to store pinto, black, northern, and lentils. Variety is the spice of life. Beans can be a side or main course. Cooked with a little meat, especially smoked meats, beans create a savory main meal. There are even recipes for pinto bean brownies. Find and try a few recipes for boiled, refried, baked, or stews.

2 BaoFeng Radios

Communication is key during a disaster. When power lines, phone lines, internet connections, and cell towers go down, you need a means to reach others. Two-way radios are your best option. With COMMs, you'll be able to stay in touch with friends and family during outings, scavenging, and other missions. Look for a radio that monitors NOAA and the emergency broadcast system. A note about radios: beware the blister-pack radios that advertise ranges of over 30 miles. Expect one (1) mile or less in wooded or hilly areas. Expect a half to a quarter of a mile when you are downtown. BaoFeng radios are higher power (wattage) but require a HAM license to broadcast. We will talk about that shortly.

Galvanized Trash Can

Time to prepare for an EMP. A few electronics stashed in a galvanized trash is a great idea. Insulate with cardboard and seal the lid with aluminum foil or metal tape. This will be your very own Faraday cage that costs next to nothing. Store radios and other critical electronics in this improvised Faraday Cage.

Eneloop Rechargeable Batteries

Your flashlights and portable radios are going to need power. If they aren't rechargeable, then they need batteries. Panasonic Eneloop batteries are some of the best. Being rechargeable, you only need a few in contrast to the cases of traditional batteries you'll need. Survey your electronics and purchase all sizes required. And yes, you will have a way to recharge them (coming soon).

Cash

Cash is king. You're going to need money if you find yourself in the middle of an emergency. Need to get out of town—cash. Top off the shelves—cash. Need a little social lubricant to get something done—C\cash. When the power is out, your debit and credit cards won't work. Few businesses will go the old-fashioned way. Having at least \$70 in five-dollar bills and \$30 in one-dollar bills ensures you can still grab what you need without an ATM. Smaller bills are best. Smaller bills solve the problem of a store owner unable to make correct change. That said, few problems can't be solved with a crisp \$100 dollar bill.

Dehydrator

An electric dehydrator might not do you a lot of good post-apocalypse. It will, however, go a long way in getting you ready for the event. Between killer sales at farmer's markets and your garden, you'll have an abundance of produce. Drying your fruits, veggies, meats, and herbs is a cost-effective way to extend your long-term pantry. Grow and purchase the ingredients you use the most and stack them up in quart jars or vacuum-sealed bags. Preserving food is a great way to focus on your favorite meals and most-used ingredients. A simple five-tray dehydrator is sufficient.

5-Gallon Buckets with Lids

We mentioned buckets earlier. Now is the time to get them in quantity. Check Craigslist and tap into any friends in the restaurant industry. Anyone who has an inside track on old pickle buckets, frosting buckets, or food-safe buckets is your friend. Be wary of buckets with an unknown history. Only use food-safe buckets that have never stored chemicals. Chemicals leach into the plastic and then leach into your food. Buying in bulk is a great way to go.

Desiccant Packets and Oxygen Absorbers

Often found in jerky and pill containers, Silica gel desiccant packets are used to preserve food. They absorb moisture and help prevent food spoilage. Buy them in bulk. They come in varying sizes. You will need them for your food and ammo storage. If you accidentally leave them out or want to re-use them, you can "recharge" them by running them through a cycle in your dehydrator.

Oxygen absorbers, also called O2 absorbers, do exactly that. They remove oxygen from the environment. Food spoils from exposure to moisture, oxygen, and light. O2 absorbers use a chemical reaction to convert iron and oxygen to an inert substance (rust). You will use these when packaging bulk foods. Get them in bulk online. If you have a hard time finding them, pick up hand warmers. They are the same thing. Buy a bunch when they go on sale in the spring.

Silver

Save all silver coins and any broken jewelry you have. Widely respected as a precious metal, silver still holds value today. Even after a financial collapse, it will have a place as a currency. Precious metals have always retained their worth. That earring you have or old dime from the sixties will be worth more than paper money if the economy collapses. Keep your silver in a safe place in your home; a safe deposit box may not be accessible during emergencies. Pre-1964 coins, called junk silver, and one-ounce American eagles will be the most recognizable.

Training/Actions

Now it is time to step up your game. The next activities will thrust you even deeper into the prepping world.

Family Communication Plan

Can you imagine the terror you'll experience if you can't talk to your family? Especially separation from your children during a major disaster! It will make you absolutely crazy with worry. The

likelihood of disaster striking while you are all together is rare. This means you must have a communication plan. If separated when things go sideways, you need a method to check in with each other. There are a lot of options here. Figure out what works best for your family and write it down. Keep a binder in each car, BOB, and school bag. It doesn't have to be big, just complete. Your job is to make sure that everyone in the family knows what to do.

Learn How to Set Up a Shelter

This is so important and fun and the one task your kids will probably be happy to practice with you! There are many ways to build a shelter. Learn how to build a variety of shelters using various materials. Murphy's Law will guarantee that you won't have a tarp with you; therefore, learn to do without. A debris shelter is a common choice. The key is to learn the best way to make multiple shelters. You want to be a pro when you have limited materials with a snowstorm heading your way.

NRA Class

The NRA hosts a variety of classes. It's wise to sign up for a handgun course to get better with your recently purchased gun. There are several online courses available that make getting trained easy and convenient.

Char Cloth

Do a little research on char cloth. It helps quickly start a fire in a survival situation. Once you realize how helpful this tiny little tool

is, make a few pieces yourself. Stow them away in each of your BOBs.

Dehydrate Food

Don't let that dehydrator sit on the shelf. Learn how to use it. You can dehydrate just about anything. If you are in the offseason for local produce, try some apple and banana slices to get the hang of it. Onions and fresh herbs are available year-round. Your dehydrator can do a lot more than just dry food. Try making trail mix, fruit leathers, jerky, and biltong too.

Repackage Rice and Beans for the Long-Term

Follow the tips outlined for dry storage and get your rice and beans properly stored for the long-term. Once you gain confidence, start adding more items to your bulk food storage as they go on sale. This includes oats, pasta, and wheat.

Seek Out a Prepper Friend

If you've been on any of the prepper forums, you may have found some people who live close to you. A search on PrepperNet.com is also an option. Visit your local library and check on the bulletin board for local meetings. Prepping is becoming very popular, even in the most rural areas. You are likely to find a group to connect with. Try to find one person you respect and can depend upon in the prepper community.

Prescription Medicine and OTC Medicine Substitutes

Pharmacies and big drug manufacturers won't survive an apocalypse. If you are dependent on medicine to function or live, you need to look into natural remedies now. There are plenty of natural pain relievers, fever reducers, anti-inflammatories. There are even natural antibiotics. Study up on herbal meds. Buy a book and keep it on hand so you know how to pair up ailments and plants. Introduce one or two of these slowly into your normal treatments.

Mindset

You should be fully immersed in the prepping world by now. You've watched the movies. You've read prepper books and blogs. You've even found a few alternate news sources. Now, you are paying attention to what is happening in the world. Here are a few more things you can look into as another perspective on life after the apocalypse.

- Read "The Final Day"
- Listen to the Prepper Recon podcast
- Watch "American Blackout" by National Geographic
- Follow Scott Hunt's "Engineer775" on YouTube

Book companion PDF download:
<https://forrestgarvin.com/resources>

Chapter 8



Months Six to Eight

You should have confidence in your prepping at this point. You should also have a good hold on shelter building and have basic BOB gear. Hopefully, your family is on board and taking part in prepping with you. If not, there is still time to get them involved. Taking part in any of these steps is something. Every bit helps. Remember, you never stop prepping. Just because you've spent the last six months reading, training, and stocking up, you aren't finished. There's more to do. Let's keep at it!

What to Buy

We are moving into the bigger items that cost a bit more. These items are all necessities. They are being purchased at this point because you have already built up a good supply of the most critical items. These are the supplies needed to survive the weeks following a disaster. With these purchases tapering off, you will free up some of your monthly savings. The items from this point forward are going to extend your survival months after a major event.

Small Solar Charger

We talked about rechargeable batteries earlier. A small solar charger will charge those batteries, a cellphone, GPS (assuming

there are still operating satellites), your car battery, and so on. These small chargers are lightweight and perfect for sitting on the hood of a car if you're on the road or away from your shelter.

Ruger Takedown 10/22 Rifle

Without grocery stores, you're going to need to hunt for food. Large-game won't be easy but small-game will be plentiful. You need a rifle for hunting. A .22 is small, light, and cheap to "feed." The Ruger Takedown has several advantages over other .22s. First, it breaks into two sections, allowing for concealment in a backpack. Second, it has a huge following and aftermarket parts are widely available. While not a great stopping round, I'd hate to get shot by a .22. Accurate and easy to handle, a .22 rifle is a superb choice for defending your home or shelter just in case someone comes along hoping to give you trouble.

Ammunition .22

You need ammunition for your rifle. Fortunately, .22 is plentiful right now and fairly inexpensive. Stockpiling a thousand rounds now will give you a good starting point. That may seem like a lot; it isn't. Between storage and practice, you'll burn through it. You don't want to starve because you ran out of bullets six months into the apocalypse.

Freeze-Dried Food

It is time to build on what you bought in the last chapter. You can start adding more variety to your shelves. You want four months' worth of meals per person, or enough food for the entire family. Go

for the meals with the highest calorie counts when you can. Calories are energy and you are going to be expending a lot.

Maps

Imagine life without GPS. Remember the days where you had to use a paper map to find your way around a new city? Any disaster scenario is likely going to end up leaving satellites and cell towers down. You will have to rely on your map skills to get around and out of danger. Find maps of your city/town and the surrounding areas. Every time you travel, pick up a local map. You also want those that show terrain, known as topographic (topo) maps. They help you when planning any journey on foot. Your routes must take into consideration uphill and impassable sections. Topo maps are one of the best resources when creating your plans.

Trauma Kit

Earlier we mentioned including suture kits in your first aid bag. It's time to take that a step further. You must prepare for serious trauma events. Hemorrhagic bleeding can render a person unconscious in less than a minute and dead in two. Tourniquets, hemostatic gauze, and Israeli bandages are tools to prepare for arterial bleeding. Chest seals are also an excellent idea to have on hand. Injuries can be survivable if the immediate first aid is adequate.

Salt and Sugar

How much do we love sugar and salt? A little salt on anything makes it palatable. You can choke down a bowl of plain rice with a sprinkle of salt. Our society is addicted to sugar. When the shelves

are empty, we would give up a case of toilet paper for a one-pound bag to season a meal. Buy a hundred pounds of each. Seriously. Both sugar and salt are extremely valuable in a post-disaster world. It isn't always about the taste. Use both as barter and first aid. A little sugar and salt in a glass of water becomes an electrolyte boost and can mean the difference between life or death to a person suffering from dysentery or dehydration.

AR-15 Rifle

Considering self-defense, the AR is the gun of choice for preppers. A little controversial in today's world, the gun is an equalizer if a group of people attack. A single-shot rifle doesn't have the rate of fire and a handgun means they're too close and it's too late. Buy at least five 30-round magazines and five-hundred rounds of .223 ammunition to go with the rifle. This is an expensive purchase. You may need to break this up over time to build up your stockpile. Just keep at it: security is essential to survival.

Training/Actions

Fire Starting

In a perfect world, disasters strike when it's 72, sunny, with no wind or rain. That is pretty unlikely—Murphy will make sure of that. This means when you are training for survival, you need to get uncomfortable. For your first exercise, start a fire in the rain. Don't just try. Do! Use a couple of different fire-starting methods to hone your skills. The more skills you have, the better off you will be.

NRA Rifle Class

This class takes the same approach as a handgun class. Sign up online and check if there is a local instructor. Live and in-person are always preferable. Any information you gather is invaluable online or in person.

Basic Survival Class

These are absolutely the best choice in getting real hands-on training. There are plenty of survival schools across the country. You can sign up for a weekend course or go all in and take a full week. You will learn how to do things with your two hands under the guidance of an experienced instructor.

BaoFeng Setup

You bought your portable radios; now it is time to learn how to set them up. Get ready for when you will need them. Know how to use it and which channels to use. This can be a little confusing and very frustrating. Take the time to figure it out now before you need to depend on them. There are plenty of blogs and YouTube videos out there. Find one that fits your learning style and walks you through them step by step.

Mindset

While watching someone do something on television is entertaining. You need to do your part, though. Practice these, otherwise, the information is just book-knowledge and not actual skills.

- Read “Patriots: Surviving the Coming Collapse” by James Rawles
- Watch a few seasons of “Doomsday Preppers” on the National Geographic channel
- Attend prepper meeting/conventions in your area
- Listen to the Survival Medicine podcast

Read “The Prepper’s Blueprint: The Step by Step Guide to Help You Through Any Disaster” by Tess Pennington

Book companion PDF download:

<https://forrestgarvin.com/resources>

Chapter 9



Months Eight to Ten

You must be feeling confident with your stockpile and survival ability. You've got this. You have a clear vision and have figured out that it only takes a little effort every day to reach your goals. Your storage room should be filling up nicely. If you need more shelves, now is the time to buy them. If you feel like your goods and gear are outgrowing your space, it's time to get creative. Start looking for other places to stash your goods. You'll find a chapter in the book dedicated to helping you with that good problem.

What to Buy

We're going to get into the bigger, long-term survival needs. Think of these as retreat supplies. They are strictly for living out the apocalypse in your end-times location.

Heirloom Seeds

Seeds are a must-have. Buy a mixed container of heirloom seeds at your local garden store. Pick greens, fruits, and vegetables that you know your family will eat, then add a few heirloom plants for variety. Store your seeds correctly to ensure long-term viability. Cool, dry, dark, and protected places are the keys. Heirloom seeds

are genetically pure. The seeds of their fruit will spawn the same exact plants and fruit. Hybrid seeds are the first generation of a combination of two different varieties. While they have good fruit, the seeds are not guaranteed to produce viable plants. Often those seeds are sterile. One great example is seedless watermelons. They taste great, but the seeds are worthless to plant. Get heirlooms! Set a calendar event to buy several packs each year.

Bulk Water Filter

A bulk water filter is ideal for families. They provide gallons of water versus mouthfuls. They also don't leave the chemical taste of bleach or other purifiers. Larger systems are great for families sheltered in place for an extended stay. Don't deny it; freshwater is a luxury. A luxury you have to work for.

Goal Zero Guide 10 Solar Charger

This portable solar charger system is perfect for sliding into a backpack to take with you on the move. You can charge your phone, tablet, or AA and AAA batteries with it. It is durable enough to endure your travels. It has enough output and capacity to support even your most power-hungry devices. Remember, not all disasters will take out your electronics. Plan for that eventuality. If they work, then use them. It'd be foolish not to.

Military Poncho

One of the most important survival rules is to stay dry at all times. A quality military poncho or an Army raincoat is an excellent choice. The dark colors blend in with the environment. In a pinch,

use it as an improvised shelter. Don't forget to pack ponchos for the kids.

Sun Oven

Purchase a sun oven. Sun ovens are exactly what they sound like. They capture heat from the sun and create an environment hot enough to cook in. The sun oven heats to oven temperatures, hot enough to bake loaves of bread, casseroles, or meats.

Multi-Tool

Gerber Dime mini is great to carry everyday. There are many on the market and many come with two or three tools. You can even find some with up to twenty or more. The key is to look for a quality tool that can survive use and abuse.

Katadyn Micropur Purification Tablets

A major survival rule is "all water is unsafe to drink." Don't trust any water that you haven't treated yourself. Even a cool, clear, bubbling spring is best treated. It's always better to be safe rather than sorry. Purification tablet work similar to powdered bleach. Drop a few in water, swirl until dissolved, then wait as directed. In no time, it's safe to drink. Have a lot on hand. Tablets store for years, while bleach expires in six months. Prepper hint. Also, store some lemonade or other flavoring to mask any chemical taste.

Shortwave Radio

You don't realize how much you depend on the news until it's gone. When completely cut off from the world, you will need to

find out what is happening. Use a shortwave radio to pick up any AM stations that may be up and running. Purchase a shortwave radio with Single Side Band (SSB) capabilities. With SSB, you can listen in on most HAM radio conversations. Find out what's happening near and far. Roam the dial and you can even get a little music. Music will be a vital part of your life when the world has gone dark and silent.

Training/Actions

Go Camping

Grab your tent, gear, and head out for a three-day camping trip. Do what you can to rough it. If you can't find a place to camp without modern conveniences, leave as much home as possible. Skip the glamping and overnight in a tent, tarp, or hammock. This is going to give you that real-life experience. It will shape what you can expect when you have to sleep under the stars.

Find Temporary Bug Out Locations

If you have public lands around you, take a hike and scope out the good places to bugout. Avoid private land at all costs: this can get you shot. Remember, you're not the only evacuee seeking shelter. Other folks also buy land off the grid to bugout to. You don't want to encroach on their territory. Not even for a single night.

Get HAM Operator License

Study, test, and get a license to operate a HAM radio. There are classes, books, and online sites to help. You decide what level of

license. Study up and take a test or attend a paid course. You'll need a lot of practice and training to make HAM radio an effective communication tool. When you know what you're doing with the right equipment, you will be able to talk to people on the other side of the country and around the world.

Take an IDPA Class

You can never know too much about the defensive use of firearms. Take an International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) class. IDPA classes teach both marksmanship and tactics. More importantly, they provide practice under the stress of competition. These skills may mean the difference between life and death in a gun battle. Learn how to handle a gun in dynamic scenarios. Use a flashlight with your gun. Practice shooting while on the move. These are just some of the skills you can expect to learn.

Store Manuals on a USB Drive

Store all the manuals you have been downloading on a portable USB drive. Carry the digital instructions for dressing a deer, building a homemade water filter, etc. in your BOB and at your BOL. I know I keep saying this, but you will not remember all the little details later. Download or copy and paste the information you find into a file and store it on the USB drive. Store the USB drive and a tablet or laptop in your Faraday cage for safekeeping. Your personal library can make your life far easier after a disaster.

Join AmRRON

The American Redoubt Radio Operators Network (AmRRON) is a good place to sharpen your HAM operator skills. Second, AmRRON is a prepper-oriented information network. They are a well-run and well-organized network of HAM radio operators. The resulting hands-on practice will be worth more than any book. You will get the benefit of talking with people who have lived and breathed prepping for decades. You will connect with fellow preppers and patriots on your same journey. AmRRON is an entire community dedicated to preparing to survive a collapsed world.

Mindset

These exercises continue to build on the previous chapters. Keep at it!

- Read SHTFPlan.com daily
- Read “Day of Wrath” by William Forstchen
- Read “Surviving Off Off-Grid” by Michael Bunker
- Watch “10 Cloverfield Lane” yes, it’s scary, but it gives you a peek at a prepper’s bunker
- Read “United States Air Force Search and Rescue Survival Training” manual
- Watch AmRRON’s CommsUp Parts 1 and 2 on YouTube

Chapter 10



Months Eleven to Twelve

You're in the homestretch. We have focused on saving money and filling your shelves. Finally, and most importantly, you've consistently put in the time and energy. As a result, you are well-stocked and well-trained. There's only a little more to do. Remember, you never stop prepping. Once you get six-months of food on the shelf, go for nine. Then twelve. Then keep going. You get the idea. I'll let you in on a secret: use this book to build habits. Filling out your shelves is a positive by-product. Once you get on the right path, stay on it. Keep up the good habits you have cultivated. Continue attending meetings. Continuing filling gaps in your shelves. Most of all, continue learning. As you learn, you're going to come across more supplies you need.

What to Buy

These last items will help round out your prepper shelves. Again, this is a guide. You can always buy more as you find other gaps and as your budget allows. When you get through the first twelve months, turn around and start at the top. Do it all over again. Keep adding. You'll learn from experience and have better ideas about your personal goals and where to get the best deals. Don't forget to stop and appreciate all that you have done. You've earned that!

CAT Tourniquet - North American Rescue

A Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT) must be part of your trauma kit. Hemorrhagic bleeding can render a person unconscious in a frighteningly short amount of time. Bleeding out from a severed artery can only be stopped with a tourniquet. Easily applied with one hand, the CAT is designed for ease of application to yourself or others. This essential if you are all alone and severely bleeding. CATs are a standard kit for our military, police, and EMS.

SABRE Red Pepper Gel

This is the good stuff. You can buy the police strength gel online: in short, it's pepper spray. Have it handy to fend off an attacker that gets too close. It is also very effective against most animals. Keep it ready on your BOB and make a can a part of your EDC. Keep in mind that pepper spray is only useful in a close combat situation. It will not do much more than stun and, temporarily, blind an attacker. If the attacker continues to pursue, a more lethal self-defense option is going to be necessary.

Ear Protection

Ear protection from Howard Leight Shooting Sports facilitates shooting without damaging your hearing. These earmuffs amplify normal conversation while suppressing the loud sounds of gunshots. While you won't use it a lot in a survival situation, you will need to protect your hearing, so you have it when you need it the most.

More Ammo

Buy at least another five-hundred rounds of .223. Also buy an additional five-hundred rounds of 9mm bullets. Your gun may be the only thing you can count on in a post-apocalyptic world. Make sure you can use it. Store your spare ammo correctly. Toss in oxygen absorbers and desiccant packets or store in an airtight safe.

UHF/VHF/HF HAM Radio

This is going to be the big purchase for this period. You can buy one used or new. This radio is going to put you in contact with the outside world after a collapse. Store it in your galvanized trash can to make sure it is safe from an EMP. Don't forget the other components. These may include an antenna, antenna tuner, power supply, microphone, etc.

Training/Actions

You should be in shape and ready for anything at this point. You should feel comfortable heading out for a camping trip with whatever you have in your BOB. Knowledge is power, and you have been diligently reading, studying, and learning. Now, it is time to put it to use.

Documents

Acquire and make copies of all the important documents in your life. Keep them in a separate binder in case you can't get to your safe or someone steals your safe. You will probably need to pay for certified copies of marriage and birth certificates. Buy a couple to keep on hand.

Take a Trauma Class

This is a step up from a standard first aid class. You need to know how to handle real emergencies. Search online and find one near you. Battlefield or combat field medicine tactics are what you need. They will show you how to handle major emergencies that go beyond applying a Band-aid.

Binder

Complete the binder we've been talking about. You probably have a file somewhere on your computer or you've printed out important information and have it stashed on your desk. Put everything into the binder along with any manuals you can get your hands on. Buy paperback books and keep them handy.

Target Practice

Take all your guns to the local shooting range and log your hours. You want to make sure everything is in good working order. Get a feel for each of your guns. You need to know what kind of recoil/kick to expect. Make it a point to become an excellent shot. An okay shot will not cut it when your life is on the line.

Bugout Location

We have talked about finding a temporary BOL. Now is the time to look at something long term. You want a couple of acres, if possible, somewhere off the beaten path with access to water. If you can afford to buy such a piece of land, do it. It is a worthy investment. If not, you need to find a family willing to take you in if you have to bugout of your home after an emergency.

Tactical Gun Class

Get exposure to a real gunfight and not the video or movie versions. Find a class that trains members of law enforcement. Look for force-on-force classes with active targets and real-life scenarios. It will help hone your skills while teaching you what to look for, how to carry your weapon, and how to be the victor in a close-quarters combat situation. The instructors will teach you how to shoot while lying on your back or side, as well as the best ways to take cover. As Mike Tyson said, “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.” Be prepared and know how you react when the bullets fly.

Mindset

You can always find interesting tidbits on the internet on any one of the hundreds of survival and prepper blogs. Pick a few you enjoy reading and make it a point to read new posts. Watch movies that depict disaster scenarios, even the zombie apocalypse type. They give a glimpse of what it would be like in a post-disaster world.

- Read “The Days of Noah” by Mark Goodwin
- Read “The Survival Group” by Charley Hogwood
- Listen to the podcast Prepping 2.0

Chapter 11



Going Public

Several of your monthly assignments included hooking up with like-minded people. If you've been putting it off or you still aren't sure about getting out there, it's time. It's time to do more research and finding who is in your area. Find out who you can talk with and share stories about your prepping journey with. I can't emphasize this enough. Without a group during a major emergency or system collapse, the probability of survival is approximately zero. The great news is that via the internet, there are many safe ways to find and link up with other preppers. Let's look at several options.

- ***Craigslist.com:*** Search Craigslist using keywords associated with preppers. Include homesteading, homesteaders, preparedness groups, survivalists, off-grid, and so forth. Check the community section and look for groups and events in your area. Be smart about going to anyone's house. They could be completely safe and prefer to meet in private—just get to know them first. Most of the time, the groups that post to Craigslist will meet at coffeehouses, restaurants, or even shooting ranges. Shop around and find a group that fits your style.

- **Meetup.com:** Used by many preppers to advertise gatherings, Meetup is an online site favored by numerous groups. All you have to do is type a familiar keyword into the Meetup search engine. From here, the website shows you a huge number of groups all over the world. Some groups are quite large while others are very meager. The best part about the Meetup groups is you can “meet” online. It’s a great place to chat with others that think like you—those who are doing what they can to prepare for an emergency. You’ll get the chance to connect with thousands of people. You can share ideas and get the best tips and practices, all without ever having to leave the comfort of your home.
- **PrepperNet.com:** Another valuable online forum is PrepperNet.com. This meetup site solely serves the prepper community. PrepperNet.com is completely anonymous and online. You won’t physically meet anyone in person unless you find someone in your local area willing to meet. Built for and by preppers, it is well organized and easy to search. You won’t need to wade through a ton of information that isn’t relevant to your project. PrepperNet.com is as efficient as it gets for finding and connecting with like-minded individuals.
- **Facebook:** Ubiquitous as it is intrusive, Facebook is another simple way to connect with locals as well as other preppers from around the world. Do a quick search for preppers or

survivalists and Facebook will display a long list of groups. There are plenty of emergency preparedness groups. Once you follow one, Facebook will display other similar groups. Join them all! There is no shortage of information out there.

If you have joined several or all these groups but haven't found one in your area, consider starting one yourself. Advertise at the local co-op, post office bulletin board, library, and meeting spots around town. It only takes one person to get the ball rolling. Be that person; you don't have to be an expert. You don't have to host the meeting every month in your living room. You just need to be the spark that brings others together. Get together at a park or other public place and chat about what you're doing to prepare for something big.

You will get a great deal of comfort and support when you talk with those who think like you. This is especially important if your family is not on board. Preppers are a unique group of people. As mentioned, they get a bad rap. There are always a few rotten apples that make the term survivalist synonymous with criminal or lunatic. You might hide your head in shame as you secretly stockpile food and water. Getting together with others enforces your normalcy. Realize that the folks calling you crazy are the crazy ones. They're not taking the time to plan for a future that isn't guaranteed.

Chapter 12



Your Group

You need to think about people with whom to ride out the apocalypse. These are not necessarily the same people from the prepper groups you've joined. Your group will include people you know and trust. Importantly, they should have knowledge and skills that complement yours. Start with your family members and then expand your search. What are the skill gaps you have? Think about this when you make your list of people to seek out.

Think about the villages from days gone by. They had a doctor, a faith leader, a community leader, a blacksmith, and a baker. This is a truncated list. The complete list has hundreds of people filling too many roles to count. Think of the town you live in. Multiple businesses support the needs of the townspeople. This is the core of what attracts people to the town. A town can't be successful if it's solely populated with doctors. Variety is the key to vitality.

A successful group of people has complete coverage of skills and strengths. You want people who are strong where you are weak. The group members must support one another through the process of divide and conquer. Be careful asking people to join your group who are your clone. Every person in the group is another mouth to

feed and another draw on your resources. Every member must contribute to the ultimate survival of the group. It may seem harsh, but you can't have any freeloaders. Even children must play a role in the group's success.

Another aspect you need to think about while planning your dream team: do you like each member? Will you like potential candidates? Seriously! High-stress situations are volatile enough without conflicting personalities to contend with. Don't set yourself up for frustration and failure. It will surely lead to conflict within the group at a time that needs complete cohesion the most. You've got to work as a team to get everything accomplished. That means everyone getting along—for the most part. Tensions may run high, and there's sure to be some squabbles here and there. This is normal in times of stress.

If you've met someone in a prepper meeting and you seem to hit it off, consider asking them to be on your team. As a prepper, you are probably not generally a trusting person. However, you can't and shouldn't try to do it alone. Spend time hanging out with anyone you are thinking about bringing in. It takes a while to build trust between two people. Therefore, start your team building now. You need to go into the apocalypse with a group of individuals you know have your back. You don't want to be second-guessing someone when your life is in their hands.

Once you've compiled your list, talk with the people on it. Share a meal, head to the range, take a class; spend some serious time together. See if they are interested in being a part of your crew. You

never know; they may have other ideas. With your established group, you can make plans about BOLs, pooling resources, and develop tactics for survival.

Your group meetings will be the time when you run through those scenarios likely to happen. Iron out your plans and refine them. Then agree to take action. You have a family escape plan for your home in case of a fire; you will also need an escape plan for your group. You can't be too prepared.

Chapter 13



Storage Tips and Tricks

We've talked a lot about what to put in storage and the key components of a great storage space. When you are stockpiling food and other necessities, you have two goals. Make sure it's stored somewhere safe; make sure it is somewhere it can last. There is no way to predict the timing of the end of the world. It could be tomorrow or ten years from now. All your precious goods, all the results of your hard work and hard-earned money need to be there when the time comes. The following list is a compilation of tips and tricks to keep your prepper goods safe. These have been handed down through the generations because they work.

- ***Five-gallon buckets:*** One cannot say enough about these bad boys. As the saying goes, stack them high and deep. Get a few smaller two-gallon buckets. Store smaller quantities of salt, baking soda, and items for exchange in the smaller buckets.
- ***Bay leaves:*** Bay leaves are your friend by deterring pests. They stink so bad that bugs and mice want nothing to do with them. Toss a few leaves at the bottom of your buckets before sealing them. If you are storing bags of beans, rice,

and sugar, toss bay leaves in with the food for added protection.

- ***Mylar bags:*** We're mentioning Mylar bags again because they can mean the difference between a five-year and a thirty-year shelf life. Get these bags in varying sizes for storage options. Every time you open a sealed bag, you are allowing oxygen and moisture into the bag. Oxygen and moisture mean bacteria. Divide that fifty-pounds of pinto beans into the size your family uses in a week. Label each bag with the contents, storage date, and quantity. That way when you open one, you only risk the integrity of a week's worth of food. Not several months. You can also use the smaller portions for barter or charity.
- ***Peppermint essential oil:*** Another natural tool pests loathe is peppermint oil. Buy it in bulk for extra savings. Tear strips of an old t-shirt and place a few drops of the oil on each strip. Tie the scraps onto the shelves to deter pests or place them around the border of the room. As a bonus, they will give your storage space a nice fresh smell.
- ***Freeze Your Grains:*** Before putting any grains into storage, place them in the freezer for a week or two. Rice, flour, and pasta all contain weevil eggs. Given time, they will hatch, grow, eat, and spoil your grains. Some people are cool with picking the bugs out or calling them an extra dose of protein. That's fine, but if you'd rather avoid weevils, freeze

your grains; it kills the eggs. You won't have to worry about opening a bag and finding creepy crawlies.

- ***Oxygen absorbers:*** These are another necessity. We mentioned buying them during your one-year prepping plan. Make no mistake about it, you need them. They are cheap and, once again, they greatly extend the shelf life of dried goods. Add a few into the Mylar bags before you seal them. This removes any remaining oxygen. No oxygen, no spoiling.
- ***Label and date:*** Use a big black marker to write the purchase dates on your canned goods. Cans will often have a use-by date on the label somewhere, but it can be very small and hard to read. Save your eyesight and write the date you bought the food on a nice big label. Use it to identify the contents and date on your five-gallon buckets AND Mylar bags. With the labels, you will avoid any mystery meals when you open an unknown container.
- ***Repackaging:*** Take boxed items out of their packaging and repack them in Mylar with an oxygen absorber. This process does two things. First, it saves space. How much of a box of mac and cheese is actually mac and cheese? Only about half. Add the noodles, cheese mix, and an O2 absorber into the bag and seal it up. Second, cardboard isn't airtight. Boxed foods go stale in their original packaging in less than a year. Repackaging them in an airtight bag greatly extends their shelf life.

- ***Cheese:*** Ever have aged cheddar? Cheese gets better as it ages over months and years. You've probably resigned yourself to forgoing fresh cheese after a major disaster. That doesn't have to be the case. You can buy a block of cheese and dip it in cheese wax and extend its life. With proper precautions and storage, it will be good for a decade, maybe even longer. There are some tricks to doing this, so study up. Life is better with cheese. Life is sublime with aged cheese.
- ***Rotation:*** Practice good rotation. First in, first-out (FIFO) is your new rule of thumb. It's beneficial to dip into your stockpile occasionally. This ensures you're always adding fresh stuff to the shelves as you remove the old. To optimize this process, use the FIFO method. For example, buy a fresh bottle of ketchup because you're out in the daily use pantry. Grab the frontmost bottle. Then put the new bottle in the back of the shelf pulling everything else forward. Always put new products in the back. This makes it easy to know which is new and which is old. Make sure everyone in the household knows this as well.
- ***FIFO can rack:*** When there is some room in the budget, buy a few FIFO canned good racks. If you're handy, make your own. These are a dream! Drop a can in. It rolls to the front and you can see the label. No one can grab from the middle and mess up the rotation. Plus, the cans stay put.

They won't get knocked down or roll off the shelf. Having a row of racks on your shelves keeps them tidy and organized.

- ***Recycled storage:*** If you have an abundance of jars or other PET plastic containers, use them to store small quantities of rice, sugar, beans, or other bulk goods. These are a portable way to take food with you. Should you have to bugout and have limited room, grab an armful. You can see exactly what's in them and you accumulate them for free. Make sure you toss in a bay leaf and an oxygen absorber to prolong freshness. Don't forget to label your jars with the date and contents.
- ***Diatomaceous earth:*** Food-grade diatomaceous earth (DE) keeps bugs at bay. Sprinkle a fine layer at the bottom of your food-grade bucket and inside Mylar bags. Pour in your dried grains, i.e. beans, rice, flour, and add a little more DE. Finally, fill the bags, sprinkle DE over the top and seal the container. DE keeps out bugs and keeps moisture down. It is safe to eat and won't affect your cooking. Some people add it to their diet as a tool against intestinal parasites.

Are Expiration Dates the Gold Standard?

A note about food dates: most food companies have moved from expiration dates to "use by" dates. You've probably pushed the limits a time or two and live to tell the tale. Think about the world when food manufacturing companies are offline. The only food available is what's in your cupboard or what you can scavenge.

How serious are you going to be about that little stamp on the box or can of food?

Here's the deal: those dates are a way for manufacturers to cover themselves. A use-by date is a manufacturer indicator of the timeline for the food's optimum quality. A box of crackers has a use-by date that promises fresh and crisp crackers. That's it. That's all. After the date, they may not be as crisp, so don't complain to them.

Passing that date doesn't mean the food isn't safe to eat; it just means it won't taste factory fresh. This is the same for a best-by date. Again, food doesn't magically spoil the day after the date. Sell-by dates are for stores. If they have a case of something hanging around that is past the sell-by date, they missed their chance to sell it. The food either gets tossed or sent to a food bank.

View expiration dates in your pantry as more of a guideline. Again, it might not taste perfect, but it isn't necessarily toxic. When in doubt, use your senses. If the can is bulging, if there is a spoiled odor, or if there is visible mold, toss it. If something is stale, it's safe.

When Bad is Bad

So, how do you know when to adhere to a date? There are some key signs to look for. Always remember, when in doubt, to throw it out. Botulism is no joke, and it isn't always obvious when you open a can or jar of food. In fact, you may not even be able to taste or smell it. Botulism is most common in low-acid foods. Most

vegetables, meats, and potatoes are susceptible. When you open a can of low-acid foods, pay attention. Signs to look for that indicate there is a deadly toxin growing in the food are as follows.

- ***Foam:*** Foaming on the top of the can when opened
- ***Smell:*** A bad or rotten smell
- ***Swollen:*** Cans swollen or leaking should be immediately tossed—use gloves to handle the can and throw out with the bad food
- ***Mold:*** Throw out any home-canned jars of food that have mold growing inside, jar and all
- ***Failed seal:*** Check the seal on a home-canned jar by pushing the center of the lid, if it is bouncy then it isn't sealed and should not be eaten—sealed lids are dimpled down in the middle
- ***Dents:*** Dented and rusted tin cans are likely bad—a dent leads to rust, and rust perforates the can, all leading to air getting inside the can, which immediately causes spoilage
- ***Coloration:*** Discolored liquids are not a full-proof indicator, however, if you open something that should be clear, and it is thick or milky, don't take the risk

Go Medieval with Root Cellars

Root cellars are something many people are unfamiliar with in this day and age. Before refrigerators, root cellars were the preservation method for fruits and vegetables. The earth keeps foods cool

without using fans or refrigeration. While some are big and elaborate, others are as simple as a hole in the ground. They are a favorite for preppers for many reasons. First, they are easy to hide. You can store your canned goods and root vegetables in a root cellar and conceal the entry with very little effort. Best of all, they require little maintenance. Depending on where you live, you may need to protect against excessive moisture or flooding. Raise the food off the floor with wood pallets and protect against pests.

Root cellars are perfect for onions, potatoes, carrots, apples, and a variety of other hardy crops such as squash. Installed correctly, you can eat fruits and vegetables throughout the year. If you are planning a BOL, think about putting in a root cellar. There are quite a few different, inexpensive plans for backyard root cellars. Some even use old refrigerators buried in the ground as an improvised root cellar. These are things you can learn from talking to other preppers. Remember, you aren't the only prepper out there. Some have tried these ideas while others have mastered them. Reach out and connect. Exchange ideas! Shorten your own learning curve through the experience of others.

Chapter 14



Liquid Gold aka Water Storage

I cannot say enough about the necessity of water. Water keeps you alive. You can have a mountain of food and still die if you don't have water. Dehydration can take you out of the fight in hours and leave you dead in days. Without water, eventually your internal organs stop functioning and you die. It's harsh, but it's the truth.

Unfortunately, water is a problem to store. It takes up space, is unwieldy, and is heavy. Experts recommend storing one gallon of water per person, per day - that's the absolute minimum. You might survive on one gallon per day, but it won't be pretty. You must have a cushion that allows you to bathe, wash clothes, clean dishes, and cook. The one-gallon rule keeps you hydrated and maybe cooks some food. It will not be enough to keep up with hygiene or any other uses.

Storing a realistic amount of water takes space. A lot of space. Don't forget the weight. At eight pounds per gallon, a year's supply for a family of four will stress any subfloor. There is no practical way to store water to last you years. You need a source of water.

Water Sanitation

All water needs to be treated to ensure it is safe to drink. You will need to make your stored water safe for drinking. It is far too risky to take chances with water harboring bacteria or other pathogens. Luckily, you have a few options. One of the easiest and most effective methods is boiling. When water is at a rolling boil for one full minute, it is safe to drink. You don't need to boil it for five minutes or thirty minutes. Boiling it longer doesn't kill the bacteria any deader. Dead is dead. Boiling it longer only loses water to evaporation and wastes precious cooking fuel.

If you can't boil water, use the water filtration system that you purchased. Along with your water system and plenty of extra replacement filters, it's a good idea to have at least one additional method on hand. Finally, you can chemically sterilize the water. While not a purification method, sterilization kills all the pathogens in the water, making it safe for use. There are multiple options.

- ***Purification tablets:*** You can buy chlorine or iodine-based. Go with the chlorine if you can.
- ***Liquid bleach:*** Household bleach is a great, cheap, effective method but bleach degrades after six months. Depending on how long it's been sitting on the store shelves, that date might be even shorter.
- ***Iodine:*** Iodine is an option and when stored in a cool dark place, it can last for several years. Quite a few people allergic to iodine. A good rule of thumb is that those with a

shellfish allergy are likely to be allergic to iodine. An apocalypse is not the time to find out if you have an allergy.

- ***Pool shock:*** Pool shock is a powerful purification tool, and a little goes a long way. Unlike liquid bleach, powdered bleach has a shelf life measured in years. You can buy shock in small packs or gallon buckets.

If you cringe at the thought of drinking bleach, relax. A few drops mixed into water is safe - one drop per pint or eight drops per gallon. If the water is dirty, use twice that amount. Let the water sit for one hour. Afterward, aerate and the bleach smell will dissipate. Swirl it around to get the oxygen moving, and you won't notice the aftertaste. If in doubt, add a little drink mix to mask any lingering taste.

Vessels, Cisterns, and Bottles

There are many ways to store water. The key is finding the one that suits your needs and available space. If you have a good size piece of property, your options are vast. For apartment dwellers, options are much more limited, but that doesn't mean you don't try. Remember, you are not likely to stay in your home unless you live off-grid or have an out-of-town home that you can defend during a disaster. Don't waste time and money storing thousands of gallons of water only to leave it behind.

Cisterns/Tanks

Cisterns are the big tanks buried in the ground or stored elsewhere on your property. These enclosed tanks usually have a spigot on the

bottom for a standard garden hose. Filled from the top, they range in size from a hundred gallons to two-thousand gallons. Get one that is black if the tank is for above-ground storage. The black blocks light and impedes algae growth. If possible, set the tank on a hill or on a short, sturdy tower to take advantage of gravity. It only takes a few feet to get enough water pressure to fill buckets and bottles quickly. Adding bleach or pool shock when you fill the tank is always a good idea. You can even put a chlorine tablet in a floating pool dispenser. Used tanks can be inexpensive. Don't buy tanks that are not food grade or have an unknown history. Chemicals leach into the plastic and then back into your water. Drinking contaminated water can kill you quicker than dehydration. No amount of filtering can remove chemicals from water. Also, vegetable and olive oils are difficult to remove from tanks. Skip these and keep looking for better tanks.

Rain Barrels

Rain barrels are a huge hit in the prepper community as they are a free way to collect water. Keep in mind that some counties have made it illegal to collect rainwater. Setting up fifty-gallon barrels under the roof of your home is an excellent way to catch and store water. Brown or blue barrels are the way to go here. You can buy complete setups or make your own. Purchased a few barrels for anywhere between ten and twenty dollars each. Use a hole saw to mount a spigot at the bottom and you're set. A lid with a hole for a gutter to drain into or a screened cover will keep out large bits of debris and animals.

Bottled Water

This is what a lot of preppers think of when they plan on storing water. Small plastic bottles of water are great when you are preparing for a brief power outage; but they are not an ideal long-term solution. You will end up with mountains of plastic bottles to contend with. Buying gallon jugs is a better option and more cost effective. While you will want several cases of bottled water for convenience, the bulk of your water storage should be in much more efficient containers.

Bottling Your Own

Do it, but do it right! If you just polished off a two-liter bottle of soda and trying to think of how you could use that bottle, wash it and fill it with water. Add four or five drops of bleach, write a date on it, and put it on your shelf. Rotate your bottled water about every six months to a year. Water your garden with the old. Wash, rinse, and repeat. Juice bottles, soda bottles, and even iced tea jugs all make excellent containers. Milk jugs do not! The flimsy plastic traps bacteria and breaks down: you'll either end up sick or with an enormous mess.

Stackable Water Jugs

These are super cool and very easy to use. They are usually square with a carrying handle and a spout. Fill with water and stack the jugs against the wall. Because they are square, you can stack them like blocks. These are an excellent option for those who have limited space. Stack them in the back of a closet or under a bed. Build a frame out of 2x4s to give your wall of water jugs a little

more support. Building the frame also prevents them from toppling in case of a mild earthquake or other accidental bumps and shakes.

Swimming Pools

If you are one of the lucky preppers with a backyard pool, you have a fantastic water source! It may not seem all that palatable to drink water from the pool, but you can treat it and use it to cook, clean, and drink. Water is water, and as long as there aren't any harmful chemicals in it, you can usually make it potable. Which brings us to the next option.

Ponds

Green water may not look all that appetizing, but a little filtering and boiling, and it's good as new. Don't discount a backyard pond as a water source.

Water Heater

Every home has a water heater! You can easily store fifty gallons of water without even trying. If the power goes off, shut off the main water supply to keep potentially unsafe or contaminated water from coming into the tank from the city water supply. You can use the valve at the bottom of the tank to extract the water as you need it. When storing water in your garage or directly on a cement floor, put down a barrier to keep the plastic off the concrete. This even goes for large barrels. Chemicals from the concrete will eventually leach into the plastic. This will either weaken the plastic or contaminate the water inside. Build a small platform: it's cheap insurance.

Chapter 15



Training, Training and More Training

Today, the knowledge of the world is literally at our fingertips. On your own, you can never know everything about all topics and keep up to date on the latest advancements. These rules apply to both prepping and major disaster survival. Single-handedly you can't master it all. Luckily, you don't have to. To conquer the preparedness world, you need to prioritize first. Establish the most important topics based on your skills and, more importantly, those areas where you lack skills. Armed with these, get training. Once you learned and mastered one aspect of prepping, move on to the next.

The great thing is that there is an entire industry dedicated to making better preppers. Most people are not aware of the many classes and training options available to preppers. We've already discussed concealed carry classes. Let's dig into training opportunities a bit more. First, consider the need for training. When you can't call the doctor or the police, it's all on you. You need as much knowledge and hands-on experience as possible. This gives you and your family every advantage. Secondly, by gaining experience you avoid the fatal pause associated with a new challenge. Exposure breeds familiarity; familiarity breeds action.

Research several of the following classes. Some are free while others require a modest fee. It's all about having a keen eye and paying attention to the prepping groups you are a part of. Check the local paper and community bulletin boards and take advantage of any classes offered.

- ***Gardening:*** Local gardening clubs, the extension office, and co-ops all offer gardening classes for free. You can never know too much about gardening, especially when your very life depends on the food you grow. Learn about what and when to plant, how to manage pests, how to evaluate plant health, and best maintenance practices. Extending the growing season should also be a part of the class.
- ***Trauma and first aid:*** First aid classes are generally paid classes. The more people that sign up, the lower the individual fee. If you are a member or have started a prepper group, call the Red Cross and ask to have a class in your area. They'll charge you a flat fee, which you divide between your group members. Once you have completed a basic and advanced course, seek out a trauma or "Stop the Bleed" class. These teach critical techniques for patient assessment, managing severe injuries, arterial bleeding, and tourniquet usage.
- ***Active shooter:*** Active shooter classes are becoming very popular. They are now found in rural areas and in most cities. Sheriff departments often hold active shooter classes, and most are free to attend. They teach what to do should

you find yourself in an active shooter situation. As hard as it is to accept, active shooter events will be even more likely after a major disaster. Know what to do and how to respond.

- **Self-defense:** Self-defense classes are not just for women. Learn how to defend yourself with your hands, non-lethal weapons, and improvised weapons. You can't always get to the gun. Nor should you always use a gun. They often offer these for free or for a very low cost. Invite an instructor to give a course to your entire prepper group.
- **Hunting:** A hunting and processing class would be very beneficial. Learning the local laws is a must practice while times are good. The tips and techniques will give you the edge when times are hard. If you don't know how to properly gut and process game, you need to learn now. There is a lot more to it than cutting and dumping the guts. Knowing how to handle the meat after the kill is essential to not wasting this precious resource.
- **Candles:** Learn how to make candles. This is an easy class, and you can find many online. Think of a post-disaster world without power. If you want to see, you need to know how to make candles from animal tallow and wax.
- **Soap:** Soap-making is another essential skill. You need to be clean but won't always have access to soap. Use your homemade soap to clean your body as well as your laundry.

- ***Leather:*** Leathercraft is a valuable skill for barter and trade. In a world that leaves behind bank tellers and computer geeks, those with practical skills will excel. Learn how to tan leather and how to make shoes, knife sheaths, and so on.
- ***Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):*** Get involved with a CERT team in your area. Take advantage of CERT's free training. Sessions include putting out fires, search and rescue, patient assessment, and triage. Community Emergency Response Teams are trained by FEMA to act as the first responders after a disaster. These local teams are trained to take action before the Government arrives. Some courses offered cost money, but most are completely free of charge. This is an excellent way to get hands-on training to prepare for a time when there will be no FEMA to save the day.
- ***Canning:*** Home preservation classes teach the ins and outs of safe home canning, jerky, and dehydration. These are often free! They are a crash course on filling your pantry with fruits, vegetables, and meats. They are cheaper and better than any store-bought can.
- ***Sewing:*** Sewing classes offered by the little old ladies at the community center will be extremely handy. Think about life after a disaster when there are no malls to buy new clothes. What to do when your old ones wear out? You'll learn how to darn socks, patch knees, make quilts, knit, make clothes

from raw cloth. These little life skills have gone by the wayside in today's technological world. After a collapse, they will be valuable beyond words.

- ***Foraging and wildcrafting:*** Take a class on the identification of wild plants used for food and medicine. Wildcrafting, and foraging for edible plants and fruits will be your new way of life. Instead of going to the grocery store or local farmer's market, you'll head off to the woods or the prairie for wild edibles. You need to know what you're looking for. Once again, check out the co-op for these classes or a university extension office.

These classes are available in most areas. Once you have completed your one-year stockpiling plan, continue your prepper path by putting a little money aside. Save up for a first aid course or an active shooter class. During the late summer, find a canning class. Knowledge is power; it can mean the difference between life and death in a post-disaster world.

Chapter 16



The Big Stink

While you are stockpiling supplies, don't forget about hygiene and sanitation. It's easy to have tunnel vision on food, water, and first aid supplies. Those are important things, but you also need to address long-term hygiene. Imagine living in your house without ever cleaning it, never washing dishes or taking care of the floors, laundry piled up and bedding never changed. It sits, collects dirt, grime, and eventually bacteria, pests, and other pathogens.

A lack of cleanliness isn't just gross, it's dangerous. Neglect leads to germs, bacteria, rodents, infections, and sickness. Lice and scabies are not something you want to deal with. Your family and your children cannot afford to get a cold or the flu when no medicine is available. Common viruses can become life-threatening illnesses when complications arise. Even a simple cut can get infected and threaten your life.

You must have a way to clean your house whether your house is a one-bedroom shack or a tent in the woods. Keep your living area as sanitary as possible. Historically, one of the biggest contributors to death, disease, and even the plague was the lack of proper

sanitation. Without running water and flushing toilets, things are going to get rough. It's time to discuss the stuff nobody wants to talk about—poop. Manage it properly or you will get sick and die. It's that simple. You can ensure your family's health by stocking up on a few things now that will keep your environment clean.

- ***Trash bags:*** The big heavy-duty contractor and lawn bags. Store as many cases as you can get on your shelf. Use them to contain garbage, soiled linens, and toilet paper. If you find yourself when you don't have a toilet, trash bags and a bucket will suffice as your toilet.
- ***Cleansers:*** Bleach is great, but as mentioned before, it loses strength. Stock both liquid (short term), and powdered (long term). Learn to make liquid from your pool shock supply.
- ***Soap:*** Lots and lots of soap for your body, hair, dishes, and laundry. Yes, you could get by with just bars of soap, but think about personal comfort. The little things do matter. Choose antibacterial soaps where possible.
- ***Toilet paper:*** TP is one of those things that is eventually going to run out. Be prepared to use something known as a family cloth. Second, educate yourself now about plants used to tidy things up.
- ***Feminine hygiene products:*** The ladies in the household will appreciate modern products after the collapse. Stock up

now, even if you don't think you'll need them. They will be valuable bartering items.

- ***Gloves:*** Stockpile gloves for cleanup duties around the house. If someone in your house gets sick, you don't want to spread the illness by leaving soiled linens, clothing, and other infected trash around. Pick it up and burn or bury it. Gloves are your first line of protection, so fill your shelves!
- ***Personal care items:*** Think about things like razors, brushes, nail clippers, and the other tools we now take for granted. Good personal hygiene is important; it makes you feel good and keeps you clean and sanitary.
- ***Deodorant:*** Deodorant may not be all that critical to the person who doesn't have it. But for those around him or her, it's mighty important. Again, it will not last forever, but using it on days when things are tense or hot will be appreciated.

Another option is essential oils. Become familiar with the oils used to clean and disinfect. You can even make your own cleaners with orange and lemon peels. It's something to keep in mind when you use the last squirt of your favorite cleaning product. You can't afford to get lazy and let the house go because it's the apocalypse. Stay clean and stay healthy.

Chapter 17



Getting Sneaky

Say you're living in a home where you don't have a garage or basement. You also don't have a room you can close off and dedicate to your storage. You can still stockpile ample food and gear even if you don't have a lot of space. Use the following options to hide your food. Tuck it away in the event of looting after a disaster. Be sneaky. Be safe.

We're going to cover various ways to hide gear and food in your home. Most require almost no additional space or preparation. Having several caches of food and supplies hidden in and around your home is prudent. A better idea is to hide caches along a pre-planned bugout route. Part of prepping is thinking about the likely scenarios to occur. Plan for the worst: having plans A, B, and C, isn't enough. You need to exhaust the entire alphabet. Prepping now will give you time to sit and stew on all the "what if's" and plan accordingly. Murphy's Law dictates something will always go wrong. Be prepared to deal with it as much as you can.

- ***Under the bed:*** It may seem cliché, and it is, but there is a way you can make it less obvious. Boxes (depending on how high your bed sits off the floor) with clothes as a top

layer and labeled as “winter clothes” or “fat clothes” are an excellent way to hide supplies in plain sight. Stash energy bars, bottles of water, or emergency gear underneath clothes/blankets/coats.

- ***Under the furniture:*** Use your bedroom dresser, couch, and most furniture as a stash. All it takes is a small gap under the furniture. Hide gear like magnesium fire starters, guns, or a supply of powdered drink mixes. Use the space to your advantage.
- ***Toilet:*** Under or behind the toilet tank is another great place. Make sure you use several Ziploc bags and duct tape to fasten your bags in place. Moisture and cold temps can cause the tape to become undone. Some brave souls put a gun in several waterproof bags and stash them inside the toilet tank.
- ***Linen closet:*** You can hide canned goods and other food behind the towels and sheets in your linen closet. Rarely do you push the usual stuff to the very back. Sacrificing a few inches on the shelf makes for storage space. Storing enough food or bottles of water to last you three days or more prepares you that much more. Keep your linens in front of the food and you will have an accessible, yet well-hidden stash of goods.
- ***Closet false floor:*** Create a false floor in one of several ways, depending on the type of closet you have. If you have

the kind with dark corners on either side, this is a great place to stash canned food and freeze-dried foods to create a false-wall or floor appearance. Place the cans in the back corner, put a flat piece of plywood over or in front of them. Pile shoes, blankets, and other closet detritus over the top of the cans to hide them.

- ***Closet clothes:*** Hang your food under a coat or dress in the closet. Use duct tape to string energy bars together like a bandoleer. Stash it in the sleeves or under the zipped-up jacket or coat. Make a row of energy bars, fire-starting materials, purification tablets, or anything else that is small and easily concealed by the garment.
- ***Wood furniture:*** If you have wood furniture, like end tables or coffee tables, the hollow spaces can be a great place to stash small items. Cut plywood to create a false floor or bottom.
- ***Five-gallon buckets:*** If you lack furniture, make your own with a five-gallon bucket, a piece of wood, and a tablecloth. Fill a bucket with a week's worth of supplies, all while sitting in plain sight. Dress it up with a vase and a cloth, and no one will be the wiser. You can make a coffee table with the same concept and two buckets.
- ***Concealed can holders:*** Some manufacturers sell can holders about two to three feet tall and only about four inches wide. These fit behind a couch and between a wall.

You can store hundreds of cans of food in this way. Put a long piece of wood over the back and it will be out of sight.

- ***Not your top dresser drawer:*** Don't hide your good stuff in the top drawer of your dresser; hide it in the bottom drawer. Creating a false bottom in a drawer is also a clever way to hide things like cash, coins, and other flat items. Pick up sheets of thin plywood at a local hardware store, cut the piece and line a drawer or two. This easy hiding place will go unnoticed during a typical toss.
- ***Build your own:*** Grab a hammer and drill and practice your building skills. No, you won't need to build a house—but you can create a secret space! You are simply installing shelves directly above your closet door. The shelves only need to be a few inches wide. They will be high enough to avoid attention. You can store quite a bit on those shelves.
- ***Under the stairs:*** If you have stairs in your home, there is a lot of space under that staircase. Use it for storage. If you have to, hire a contractor so that there is no evidence of a secret door. Putting a bookshelf in front of the hidden door is also helpful.
- ***False pictures:*** You can buy pictures that are actually wall safes. It is an old-fashioned trick, but effective. Make sure the picture matches the room. It can even be a family picture.

- **Ducting:** Ductwork is usually in an attic or hidden in the ceiling of a home. It's fairly inexpensive to buy a length of ducting (similar to that of a dryer vent but larger circumference). Install the fake ductwork in a ceiling, crawl space, or the basement. Hide lightweight gear inside.
- **PVC pipe:** PVC is a great way to hide a cache of goods in water or underground. You need to seal your goods in a plastic bag first. Use several layers for extra protection - four-inch pipe is best. Buy end caps and plastic-weld them on, making the pipes leak proof. Hide your PVC caches around your home or along your route to your BOL.
- **Mattress:** Your bed's box spring is nothing more than a hollow box and a great place to hide food and supplies. Use a sharp razor to cut the edge of the fabric stretched across the plywood and peel it back. Stuff your goods inside and use a little duct tape to put the fabric back in place. Throw your mattress on top, a comforter over that, and you've hidden everything from sight.
- **Planters:** If you don't have potted plants, real or fake, get some! You can stash something small like a handgun, knife, or money in the pot under the soil. Put your gear in a sealed bag, cover it with soil, and put it in your plant. If you have those nice big pots on your deck or even on your front porch, you can store a lot in those bad boys!

Get creative. You know your home best. You know where there is space in the wall that can be used as a cache. In the back yard, under the garden, in the flower bed, and the eaves. Utilize these places to keep your gear away from prying eyes. Even if you live in an apartment, you can find little nooks and crannies to stash goods. That gear may save your life one day.

Chapter 18



Playing Doctor

We have already talked about stocking medical supplies in case you get hurt. Performing hands-on unfamiliar tasks puts you at a higher risk of injury. Medical preparedness goes beyond physical injury. Viruses are inevitable. With a lack of sanitation, diseases will run rampant. Survival is hard work. You'll be dealing with bee stings, sunburns, sprained joints, and broken bones. Add to the mix skin infections and intestinal bugs as your body adjusts to its new diet.

Doctors are going to be in short supply if there are any available at all. Even with a doctor's help, the lack of a fully stocked pharmacy, things are going to be tough. Most modern doctors rely on prescription drugs and medicines to cure what ails you. Doctors will be lost without their pharmacological arsenal. Even minor surgeries may be off the table.

Prevention is always the best medicine; you need to do everything you can to stay healthy. Maintain a balanced diet and use vitamin supplements if possible. Being more cautious and paying attention to what you're doing will be a must. Doing your best to get plenty of sleep keeps your mind focused and aids your physical wellbeing.

Practice the skills now that you will rely on for survival. Familiarity is the best way to prevent accidents caused by inexperience. That said, stuff happens. So, let's talk about tools, supplies, and the knowledge you can add to your stockpile to give your body a helping hand when the doctor is out—for good.

Plants

There are a ton of plants and natural remedies out there for the taking- all around you no matter where you live. You will find plants, usually weeds that have medicinal uses. It would be impossible to list out every single medicinal plant. But suffice it to say, you can heal just about anything with plants and trees you find in your environment. If you know where to look. The key is learning what plants are in your environment. Buy a book, take a class, or do a bit of internet research. Some prepping groups as mentioned earlier may offer plant walks and classes. The best take you into the wild and show you what these plants look like in person. It is critical to know, without a doubt, that you are picking the right plant to treat an illness. There are a lot of imposters out there, and some of those imposters are poisonous. You want to heal, not hurt.

In most situations, you will use fresh leaves, stems, or roots to treat an illness. However, many remedies use dried parts to make teas, rinses, salves, and tinctures. Some are strictly used internally, while others are used externally. Examples include topical application for burns, rashes, and infections. Search the internet for resources where you can buy dried plants. Put them in your stockpile for later

use. Seriously, do some research and learn the art of herbal medicine. We can't cover everything here. What follows is a list of the top plants you can stock now to help treat stomach problems, infections, pain, swelling, and a few other maladies.

- ***Mullein:*** Fresh mullein leaves make excellent toilet paper. Use the dried flowers to make a tea for treating respiratory ailments. The flowers soaked in olive oil are an effective ear pain reliever.
- ***Dandelion:*** Yep, the flowers and leaves make a great salad. A tea made from dried dandelion helps with stomach ailments.
- ***Plantain:*** Plantain is an absolute must-have around the house. A poultice from the dried leaves helps bug bites and bee stings. The poultice also quickens the healing of scrapes and minor cuts.
- ***Yarrow:*** This is an excellent plant for aiding clotting and stopping bleeding.
- ***Lavender:*** Fresh or dried, lavender helps the treatment of skin injuries and sunburns.
- ***Dried willow:*** Willow bark has long been considered a pain reliever. The key chemicals in willow bark were the inspiration for aspirin.

- ***Dried Licorice Root:*** Licorice root tea makes ulcers, stomach cramps, and general stomach problems better.
- ***Comfrey:*** Comfrey, especially when mixed with plantain, is an excellent treatment for burns, tension issues, and even knitting broken bones.

This is a small sample of the plants found growing in the wild or can be ordered from any natural food store. They are cheap! Incredibly cheap! Buy them now! Start using them now to get familiar with their uses. Discover the medicine of years gone by. You may never buy another bottle of cough syrup again.

Spices

The spices that make your food taste great have hidden medicinal uses. Every prepper should have an herb garden hanging off their window or in the backyard. Herbs are prolific and easy to grow all year round. They can help flavor a bland pot of beans and manage health problems. Grow the following herbs or purchase them in bulk.

- ***Basil:*** great for bug bites and skin infections
- ***Turmeric:*** used widely for general inflammation and intestinal conditions caused by inflammation
- ***Cayenne pepper:*** excellent topical pain reliever, gargled it will clear up a throat infection

- ***Cloves:*** natural anti-fungal and antibacterial, excellent for a toothache
- ***Sage:*** used for acne or to help heal bleeding gums
- ***Thyme:*** used as a tea, it helps respiratory and digestive issues
- ***Cilantro:*** added to meals is a natural way of lowering blood sugar
- ***Ginger:*** the go-to treatment for nausea
- ***Oregano:*** made into an oil, oregano is an excellent antibacterial

A few herbs require a deeper look. Either they are especially effective, or they have been used throughout time as medicinal herbs. Let's look at these special herbs now.

Garlic

Garlic deserves a chapter of its own because it's that amazing. Garlic is naturally antibacterial and antiviral. When battling an infection, your body sometimes needs a little help: garlic is the answer. If you are not a big fan of eating raw garlic or drinking garlic tea, buy garlic capsules in bulk. Seriously, this amazing little bulb is an absolute must-have on your shelves. It boosts your immune system and helps ward off viruses targeting you while in a weakened state.

Elderberry

Elderberry is another super fruit that deserves its own chapter. It is an amazing immune system booster and is especially effective at combating the flu. It's effective. In fact, the over-the-counter medication, Sambucol, is based on elderberry extract. Buy dried elderberries in bulk and make your own syrup or tincture. Elderberry syrup is a must have. At the first sign of a cold, start taking homemade syrup and give your body the boost it needs. You might still get the cold, but it will be far milder and shorter. Rest and fluids will you get back in shape even quicker.

Raw Honey

Truly, if you could only have one natural medicine in your pantry, it should be gallons of raw honey. Raw honey is not the stuff you pick up at the grocery store and squeeze out of a bear-shaped bottle. Your neighborhood beekeeper sells raw honey in buckets and jars. Found locally, it is thicker and has much more flavor than the store-bought imposter. Applied directly to a wound, raw honey aids healing. Yes, it is a little sticky, but the stuff is amazing. It is a natural antibacterial. It helps heal a wound by fighting infection and promoting the perfect healing environment. Honey added to tea, that is, taken internally, is an infection fighter. A spoonful of honey does wonders for a sore throat. Buy honey. Buy it now. Don't go into an apocalypse without it.

Fish and Pet Meds

Seasoned preppers will tell you to head to the pet store and stock up on pet and fish meds. Why? Because for some crazy reason, here in

the United States, you can buy penicillin, amoxicillin, and other antibiotics over the counter at the pet store. They're for your fish and livestock. Humans, however, need a prescription from a doctor. Are these antibiotics the same? Yes! Yes, they are.

Let's start here: in today's world, you shouldn't skip a visit to the doctor. So, the next time you have a toothache, don't head to the pet store for some antibiotics. After a disaster, however, desperate times call for desperate measures. Penicillin is penicillin whether for humans or animals; the difference is the regulatory standards. Fish antibiotics don't go through the FDA. That said, if you choose the right pet antibiotics they are dosed, shaped, and marked identically to the ones your doctor prescribes. Some are made at the same factories. Look at the ingredients and make sure they have no other additives or fillers than the prescribed ones. With a little research, you can find exact copies of those described in the Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR).

It is up to you to decide what to do, but it doesn't hurt to have some on hand. Just in case. If you aren't comfortable taking it or giving them to your kid, that's fine. Use them as barter to someone else willing to save a life with them. Do your research and draw your own conclusions, but discount nothing.

Chapter 19



Baby It's Cold Outside!

In almost any part of the country or the world, you'll encounter cold weather. Many preppers prefer to live in mountainous regions, and for good reason. Mountains mean cold. Cold means snow. Snow means fewer people. And those that stay are made of stronger stuff. In most mountainous areas, expect long winters- six months of winter, followed by a cool spring and two months of summer. Not much room for comfort. That means you have a fifty-fifty shot of finding yourself in a cold-weather situation. Even if the apocalypse strikes during the middle of the summer, winter is right around the corner. The goal is to survive for months and years while the world returns to normal.

Clothing

You need to be ready for the cold. Chores still need to be done. You can't hideout in your house or shelter for the entire winter. You're not a bear—you don't get to hibernate. Get ready for many hours outside chopping wood, hauling water, and hunting for food. Clothing is your first layer of protection against the elements. Improper clothing can kill you. Invest in the right clothes for your climate. Quality winter wear is worth every penny.

- ***Shoes and boots:*** Footwear is critical to survival. When there are no cars, the only transportation will be your feet; you need to take care of them. Get a good pair of waterproof boots. Thermal liners are also important. These keep your feet extra warm and dry. If you buy a new pair of boots claiming to be waterproof, don't take the seller's word for it. Do yourself a favor and apply a couple of layers of waterproofing oil just to make sure. Sturdy boots that lace up give better support and tighten down better; however, taking off lace-up boots after stomping around in the snow for hours is not fun.
- ***Socks:*** Socks are another vital part of cold-weather wear. Avoid cotton socks as wool socks are much better than cotton. They wick away moisture and keep your feet dry. You're probably sensing a trend here. Your feet need to stay dry at all costs. Wet feet are no joke and can lead to blisters and trench foot. Wet also means cold. In extreme weather, a failure of footwear can lead to frostbite. Frostbite is serious and can lead to lost toes, infection, or worse. Have socks, socks, and more socks. Have enough socks such that you can put on a clean, dry pair the moment you get back inside.
- ***Gloves:*** Gloves are another important safety measure. Standard work gloves only protect and do not keep you warm. Fingers are extremely susceptible to frostbite. A quality pair of lined gloves allowing you to move your fingers while staying warm is important. Especially when

you are outside working. An option that many mountain folks use is wearing two pairs - a thin, tight pair of gloves as the first layer and the second is a pair of leather work or lined gloves. The two in tandem will keep your hands warm.

- ***Balacklava:*** A full-face mask, also known as a balaclava, is another line of defense. If you've seen anyone who has spent time in the cold, you'll notice their red and cold nose and ears. These are the first parts of the face to freeze. Cover your face with a balaclava to keep your head, cheeks, and ears warm.
- ***Hats:*** Knit hats are a key to keeping the body temperature at 98.6 degrees. Most of your body heat escapes through your head. Therefore, trap that body heat with a hat. Hats with earflaps are a bonus. As discussed, ears are prone to frostbite!
- ***Coats:*** Coats are a must but are a bulky pain in the butt, especially when you need to move a lot. That said, you need one. Ideally, you want one long enough to cover your waist. You don't want your waistline bare when moving around, exposing your skin to the elements. A waterproof coat is best. As soon as the coat gets wet, it loses its insulation capabilities. Soon you will chill then become hypothermic.
- ***Thermal underwear:*** Long johns are a part of a layered system. This is the layer that traps most of your body heat against your body. Some "high tech" materials are form-

fitting, moisture-wicking, and highly insulating. You'll be warm and won't know you're wearing an extra layer.

- ***Insulated pants:*** Thermal and waterproof pants keep your legs warm and dry. Depending on the depth of snow in your area, you might need a full snowsuit. Walking around in the snow makes your legs wet then heavy, even if it's only a couple feet deep. The proper outerwear keeps you dry, warm, and the snow off your legs.
- ***Scarves:*** Scarves may seem like a silly accessory for a survival situation; they are far more important than a fashion item. They are primarily useful in keeping your neck and ears warm. You want to cover as much skin as possible in the extreme cold. Scarves fill in the gaps between your jacket collar and your hat. Even a thin scarf, such as a Shemagh, provides a warming layer of protection.
- ***Earmuffs:*** Earmuffs are an excellent option for keeping your ears extra warm. Beanie hats can ride up, exposing your ears while earmuffs stay put. Putting earmuffs over a knit cap may look silly, but in life or death, okay look silly, but stay warm.

Keeping Warm without Electricity

If you are unprepared when winter hits without a fireplace or wood stove, other options can be used in a pinch. Many people don't realize that four walls alone won't keep you warm. You can develop hypothermia in a fifty-degree house; it may not seem as

dangerous. You might not be as uncomfortable as if you were outside in the wind and snow, but it's just as risky. If you don't, or can't, have a wood stove, you're not completely out of luck. There are still several options. The tradeoff is that these are not permanent solutions. They may get you through a cold day or two and keep you alive until you can get to a place where wood or other heat sources are available.

A word of warning—NEVER bring your generator inside the house. Carbon monoxide poisoning kills people every winter. Don't burn a propane stove inside a tightly sealed room. Do yourself a favor and plan ahead, buy a carbon monoxide detector and put it in your house. They run on batteries and could save your life.

- ***Stay small:*** Close every door in the house and stay in the smallest room. If you're alone, make yourself comfortable in a closet if needed. Your body heat warms a small space much faster than a full-sized room. If you have several people, a small bedroom is good. Windowless is even better. An interior room, one without any exterior walls, is the best option.
- ***Seal large openings:*** Cover the doors and windows with plastic creating an insulating “dead air” space. Garbage bags stapled or taped over the windows work very well. Heavy blankets, if you have enough to spare, are an option.
- ***Tents:*** If you only have large rooms or your house is “open-concept”, pitch a tent or make a blanket fort. You want

yourself in the smallest space possible to take advantage of your body heat.

- ***Drafts:*** Roll towels and place them under the door to block drafts. This is important even if you're huddled in a bedroom. Keep the house as draft-free as possible. This keeps all rooms, and especially your chosen shelter room warmer.
- ***Hand warmers:*** Use hand warmers in your pockets to generate heat. You can also heat small water bottles or stones. Each has thermal-mass that will keep them warm for a long time.
- ***Extra layers:*** Wear several layers of loose clothing. Use your hat, mittens, and keep your feet warm with several pairs of socks. Each layer creates dead air that aids in insulating you.
- ***Candles:*** Burn candles. Each little flame generates some heat. A few candles may be enough to reduce the chill. Be cautious! If you are in a blanket tent, put the candle just outside the tent to avoid setting your shelter on fire.
- ***Exercise:*** Jump up and down to get your blood flowing. This helps warm you up and the room at the same time.
- ***Warm drinks:*** If you can, heat a pot of water, coffee, or tea. Use your outside barbecue, camp stove, or rocket stove to

heat a pot. Sit back and drink the warm liquid. Heating your body from the inside is an effective method for keeping warm.

- **Blankets:** Layer lots of blankets on top of you. You can beat the cold by huddling under the blankets, face and all. Again, each layer forms a small insulating space and traps heat.
- **Partner Up:** Snuggling with a partner or several partners is especially warming. Layer up the blankets, put on your warm wool socks, and cuddle.
- **Pets:** Don't forget Fido. Cuddling up with your dog helps you stay very warm while bonding.

If you are cold and begin to feel drowsy, get your butt up and move! You don't want to fall asleep and not wake up. Dance, do a few jumping jacks or jog in place to keep your body temperature up. Drowsiness and exhaustion are some of the first signs of hypothermia. If you or any of your group are needlessly tired—Get Moving!

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is the medical condition associated with a drop in your core body temperature. You have three degrees from normal before requiring medical attention. Your core body temperature averages 98.6 degrees. When it drops to 95-degrees, you are severely hypothermic. If your core body temperature drops below 90, you must warm up or die.

Hypothermia is the biggest risk in a cold-weather environment. The survival law of threes states that you have about three hours of exposure before your body temperature drops. You need shelter and warmth. Hypothermia isn't only a risk when there are three feet of snow on the ground, nor is it only a risk in single-digit temperatures. Cool spring weather, especially at night, is just as risky. If you are wet, the water robs you of heat faster than the air. This significantly raises the risk of developing hypothermia and is why staying dry is critical. Hypothermia kills. Fortunately, or unfortunately, it is a silent killer and sufferers become confused or fall asleep and die. Therefore, you must recognize the symptoms and be prepared to take immediate action the minute you realize your body is shutting down.

Symptoms of hypothermia include:

- Feeling deep cold
- Uncontrolled shivering—shivering is your body's way of generating heat
- Slowed, shallow breathing
- Slurred speech
- Slow, weak pulse
- Drowsiness
- Lack of energy
- Numbness, no longer shivering
- Clumsy, tripping, and stumbling

- Loss of coordination, fingers can't tie or move to turn on a flashlight
- Confusion—some people will take their clothes off or make equally bad decisions
- Loss of consciousness

A person with hypothermia may not immediately recognize the signs. Once they get confused, they are at greater risk of succumbing to the cold. They no longer have the ability to recognize or react to their situation. If you stop shivering and no longer feel cold, but your situation hasn't changed, you are in the danger zone. If you or someone you are with is hypothermic, they need immediate attention. Take these actions.

- ***Handle with care:*** An extremely cold person will be very sensitive. The slightest touch or scratch is amplified.
- ***Warm them up:*** Get the person out of the weather and somewhere warm. Start a fire if you are in the open and make a shelter. The shelter can be something as basic as sitting underneath tree limbs.
- ***Get them dry:*** If they are wet, remove any wet clothing. There is no time for modesty. If there is dry clothing available, put it on; if not wrap them up in a blanket.
- ***Add insulation:*** If you are in a situation where you can improvise insulation use it. Put wadded up newspapers,

cardboard, leaves, or anything similar around the person to trap their body heat.

- ***Skin contact:*** Skin-to-skin contact is a great way to warm someone up, assuming the other person isn't cold. This can help both people stay warm.
- ***Warm drinks:*** If available, give the afflicted warm liquids, like soup, tea, or warm water. Each is a great way to heat the body from the inside out. Avoid caffeinated beverages if possible. Technically, alcoholic beverages are also not the best option.
- ***Hand warmers:*** Place hand warmers against the sides of the neck, wrists, groin, and under the armpits. Warm the areas with blood flow!

Remember that a person isn't dead until they are warm and dead. A hypothermic person's body has shut down and is waiting to warm up. Don't stop until they are warm and you have tried everything.

Frostbite

Frostbite goes hand in hand with hypothermia. Let's cover a little more about what it is and how it happens. Frostbite is when the tissue just under the skin freezes. The most common areas for frostbite are:

- Fingers
- Toes

- Cheeks
- Nose
- Ears
- Chin

If you notice, each of these body parts has little or no insulating fat. Fat provides insulation and protection from the cold. Frostbite rarely occurs unless the temperature is below 28 degrees. However, prolonged exposure and wetness can lead to mild frostbite. Wind chill is another factor to be considered. Wind chill is the perceived temperature on bare skin when considering air movement. A wind chill factor of -16 degrees can cause frostbite in as little as 30 minutes - this is a 10 MPH breeze with an air temperature of 0 Fahrenheit. Therefore, it is critical you must cover as much skin as possible including your lips and eyes.

There are three stages of frostbite.

- ***Stage One:*** Easy to get and commonly called frostnip. Your skin appears red and feels cold. As the stage worsens, numbness and tingling sets in. It's similar too when a limb "falls asleep." A lack of circulation causes this feeling. We've all experienced this a time or ten. Once your skin warms, a million pinpricks erupt. Frostnip isn't dangerous and doesn't cause long-term damage when stopped early.
- ***Stage Two:*** Superficial frostbite happens as damage sets into the skin. The skin takes on a pale white color as ice

crystals form within the tissues. It may feel warm, which is a danger sign. When warmed, the area may appear bruised. As it thaws, the damaged skin will hurt and burn. Swelling may appear depending on the extent of the injury. In a day or two, look for blisters and treat accordingly. The blisters are due to damaged blood vessels and the extensive healing required by the damage encountered.

- ***Stage Three:*** This is the danger zone. Severe frostbite occurs when the full thickness of the skin freezes solid. It is hard to the touch and white. This stage affects several layers of tissue and the lack of circulation leads to numbness and inability to feel heat or cold. If the frostbite is in your fingers or feet, you can no longer move them. Your feet or legs might feel heavy and you will feel clumsy. Rewarming the area slowly is your best option. It will be painful and the damage will be severe and permanent. Once thawed, the skin quickly blisters, blackens, and dies. If not treated quickly, infection will set in.

Frostbite has long-term consequences. If you have developed stage two or three, you can expect to deal with the following for the rest of your life:

- Numbness
- Sensitivity to cold
- Higher risk of developing frostbite

- Arthritis if the frostbite was in a joint (fingers or toes)
- Doctors may amputate the dead tissue to stop an infection from spreading

Do yourself a favor and be ready for the cold weather, so you never have to worry about any of these long-term problems.

Home Preparation

Let's assume you plan on bugging in. That is, you will stay home during the apocalypse. You must prepare to ride out a long winter. You won't have the luxury of city plows, electricity to run the furnace, hot water on demand, and the other comforts of the modern world. Therefore, you need to prepare to live like the pioneers of the eighteen hundreds. Even if you are planning a bugout retreat, times will be rough. Stock any location you stay at through the winter with the following items.

- ***Snow shovels:*** A snow shovel is not a typical shovel. Don't waste your money on flimsy plastic shovels; you need a sturdy metal shovel or a durable plastic shovel. Curved shovels are great for shoveling long paths.
- ***Wood stove:*** We're assuming you have a wood stove. If you are in an area where it gets cold, you need heat. Without electricity or natural gas, you need a wood stove. Make sure you know how to run and clean it. Improper operation or maintenance can fill a house with carbon monoxide or smoke.

- ***Crosscut saw:*** Without a chainsaw, you will need to process wood the old-fashioned way. Either a one person or a two-person crosscut saw will make preparing wood quick and easy. Make sure you know how to sharpen it. There is no quicker way to waste energy than a dull saw.
- ***Ax:*** You won't have a chainsaw or ample gas in many situations. That means you need a solid ax. Not all axes are created equal. A heavy ax is going to be necessary to split logs. A lighter ax can chop softwood, like pine. You need to know how to use the ax to split logs and chop wood. It is a learned skill.
- ***Hatchet:*** A hatchet is perfect for cutting small pieces of kindling and cutting off small branches from larger trees. Using an ax to chop kindling is risky while a hatchet is safer and easier to swing.
- ***Sledgehammer and wedge:*** A wedge is a heavy piece of steel used with a sledgehammer to split large logs. When a gas-powered wood splitter isn't an option, a sledgehammer and wedge are your next best options. Trees felled that are nearly two-feet in diameter won't be easily split. Again, this is a learned skill.
- ***Roof rake:*** A roof rake is essential for keeping the roof of your home in good shape. Snow is heavy; you need to pull the snow off when it doesn't slide on its own. Get a decent one. Don't waste your time with flimsy ones that snap

easily. This is a tool you will need to use several times per winter.

- ***Ice melt:*** Rock salt and ice melt make walkways safer to navigate. You can't afford a slip and fall. A broken leg is no way to manage the apocalypse.
- ***Kitty litter:*** Kitty litter will suffice if you can't or don't like ice melt. More compatible with pets, litter is safer. Kitty litter, even the cheap stuff sold in big bags, is an excellent alternative to ice melt. Both will keep you from slipping on your butt on the ice.
- ***Blankets:*** You need to keep plenty of blankets on hand. If you can't get the woodstove hot enough, you will need blankets to stay warm. Use blankets to block off doorway drafts and to make a large room smaller.
- ***Plastic sheeting:*** Plastic sheeting is great for blocking drafts around windows. Have a good supply of plastic (garbage bags will do). Add in duct tape to seal up the sheeting around windows and help keep your home warm.
- ***Space heater:*** A propane or kerosene space heater specifically designed for indoor use is an excellent tool to have on hand. You will also need to have a supply of fuel. Neither kerosene nor propane expires. If you don't have wood heat or another heat source, these little heaters can save your life.

- ***Ice scraper:*** An ice scraper will also be helpful, assuming you are going to have the luxury of a running vehicle.

Extra Stuff

There are a lot of little things that can make your life a little easier during a cold winter. Cold weather survival is one of the toughest environments to cope with. Protect yourself. Ensure your health and safety by spending a few minutes stocking up on several inexpensive items. Each will go a long way in an apocalypse situation.

- ***Chapstick:*** Chapstick isn't just to make your lips shiny. You need a layer of protection from the cold and sun. Chapped lips are problematic and bad cases make it difficult to drink or eat. With extreme chafing, chapped lips can lead to an infection.
- ***Sunglasses:*** Sunglasses may seem like a luxury, but they protect your eyes and prevent snow blindness. The sun reflecting off the snow can cause sunburn on your eyes. Snowboard/ski goggles are an excellent choice. The amber tint gives you a clear view while protecting your eyes.
- ***Hand warmers:*** Use hand warmers in multiple ways. Stuffing them in your shirt can help keep your body warm. In your pockets, they provide a nice warm place to put your hands between manual tasks.

- ***Snowshoes:*** Snowshoes are extremely useful for traveling in snow. Sometimes, it is next to impossible to walk through deep snow, and to do so is incredibly taxing. Struggling through snow burns calories and works up a sweat. Sweat makes you damp, which makes you cold. When possible, don't overexert yourself.
- ***Ice cleats:*** Ice cleats or crampons are another tool you can add to your stockpile to make your life easier. Ice storms are common during the winter. You don't want to slip and fall on the ice. Attach crampons to your boots for better traction on icy surfaces. They won't do you a lot of good in the snow, but if you've shoveled a path, it will get icy.
- ***Lotion:*** Yes, it sounds cheesy, but cold, dry air will zap your skin of its moisture, leading to chafing and broken skin. Broken skin leaves you susceptible to infection. Your skin is your body's suit of armor; it deserves extra care and attention. A good moisturizing lotion applied after a day in the cold can restore your skin and make you feel better. Dry, itchy skin is no joke.

Chapter 20



Green Thumbs Matter

You know you're going to have to grow your own food. Eventually your dry and canned goods will run out. At the very least, you will eventually crave a fresh salad or a vine ripe tomato. Unfortunately, we aren't all blessed with green thumbs. When your garden is your sole source of food, you have to dig deep and figure out where that green thumb is hiding. You need to make it work. Let's start with a few things you need to know about survival gardens. Not all seeds are the same, and they don't drop out of the fruit, begging for planting. We talked earlier about heirloom seeds and stocking them. Let's take a deeper look at seeds and the pitfalls of survival gardening.

Heirloom Seeds

Heirlooms are seeds in their most natural state, naturally born and bred. Some define an heirloom seed as one that comes from a plant grown before World War II. This isn't exactly true. Heirloom seeds result from a natural process. They are open-pollinated and have a "true" lineage. They haven't been crossed with anything out of the family line.

We are used to fruits and vegetables with exquisite taste, flavor, and resistant to most common diseases. Ultimately, modern fruits and vegetables are hardier than those of the past. They produce larger and sweeter fruit. They are nature perfected because some smart scientists figured out how to cross-pollinate vegetables. They then improved vegetables like corn and tomatoes and created hybrids that are better all-around—with one exception. In doing Mother Nature one better, we have larger harvests, bigger fruits, brighter colors, and disease resistance. The side effect is that by combining two species, the offspring are increasingly mutated. From generation to generation, they lose the ability to reproduce.

This is all splendid news for today's world when we can buy new seeds every year; but after a major disaster, a hybrid plant is useless. Producers create hybrid seeds every year. They redo the cross-breeding for each pack of seeds. The problem is that a hybrid plant does not produce seeds that grow the exact same plant because they are not open-pollinated. That super-sweet corn you love this season will not be available the following year. You can save the kernels, but it does not guarantee they will produce or even germinate. The problem is, the kernels won't give you the corn you hoped for. You might get a beautiful plant with no fruit, you may get smaller fruit, you may even get corn with no appealing taste at all. Saving hybrid seeds is a little like playing Russian Roulette with your food.

Heirloom seeds produce true, generation after generation. As a prepper, to save seeds year after year you need heirlooms. The

second advantage of this process is adaptation. Instead of rushing to create a franken-fruit for your area, you naturally allow the plant to adapt. As you harvest seeds, you pick the traits you want to enforce. Save the earliest fruit, the largest, or the sweetest. You can even save the ones that resisted the local diseases. This is natural selection at work. Allow those plants that produce the best for your needs to continue to the next generation. In no time you will have a plot adapted not only to your specific environment but to your vision of the perfect garden.

Harvesting/Drying Seeds

Now that your garden is full of heirloom plants, you'll want to harvest seeds from a handful of the fruits/veggies. This is the whole reason for investing in heirloom plants and seeds—you don't have to buy seeds every year. You must be fully self-sustainable; that means growing your own food. Obviously, the luxury of hybrids is great and lessens the worry of disease and crop loss. Still, you need to learn. Start using heirlooms now so you become familiar with their delicate nature. On the bright side of things, many people agree heirloom fruits and vegetables are far superior in taste to manufactured hybrids.

Wet Seed Saving

Wet seeds are from vegetables/fruits eaten before the seeds are ripe. Plants like cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, and eggplant have the best flavor when eaten early. However, the seeds are not fully developed. You need to leave one or two in the garden to ripen to allow the seeds to mature completely. The seeds are ready for

harvest when the skin wrinkles and shrivels. Wet harvesting seeds is easy, follow these steps to create your own seed bank.

1. Select a few of the best veggies—those that look like the picture on the package
 - a. Pick out the best of the best
 - b. The fruits/vegetable with a uniform color, no disease - and big
 - c. Harvest fruits only from healthy plants
2. Cut the fruit open and remove the fleshy seeds
3. Put the seeds into a clean jar and cover with water
4. Place a cloth over the jar
5. Set the jar somewhere warm
6. Stir the water in the jar once a day
 - a. You'll probably see a layer of fungus/slime on the water and seeds—this is okay
 - b. This bloom or “mother” gives your seeds a little boost and making them more disease resistant for future crops
7. Let the jar sit from one to three days
 - a. Tomatoes require the longest at three days

- b. Squash only need about a day
8. Pour out the old water and refill with fresh warm water
 - a. Cover and swirl the seeds around
9. Set the jar on your counter, wait, and watch
 - a. Seeds that sink are viable and should be saved
 - b. Seeds that float should be discarded
10. Use your fingers or a spoon to pull out all the floating seeds and discard
11. Give the viable seeds a good rinse and set on a paper towel to dry

Dry Seed Saving

Dry seeds are vegetables and fruits like peas, beans, peppers. Vegetables eaten when the fruit is ready to harvest. They are very easy to collect.

1. Pluck as many pods as you want, yielding enough seeds for next year's planting: only pick the best-looking fruit from the healthiest plants
2. Open the pods and use your thumb to gently remove the seeds
3. Place the seeds in a bowl of warm water
4. Discard seeds that float—they are not viable

5. Rinse the seeds that sank and place on a paper towel to dry

Flowering Plant Seed Saving

Some plants must be harvested after we would normally pick them. This includes spinach, lettuce, radishes, and carrots. For these vegetables, allow them to mature, flower, and develop seeds. You will need to leave a few in the garden and give them time to complete their life cycle. Harvesting these seeds involves the following steps:

1. After the plant has bolted and flowered, cut the stem leaving the seed head untouched with as much stem preserved as possible
2. Use string to tie the ends of several stems together
3. Hang upside down in a cool, dry place
4. Place a plate or bowl under the bouquet of stems
5. Allow the seed heads to dry for two to three weeks: they should be brittle to the touch when ready
6. Gently shake the bundle over a plate to catch the falling seeds
7. Store the dried seeds

Drying Seeds

Drying seeds is very easy. The required tools can be as simple as a paper plate or a paper towel. Spread your seeds out with a half-inch between each. Label each plate/towel with the seed type, avoiding confusion. This is especially helpful if you are drying a large number of different seeds. Place the seeds in a dry place out of direct sunlight. If the plate or towel gets damp, replace it. It takes one to two weeks for your seeds to dry completely. You can wait a few extra days or a week if you are unsure. Storing damp seeds will mold. One moldy seed may ruin all the seeds in that container. If in doubt let them dry a little longer. Check larger seeds, like pumpkin, squash, and cucumber for dryness by cutting one open. There should be no pulp in the center - it should be a clean cut. The seed needs to be hard and not soft.

Storing seeds

Seeds stored correctly are viable for five to eight years, possibly longer. This simple fact allows you to store multiple years per harvest. This further extends your food buffer. Using sealed bags is one way to preserve seeds. Jars are another. Bags are a little easier to work with as you don't have to worry about the container breaking. Label all containers with the seed name and the date stored. The best place to store seeds is in the back of the refrigerator. Cool and dark. Organize your collection of bags into separate containers.

Ideally, store your seeds between 32 and 41 degrees. If you are in a situation with no electricity, storing seeds in a cool pantry is an

option. Toss in an oxygen absorber and a desiccant pack into each bag/jar to suck up any moisture and retard spoilage. You can also add a dusting of diatomaceous earth to each bag to kill any insects that get in. Some people even use powdered milk to keep seeds dry.

Chapter 21



Bug Out Locations

We've talked extensively about bugging out. Now, we need to talk about where to go when the going gets tough because getting out of dodge makes good survival sense. Sticking around and waiting is dangerous and will get you killed. You need to have a place lined up before the disaster strikes. Ideally, this place is a piece of land you own already. It doesn't have to be big. It doesn't even have to be yours. It just has to be remote.

In a perfect world, you have the luxury of buying a home in a rural location. If you can't financially swing it, don't get too worried. You can work out deals with members of your prepper group. Crash at their place in exchange for help. This is another important reason you need a group. Similarly, identify rental properties and form relationships with the owners. Be in a position to make a last-minute rental request when things turn south.

Characteristics of a Good Bugout Location

Most people assume that the mountains are the place to be. In many ways, this is true. Mountainous areas have an endless supply of food (assuming you can hunt), water, and good security. However, you have to make sure you don't become part of the food chain. Get

the required wilderness skills now! Be ready for the harsh living conditions of the mountains. Prairies and plains are often good retreat spots as well. Unfortunately, they don't have the luxury of tucking your house into a hidden valley. You need to ensure the retreat is as far from civilization and neighbors as possible.

With that said, let's talk about other features you should look for:

- **Water:** You need water. Is there a water source nearby? Having a convenient source will be key to your survival. You don't want your BOL on a river or in a flood zone. You want to be within walking distance or create a system that brings the water to your door.
- **Natural disasters:** What kind of natural disasters are common in the area? Think about surviving a hurricane or severe snowstorm. Does your BOL offer any natural shelter?
- **Accessibility:** Is the location accessible or easily found by a passing stranger? You don't want a nice driveway that invites every Tom, Dick, and Harry to stop in. You want it secluded and hidden away from the world as much as possible.
- **Defenses:** Can you defend your location? If you are in the open, you will need to defend your location with fencing, large boulders, or natural barriers. This applies to mountain

retreats as well. Don't disregard downed trees and thorn bushes.

- ***Food resources:*** Is there a source of food? Hunting and fishing will be your new trip to the grocery store. It would be nice if you didn't have to walk thirty miles to find reliable game. You also have to think about how you will get your catch back to your house. Dragging a five-hundred-pound bear home will be impossible.
- ***Growing food:*** Can you grow food? To be sustainable, you need to produce your own fruits and veggies. What kind of soil are you dealing with? Is there enough sunlight? Is the weather conducive to a garden? These are things you can fix before you bugout. You just need to know what you're dealing with now.
- ***Livestock:*** Is there room for livestock? Ideally, you will raise animals to save on hunting trips. Just like the grocery store, you won't be able to run to the feed store. Your animals are going to need to be free range. They are self-sufficient, just like you.
- ***Familiarity:*** Are you familiar with the location? Don't plan on bugging out to the mountains if you've never been there before. You must know the terrain and the local wildlife. What threats are in the area? What plants are safe to eat, and which do you avoid? You must know how to survive in the

area you choose. Study up and spend some time in the area before you have to call it home.

How Far Will You Go?

Your BOL is where you head when everything falls apart. If you're lucky, you may get some warning. Use this time to drive where you need to be. Unfortunately, it is more likely your bugout happens hours or days following a disaster. Closed roads and incapacitated cars. There may be no way to get fuel for your car. Because of this, some experts advise a BOL no further than one tank of gas away. That's an option, but do you always have a full tank of gas?

Consider a BOL within walking distance. That doesn't mean a couple of miles, but it does mean within a reasonable distance from the city. In most metropolitan areas you can find security thirty miles outside the city. These locations are away from most, but not all, of the people. Don't plan on living in LA and bugging out to northern Montana. Be realistic. If you must, extend your search radius to 50 to 100 miles. You better be in darn good shape to do it on foot. Better yet, have two or three temporary locations along the way to your final destination, each a day or two from the last. Get away from the danger, rest, then move to a safer location.

Assume the worst case: you will be on foot. Consider the time of year, the type of apocalypse, and the current state of the area. You don't want to take a week to get to safety. Ideally, you will carry a BOB with three days' worth of food and gear. The faster you can get to your BOL, the better it will be. You must also realize that

you won't be the only person scouting out locations. If you are looking to head into national forests or other public lands, so are others. You could find yourself in a turf war. Unfortunately, you can't ask around to see if anyone has already staked your favorite spot. If you don't own the land, you need a backup location in mind. Backups for your backups! That's the key to survival.

Another note on BOLs: in the event of a serious disruption (e.g. long-term power outage), the masses will push you out of the city. The longer a collapse drags on, the more people from the cities will push outwards. They will move and eat. Just like the locust, they will extend their range week by week. Over several months, they will end up in your front yard. The farther they push, the further you need to go. Be prepared to move on.

Getting There

We've discussed a place you can walk to. Now let's go into the details of that walk. To be safe, you need at least three pre-planned routes to your BOL. This covers closed roads and hostile areas. You need alternatives if the original route proves dangerous. Your route should also be stealthy. You don't want to head down the highway with your pack on and hundreds of people watching you go. They'll follow you. They'll accost you. They'll take your stuff. Remember that eventually, you need to sleep. During this time, you'll be vulnerable. Your route should off-road, through trees, or along remote back roads. Walk your route several times and get familiar with the terrain.

If you have young children, think about how you are going to get them there. Especially if a car isn't an option, so have a wagon or a cart on standby. Off-road strollers or backpack baby carriers are the keys to your family's safe escape. Plan ahead for every eventuality. Preppers often plan to make their bugout escape in the middle of the night to avoid detection. This is a great idea. It also cements the concept of learning the ins and outs of your routes. This allows safe navigation without a flashlight.

Bug Out Vehicle (BOV)

A lot of preppers have no interest in getting out of the city on foot. There are plenty of reasons why you avoid walking out of the city. Walking takes longer and is physically exhausting. Finally, it is extremely dangerous. Don't forget that you'll only be able to carry a fraction of your stockpile. Compare this to your options if you had a vehicle.

A BOV is a force multiplier in a disaster, selected and outfitted for off-road travel. Designed and equipped to get you out of danger and to safety, your BOV is a critical piece of gear. The size is based on your needs. It must carry your family and all your critical survival goods. Let's look at some of the specifics of this critical vehicle. If you are prepping with the idea that an EMP starts the apocalypse, choose your vehicle wisely. It is a known fact that vehicles manufactured after the 1970s will likely not run after an EMP. Unless it is parked in a steel container, the EMP will likely destroy its sensitive electronics. If this is your scenario, think old. You need something built before the mid-sixties.

There are several things you need to look for in a BOV:

- ***Four-wheel drive:*** Four-wheel-drive is best. You don't want a Toyota Camry that sits low to the ground. A low-clearance car will bottom out on the first ditch you run into. You need to be prepared to go off-road. Blocked roadways will be a real problem. Your BOV must get through mud, hills, rocky terrain, and a thousand risks you haven't thought of.
- ***Durable:*** I cannot stress durability enough. You need a BOV that gets through the tough spots without getting smashed to smithereens. Outfitting your BOV with a brush guard is an excellent idea.
- ***Tires:*** Good traction tires are a requirement. They can be expensive, especially if you are using a large truck as your BOV. The investment is worth it. Your BOV is going to be what gets you out of harm's way. You need a rig that can handle rain, snow, and off-road terrain.
- ***Diesel:*** Diesel vehicles tend to run a lot longer. If you are buying an old truck, you can run it for hundreds of thousands of miles and it will stay in good shape. This is compared to gas engines that are spent after a few hundred thousand miles. Diesel engines are also more fuel-efficient.
- ***Biofuel:*** Biofuel is the ideal option if you can make it happen. You want to prepare for a time when you can't get to the gas pump. Having a way to make your own fuel is the

best option. This ensures that you'll keep driving as long as the apocalypse lasts.

- ***Solar:*** Solar power or electric vehicles are great as well. But you can't be bugging out in a Prius. If you're mechanical, you can certainly create your unique design and have a vehicle powered by the sun. They are out there: research is your friend.
- ***Camouflage:*** Consider the color of the vehicle. A boring brown or gray is a much better option than a flashy red. Your BOV should be inconspicuous. If you are hunkering down overnight to catch some sleep, you need to pull into a stand of trees and blend in. You don't want anything that draws attention. In fact, ugly is better. The uglier a vehicle looks, the less enticing it will be to those looking to steal a vehicle in today's world.
- ***Ample room:*** Passenger room and cargo room are both important. You need to take the entire family in one trip. Along with your family, you need to carry as many supplies as possible. Putting stuff on the roof in a cargo rack is an option, but it may draw unwanted attention. Think about hiding your supplies under a tarp behind the backseat.

There are plenty of preppers who make BOVs a priority. Learn from them. Figure out what works best for you. Update their lessons based on where you live and where you need to go. Include the size of your family and the amount of gear you have. You can

buy old rigs for cheap. Invest in the engine and tires and you are set.

Bug Out Vehicle Alternatives

Sometimes, less is more. If you can't swing a military truck for a BOV, that's okay. There are a few other options you can consider.

- **Bikes:** Yep, two wheels are better than none. You'll cover more ground on a bike than you would on foot. You better be in good shape and ready to go off-road. You are going to be exposed on a bike and need to stay off the beaten path to avoid others seeing you. A bike is an inexpensive option and allows you to carry a little extra gear.
- **Motorcycles:** Two wheels with an engine will get you farther and faster than pedaling. Plus, you get the bonus of being able to carry a passenger and/or a good supply of gear. Again, like a bike, being exposed puts you at greater risk of being accosted by those who want what you have. A dirt bike or motorcycle that isn't too finicky about going off-road is ideal.
- **Boat:** Depending on where you live, a boat may be a better BOV for you. If you have an island retreat, a boat is what you need. Make sure you can row the boat just in case the engine stalls, you run out of gas, or an EMP makes it inoperable. You could have a large sailboat sitting at a dock as well. Some people use boats as their bugout retreat and

BOV. Sailing the open seas is one way to avoid running into other people, assuming that pirates are not an issue.

- ***Horse and/or carriage:*** Go old school; you need never worry about engine troubles with horses. A few sturdy horses and a carriage are another way to move. However, carriages and wagons will limit your travel to roads and developed trails. If you have a BOL and don't need too many supplies, saddle up the horses and head for safety.

Chapter 22



Can You Hear Me Now?

Can you even remember a world without cell phones, telephones, or the internet? We have become too used to instant communication. No matter how much we prepare for a major disaster, we'll be lost without our ability to pick up the phone and call our loved ones. You won't be able to use your phone to send a text or even dial 911 in a true disaster. The postal service won't be up and running either. Communication will grind to a halt. Communication is vital for passing information, safety, and sanity. You must be able to get status updates to your loved ones. You have a few options here.

Two-Way Radios

Two-way radios, walkie-talkies, or “blister pack radios” are an excellent way to keep in touch with your family. If you're out on a scavenging mission or want to check in on your nearby parents, radios are your tool. Not all two-ways are created equal. Invest in quality equipment that reaches several miles while maintaining a usable signal. Uniden produces waterproof radios that boast a fifty-mile radius. The key to reception-radius is the environment. The effective range depends on where you are. You will get dramatically different results from mountain peak to a valley versus

cities. Will the signals be blocked or are they powerful enough to get past the obstructions? Spend time reading up on the best radio for your budget. More importantly, get out and use them. Advertising is one thing; your reality may prove out differently. Keep in mind that you will need a solar panel with an adaptor to charge the batteries in your handhelds.

CB Radios

CB radios scream the 70s; they were popular in the “old days.” Perception aside, they will still be useful if you want to talk to people within about ten miles. Some, like base stations, aren’t exactly portable; but what they lack in portability, they make up in range. For mobility, there are a variety of portable CBs. Midland, Cobra, and Motorola all make quality radios. Today, using a CB is perfectly legal. There are rules regarding language (PG only please), and maximum transmission power, so abide by them. After a collapse, there are few tips to make these radios a little more powerful and to force the use of alternate frequencies. Hit the internet for these tips and tricks.

HAM Radios

We talked about this earlier. A HAM radio is the prepper gold-standard for communication. Higher wattage and more frequencies make HAM radios much better communication tools. With training and experience, you can easily communicate with people around your local area. With the right antenna, you can reliably communicate around the world. There is a lot to learn in amateur radio, enough to fill a lifetime. Likewise, you will need a license to

operate today. It will not matter much after a collapse, but to know the ins and outs of the radio, you need to practice now. This is not a technology that you can just pick up and go.

Satellite Phones

You see them in the movies all the time. They are great for military guys and gals who want to make a call home from the middle of the desert. But are they worth the cost? A satellite phone is expensive. They are great if you are out on a yacht or high in the mountains and need to call someone with no other option. This is great, assuming satellites are still up and cell phones are still working. A satellite phone won't do much good if a CME destroys the satellites. Remember, you need someone to call too. If the disaster shuts down the power grid and cell towers, there won't be anyone to talk to. However, you could call someone else with a satellite phone.

Solar/Crank Radios

Not all communication is talking. Some of the best information and intelligence comes from listening. Solar or hand-crank radios are a must-have for your stockpile. You may not get your local FM pop-music stations, but long-distance AM stations and emergency broadcast networks will come through. These radios don't require electricity or batteries. Keep one on hand for any disaster.

Short Wave Radios

Short-wave radios, especially with Single Side Band (SSB) are a great intelligence tool. The SSB functionality allows you to listen in

on long-range HAM communications. This also gives you the benefit of picking up digital HAM broadcasts. Digital is designed to get the message through when conditions are poor. You will need a working computer and the knowledge to receive and decode these signals.

Secret Messages

If you don't have two-way radios or other communication methods, you can resort to old spy tricks to get your message across. Imagine you are at work when an EMP hits. The kids are at school and your spouse is working on the other side of town. You've already established a rendezvous point and all have your BOBs. You are delayed and get to the designated meeting place much later than expected. Do you stay and wait in a dangerous scenario, head home, or head for your BOL? Did the rest of your family already check-in and move on? Should you go looking for them?

These are all questions you'll have when you can't pick up the phone and call. Alleviate some of your worries and get to safety with a secret messaging system. Your bugout plan must have backups to your backups. This plan should define not only the rendezvous points but also the timing of when to stay and when to go. Every minute you aren't moving away from a disaster puts your life at risk. You want to travel with your family. When that puts lives at risk, your plan must include the option for separate travel and the means to communicate while moving independently.

Some ideas:

- ***Pebbles:*** Have each person carry a small bag of colored pebbles. When they reach a rendezvous point, put the rock in a predetermined spot. This spot should be out of the way as to not draw attention or be disturbed.
- ***Hidden notes:*** Leave a handwritten note in a secret place. It can be in a bottle next to a trash can or set out in some other hidden in plain sight. Look up the hobby “geocaching” for ideas. Especially micro-caches.
- ***Markings:*** A simple mark on a signpost, rock, or wall is another way to let someone know you’ve been there and are safe.
- ***Trusted friends:*** If your meeting place is at your home, a friend’s home, or business, leave word with someone you trust.

Chapter 23



When the Second Cousin Once Removed Shows Up

Once you have set up a retreat for your family or a mutual assistance group, you need to consider one more survival factor—visitors. Most people are good, decent humans. As a result, you may struggle to tell them you can't help, especially when you know that without your help they'll likely die. That isn't a good feeling to carry around. Consider your best friends, the one who have always laughed at you for prepping. When disaster strikes, they'll be at your front door begging for help. It could be your mother-in-law in town visiting when the apocalypse rains down. Or, you could find a child wandering alone and you're afraid no one will take care of it. These things are going to happen. It isn't a matter of if, but when. You will encounter people sorely unprepared and begging for help.

Now, some preppers tell you to ignore visitors: they should have prepped themselves. It's your life or the newcomers. They might be right. But again, human decency makes it extremely difficult to ignore the helpless, especially if that person is someone you know well. In a disaster, we forget little things. Grudges, disagreements, and petty differences all melt away during crises. In a long-term

disaster, every extra mouth to feed may be the difference between six and three months of food. Walking away from someone hurt or dying will tax you emotionally. If you are not prepared to deal with the guilt, you'll be in a world of hurt.

Survival depends on being in a good mental place. Guilt, shame, and regret all eat you alive if you let them. Save yourself this drama by stocking up more than you need. Add some for charity. Assume you will pick up hangers-on after the apocalypse. By prepping with this mindset, you save yourself the internal struggle and make better decisions. Base your decision on the person's position in your life. With a little extra, you won't have to worry about your family starving if you take on another mouth to feed. Your biggest worry then becomes trust in that individual. Focus on the person as an asset to your group. Looking at it through that lens, it becomes easier to decide on the fly. Remember that it will most likely be an instantaneous decision. You won't have the luxury of sleeping on it.

If you have a family of four, do yourself a favor and stock for a family of six or eight. This gives you a cushion for those inevitable moments. It isn't like you can have too much food or other supplies. If no one joins your group, then you have several extra months of food and gear. As an exercise, identify who the most likely suspects will be. You might have a family member that lives in the same town but thinks you are ridiculous for prepping. Count on them showing up. Anyone who knows you are a prepper with a basement full of food will knock on your door. That next-door neighbor who borrowed your lawnmower and never returned isn't a

guy you want to be riding out the apocalypse with. He should not know you're a prepper. This is one reason preppers don't mention their "hobby."

Be careful who you talk to. If your kids tell their friends, their friends will tell their parents. You thought the on-the-spot invitations were hard to shut down! Try telling a family you can't help them, then shut the door on their cold, hungry faces.

Chapter 24



Don't Forget Fido

Most families have pets. Some pets are useful, and others are companions and a source of comfort. When you are prepping, you need to decide how important your family pets are. Will you be dragging the house cat along with you? Let's be honest, cats won't be an immense help in a post-apocalyptic world. They might catch a few mice, but really, what more can they offer? Dogs, on the other hand, can be trained to be valuable assets in your family's survival plan. If you don't have a dog, think about getting one, or more, after reading this chapter.

- **Security:** Dogs are excellent security devices. Dogs have senses - far greater than any human. They can provide early warnings when someone is coming close. They can hear better than you. They can smell better than you. Even the smallest yappy dog can alert you that something is out of the ordinary. They can also be very scary, especially the medium to large breeds. A growl and a bark might be enough to scare off a would-be looter.
- **Hunting:** Properly trained, dogs are excellent hunting companions. There are some obvious breeds for this

category, and you can use almost any dog trained early for hunting.

- ***Companionship:*** Dogs can be your best buddy if you are a lone prepper. To be fair, a cat could also fill this role. Having something to talk to and take care of gives you a reason to live. It gets you up in the morning and gives you purpose.
- ***Heat source:*** In the extreme cold, a dog or three can keep you warm. Most dogs are more than happy to snuggle with their humans. They also produce an incredible amount of body heat. It's a win-win situation.
- ***Predator protection:*** Dogs can protect you from predators. While walking through the woods, there are plenty of animals that would love to eat you for lunch. A dog will deter them with little more effort than barking.
- ***Pack animals:*** Bigger dogs can carry supplies with properly outfitted bags. You won't want to weigh them down or make the bags so bulky the dog can't move easily. But they can carry a few things that will lighten your load.

Picking the Right Dog

Your friendly four-pound yorkie will not be a great asset to your survival. You can certainly plan on taking your tiny dogs with you, as they are all excellent alarm systems. If you are thinking about a dog for actual survival, then you need to think bigger, smarter, and

more driven to please. Some people are breed-snob and prejudiced. You might be too, which is fine. Some breeds are awesome, but don't ignore the pound puppies. You can find some pretty good mutts that are smart, loyal, and brave. The real key is finding a dog, or several dogs, that you can train. Don't waste your time trying to use a dog in the apocalypse if it isn't trained and isn't obedient. It will only become a liability. Untrained, Fido could get you killed.

Here are a few desirable traits of the perfect survival companion.

- ***Vocal:*** A dog must know when to bark and when to shut up. A barking dog will lead bad guys right to you. Train your dog to bark only when there is something alarming. They also need to stop barking on command.
- ***Hunting:*** A dog that knows how to track and retrieve is an excellent resource when hunting big and small game.
- ***Alert and aware:*** Dogs that can smell and alert you to a predator or a game animal will make your life a lot easier.
- ***Obedient:*** You want a dog that comes when it's called. You can't be traipsing through a forest in the middle of the night because a dog took off after a squirrel.
- ***Healthy:*** Some dogs are prone to problems. You need a dog that isn't prone to hip dysplasia, bloat, and other physical issues. Health issues will make it difficult for a dog to keep up with you.

- ***Environmentally appropriate:*** If you live in an area prone to cold weather, consider getting a dog with a full coat—one bred for cool temperatures. Those poor short-hair dogs are going to struggle when it’s cold outside.
- ***Good digestive tract:*** A dog that can eat just about anything without pooping its brains out or gassing you out of a shelter is a tremendous bonus. Some dogs are prone to allergies and cannot tolerate grains or poultry. In today’s world, that’s no big deal. You buy special dog food. In an apocalypse, dogs will eat people-food and/or meat. You won’t have the opportunity to be selective.
- ***Calm under fire:*** Give your dog plenty of exposure to the sound of gunfire. Some dogs panic at loud noises. They will run scared. If you have a dog that can’t handle the noise, he will need some training.

Prepping for Fido

Assuming you’ve decided to keep your dog or several dogs with you in a survival situation, you’ll need to do a little extra prepping to take care of their needs. Water is going to be a must. Fortunately, dogs aren’t as prone to stomach problems when drinking impure water. That doesn’t mean you want them to drink swamp water all the time.

A few other things that might be necessary for your dog:

- ***Worming meds:*** Your dogs are going to be eating a lot of garbage, literally and figuratively. They are going to be far more likely to end up with worms which can make them sick. Buy a stock of liquid or pill form and keep them on hand.
- ***BluKote:*** Your dog is bound to get scrapes and cuts in his new wild environment. Bandages are a struggle with dogs. BluKote is an antibacterial spray that covers minor wounds.
- ***Ear wash:*** If your dog is prone to ear mites, store a few bottles of ear wash or similar solutions. Your dog needs to hear you and not spend all day scratching.
- ***Flea collars and treatments:*** Get flea collars or drops. You're going to be spending a lot of time in close quarters with your dogs. Depending on your BOL, you might encounter fleas and ticks. Protect your dog and ultimately yourself by having them shielded from these obnoxious pests.
- ***First aid books:*** A dog's first aid guide will come in handy after that first tangle with a porcupine or a skunk. Accidents are inevitable. You must do what you can to keep your survival partner in good shape and that means knowing how to take care of them.
- ***Collar and leash:*** A collar and leash may seem a little silly, but there will be times you need the dog to stick by you.

Even the best-trained dogs get spooked and run off. A leash provides a little more control.

- ***Muzzle:*** A muzzle might be necessary if your dog gets injured and you need to provide first aid. Some dogs, no matter how much they love you will snarl or bite when injured. If you have to wrap an injured leg, you need to protect yourself from a dog bite.
- ***Dog shoes:*** Seriously, shoes for your dog! Some dogs have sensitive paws and don't tolerate ice, snow, or extreme heat. You wouldn't walk barefoot on a paved road or sharp ice. Don't expect your dog to either.

Chapter 25



Securing Your Home on the Downlow

If you plan on staying in your home after a disaster, you need to prepare and make it safe. If you have a BOL, focus your efforts there too. However, don't forget you will most likely be stuck in your home for at least a few days until it is safe to move. You need to have security measures in place in all locations to keep your family safe from harm. Use the following ideas before and after a disaster to hide your house in plain sight, so to speak. You can't instantly create a twelve-foot wall around the property. There are some things you can do to deter would-be intruders. Use one or use them all. It's up to you based on what you can afford and what you can get away within your neighborhood.

- **Fences:** Fences are always an excellent way to protect your home from random intruders. If you are thinking about a fence, think chain link. Tall wood fences are good but are breached fairly easily. Depending on where you live, you may have height restrictions. After the fall, string razor wire across the top like you see around prisons. It will keep quite a few people out. Yes, it's available on Amazon.

- ***Boulders:*** Boulders used in your landscaping can be attractive and functional. They provide natural barriers, keeping cars from driving up to your front door or through a small fence.
- ***Thorn bushes:*** Barberry, blackberries, or roses are excellent additions to the landscaping around your home. Plant these uninviting bushes under windows, between boulders, and the outside of fences to deter people.
- ***Plywood:*** Sheets of plywood are a bonus to have on standby. You can board up your windows if you plan on hunkering in place for a while. Leave an exit and cut small peepholes. Use screws during installation as they make it far more difficult to pry off this protective layer.
- ***Improved windows:*** Hurricane windows, if you can afford them, are akin to bulletproof glass. This means you can be inside your home and feel confident no one is coming through the ground-floor window with a smash and grab attempt.
- ***Window bars:*** Bars for the windows are a very secure option. You can have a welder make ready-to-install versions for your windows. If you aren't comfortable with bars on your windows full time, have them make a temporary version. Have a drill and needed screws ready to mount the bars.

- **Improved doors:** Steel front and back doors are fairly inexpensive and can go a long way to keeping the bad guys out. They aren't easily smashed with an ax. Make sure you reinforce the hinges, deadbolts, and use inside locking bars.
- **Signage:** Large "Beware of Dog" signs posted around the property will help. Add a few security company signs as well. Whether you have the actual animal or security system to back it up or not.
- **Alarms:** Invest in several battery-operated window and door alarms. They give advanced warning of intruders.
- **Motion lights:** Light up the night in the event of dark times. Criminals avoid dogs, alarms, and light. Motion lights turn on without assistance. Get several that are solar powered so they will operate if the grid goes down.

After disaster strikes, you want to give the impression your home is unwelcoming. This is going to be painful for those who value a front lawn. Remember, your life is more important than grass. If life returns to normal, you can fix it all back up.

- **Signs:** Put up a quarantine sign or biohazard tape on the front door. You want your home to look like a death trap. If you are trying to survive a pandemic, this is a great way to keep looters away.

- ***Poop:*** Yup, poop. Leave piles of dog poop in the yard. This tells people there is a large beast or two inside the home or yard.
- ***Garbage:*** Trash the front yard. Toss old furniture around the front and maybe some old cereal boxes and empty cans of food. You want people to think looters have already struck your home and there's nothing left.
- ***No trespassing:*** Display a few "No Trespassing" signs or signs indicating you will shoot trespassers. This might be enough to keep some of the most basic looters away.
- ***Traps:*** Set up booby traps on the inside of your fence line, front gate, and back gate, and under the windows. This can be a 2x4 with nails driven through or broken glass. The intruder's cries double as an alarm system.
- ***Improvised alarms:*** Set up an alarm system with fishing line and bells or empty pop cans. A person who pushes open the gate or crosses a certain point in your yard triggers the alarm and gives you time to grab your weapon.
- ***Blood and guts:*** Leave blood in the driveway. This can be ketchup or red food dye, but make it obvious. If you hunt, leave a gut pile in your yard. You want people to think the last person who tried to get in your house was seriously injured or otherwise.

While hunkered down in your home, don't make your presence obvious. Keep your windows and doors locked. Only move around outside when it is dark and you are sure no one is watching. If you use candles or flashlights, cover the windows with heavy curtains to block the light. If people suspect you are in your home surviving and thriving, they will come for what is keeping you alive.

Chapter 26



Financial Freedom

In order to do all this prepping stuff, you must have the resources to afford it. This may be a bit of a stretch for some. Many people live paycheck to paycheck. The idea of buying groceries and toilet paper that won't be used for years isn't feasible. Don't drive yourself into debt prepping. Pay cash as much as you can. Save up for the big-ticket items. Avoid running up your credit card balance, paying for things you think you need, only to shove them into the back of a closet.

This is the time to think about how you can be a little more financially secure. In fact, financial security fends off some of the most common disasters that plague families daily. Job loss, accidents, illnesses, and unexpected death can thrust a family into a personal disaster. The threat of losing one's house is real. If you have been prepping and have a stockpile of food and other supplies and your house goes into foreclosure, you are not coming out ahead.

In a financial collapse or other disasters, you must be able to keep your property without a bank coming for it. The goal should be to own everything outright whenever you can. This is especially true

for a BOL. You can't waste time and money getting a second home ready only to have it taken away. Make sure you can afford the payments. Financial freedom gives you peace of mind in today's world. It also sets you up for success should disaster strike. There are a few things you can do to get yourself into a more financially stable position.

- ***Make lunch:*** Skip the lunches out. Pack your lunch in the morning before you head to work.
- ***Eat In:*** Skip dinners on the go. Spend a few hours on your day off putting meals together and placing them in the freezer. These make for a quick dinner when you get home.
- ***Crock pots:*** Use a slow cooker for hot meals the moment you walk through the door at night.
- ***Skip the coffee:*** Avoid coffee shops. Invest in a machine that gives you the coffee you love for a fraction of the price.
- ***Budget:*** Make a monthly budget and stick to it. Spend some time looking at what you spend your money on. Most people don't realize how much money they waste on little things: soda and chips at the gas station, drinks at the bar, or too many nights at the movies. All these little things add up quickly.

- **Online shopping:** Take advantage of online grocery shopping. This can eliminate impulse buys when you are actually in the store.
- **Commuting:** Consider carpooling, riding a bike, or walking to work to save on gas.
- **Energy savings:** Make a dent in your electric bill by utilizing energy saving practices. Every dollar you save counts.
- **Credit:** Limit your credit usage. Interest rates add to the balance. Make it a goal to buy with cash. For credit cards, pay above the minimum amount and cut through the balance faster.
- **Live with less:** Train yourself to live with less. If you are prepping to survive the world after a doomsday scenario, you may as well do it now. Do you need six TVs in the house? Do you need all the extra everything?
- **Garage sales:** Have a big garage sale to profit off the items you don't need to survive. Imagine you are moving into a tiny house. What are the absolute basics you need to survive—discounting your prepping stockpile? Sell the rest and put the money towards paying down debt or buying something you need for your prepping supplies.

- ***Take classes:*** Instead of buying another TV, put that money towards the courses we discussed. Use your time in this world wisely by investing in yourself. Not the things that will only please you for a few weeks or months.
- ***Prepping jobs:*** Put your prepping training to work. If you've mastered knitting, weaving, or other skills, sell your stuff for some extra cash.
- ***Hunting:*** Hunt now. You need to know how to do it. You may as well get out there and do some hunting and fishing. The meat you harvest is going to help save on grocery expenses, which in turn saves on your budget.
- ***Investing:*** Consider investing without paying an expensive financial advisor. This is tricky for preppers to embrace for good reason. Your investment will be worth nothing if the world as we know it ends tomorrow. However, there is a reasonable and acceptable risk in any kind of investing. If you find you are in a financial position to do it, try it.
- ***Coupons:*** Take advantage of coupon deals and free shipping online options. You can download most coupons right to your phone, meaning you'll never have to grab the scissors again.
- ***Extra subscriptions:*** Cancel subscriptions to magazines and newspapers. In this digital age, you don't need it. Get on Facebook or Google to read up on what's happening. Stick

to blogs that are there for free. Don't forget "YouTube University."

- **Used:** Buy used when you can. For some, this is hard. You can get great deals buying used furniture, appliances, and even secondhand designer clothing - all for a fraction of the cost of new.

Saving money here and there isn't hard. A lot of us get a little lazy, preferring quick meals or gas at the high-priced station all in the name of convenience. Change your way of thinking. Are you dressing to impress or to be functional? Take a step back and really take a long hard look at your finances. You've got to make changes if you cannot support yourself for three months without a job.

For those who have the time, a part-time job is a good idea. Do something on the weekends that only takes a couple of hours but adds cash to the family coffers. Don't limit yourself. Think outside the box. Having the deed to your home or your BOL in your hand is far more valuable than that fancy coffee you love so much. Five bucks a day on a coffee, five days a week. It all adds up quickly. You do the math.

Conclusion



Getting prepared to survive a major disaster is serious business. It can be mentally taxing in the beginning, but don't give up. This guide has walked you through many questions you might have had. It also gets you through the more stressful aspects of prepping. The peace of mind you will have after the first few months will be worth any initial stress. If the worst happens and you find yourself staring at a world-changing disaster, you can quickly move onto the next stage, which is bugging out.

Once prepared, you won't have the emotional burden and stress concerning how you're going to feed your family or protect them from others. Your bases are covered. You can focus on the most immediate concerns. Prepping is the best insurance policy you can ever buy, and it is all tailored to you.

Disasters: nobody wants to go through life obsessing about them; but it is a fact of life. We know it can happen. Everyone is likely to experience a life-changing event at some point. In fact, a survey showed that nine out of ten adult Americans have experienced a serious disaster in their life, one that disrupted their daily lives in some way.

Beyond the physical disruption of a disaster, the resulting stress and strain is often worse than the actual event. Learning how to cope, how to manage, and how to build a support system now can make any disaster more manageable. We can't deny the fact that our world is

evolving. Mother Nature is dishing up some of the wildest storms and earthquakes recorded in history. It isn't a matter of if, but when. When will the next disaster strike? Don't live in fear. Be prepared. Your Government leaders are telling you to do just that! They know things are dicey. They know there is a very good chance that citizens will be on their own for days or longer.

Learn! Have Fun! Meet new people! Discover a world of folks who like the challenge of working the absolute minimum, all while preparing for something big. Don't be so serious and dwell only on the doom and gloom side of things. Take those basket weaving classes at the nearest college and enjoy learning a valuable skill. It's all about mindset! Remember, if you take courses and classes as part of your prepping fun, it won't feel like a chore.

Even in preparing for the end of the world, focus on the bright spots. There's a very good chance that you're going to find yourself with a new hobby and new friends. For many, prepping brings families closer together. Enjoy every day and live life as if tomorrow wasn't a guarantee. Embrace your loved ones and remind yourself why you are working so hard to give them the best chance of survival.

Stay safe my friends!

Stay prepared!

Glossary of Prepper Terms and Acronyms



If you've been doing your homework and researching like a good prepper, you may have wondered if blog and forum authors write in a foreign tongue. Like any group, preppers and survivalists create and use their own language. It seems like there is always a new term or acronym coming down the pipeline.

These terms are not in alphabetical order, but more in the order of most commonly used.

Terms

Situational Awareness: The process of being aware of what is happening around you at all times. It's the skill of looking around and not staring down at your phone. Don't be the person ignoring the guy walking down the road with an AR tucked under his jacket. Being situationally aware is walking into a grocery store, gymnasium, or a movie theater and knowing where the exits are. It's having a strategy in your head if there is an emergency.

Junk Silver: Junk silver refers to nickels, dimes, and quarters minted before 1964. The USA produced them with 90% silver and have a value many times greater than their face value.

Bugging Out: Bugging out is moving from a dangerous situation to one of safety. It's your escape plan. It's your emergency evacuation plan.

Bugging In: The opposite of bugging out. Bugging in is sheltering in place.

Genny: This is a term fondly given to generators. If someone is talking about a "genny", they are referring to an alternate source of power.

YouTube University: We all learn in different ways. For those that are visually oriented, YouTube is your personal university. There's enough there to give anyone an advanced degree in prepping.

Acronyms

BOB (Bug Out Bag): A prepper favorite. BOBs are also called 72-hour bags, Get Home Bags (GHB), or I'm Never Coming Home (INCH) bags. A BOB is crucial and should be in your stockpile.

BOL (Bug Out Location): This is where you will go when things get crazy. A BOL is a location that you have prepared to get you through serious disasters and is located safely away from danger.

BOV (Bug Out Vehicle): The vehicle that gets you from your house to your BOL. It can be a boat, a bike, or a big truck.

TEOTWAWKI (The End Of The World As We Know It): A common term for the worse of the worse. That sums it up.

SHTF (Stuff Hits the Fan): This is one of the most common terms in the blogosphere. It describes when the initial explosion, disaster, or crisis hits.

CCW (*Concealed Carry Weapon*): You first line of lethal defense. This doesn't have to be a gun and can be any weapon.

ALICE Pack: A military term and stands for All-purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment. Some people refer to their BOB as an ALICE or use an ALICE for supply runs.

MRE (*Meals Ready to Eat*): Another term borrowed from the military for pre-packaged meals. MREs need no water or heating and can be served as is.

OPSEC (*Operational SECURITY*): This refers to Operational Security. OPSEC is not revealing too much information about what you have or where you are going.

FIFO (*First In, First Out*): A method for organizing any perishable materials. Often used when discussing canned goods.

EMP (*ElectroMagnetic Pulse*): A burst of non-lethal electromagnetic energy designed to destroy sensitive electronics. EMP is something we all need to prepare for.

NBC (*Nuclear Biological Chemical*): A general term describing weapons of mass destruction. Usually the realm of state-sponsored attacks. This doesn't mean that smaller groups can't use these methods as well.

Resources



The Preparedness Roadmap Website:

<http://forrestgarvin.com>

Book companion PDF download:

<https://forrestgarvin.com/resources>

Authors Website:

<http://forrestgarvin.com>

Preppers Consulting:

<https://preppersconsulting.com>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Forrest Garvin is a former US Air Force NCO who served with the 317 MAC and JSOC SOLLII out of Pope Air Force Base. After leaving the military, Garvin worked in the technology field for the Strategic Technology Group for NationsBank/Bank of America and then went on to create several technology startups. Garvin is a survival instructor, NRA instructor, general license HAM operator, Krav Maga apprentice instructor, speaker, educator, radio/podcast host, and author. Garvin has been a prepper since Y2K. Garvin also owns the Carolina Survival & Preparedness Academy in Charlotte, NC. His survival academy offers courses in self-defense, homesteading, firearms, family preparedness and survival skills. In addition, he consults with preppers and survival groups around the USA. Garvin was the founder of the Carolina Preppers Network, which now is PrepperNet. PrepperNet has over 54,500 members nationwide.

info@forrestgarvin.com



PrepperNet is the place to meet, network & find other preppers.

If you are not in a group... You will die.

For more resources and tools join us at
PrepperNet Website: <https://preppernet.com>

Signup for our Newsletter



The Prepping Academy Radio Show!

Prepping Academy Radio Show is a live broadcast where we discuss all things prepping, survival and self-reliance. Our Goal at The Prepping Academy Radio Show is to expand your thinking & motivate you to take action – because it's time that we get prepared.

Host: Forrest, Kyle &Tenderfoot

Website: <https://preppingacademy.com>

God Bless!