



Do It Like Dax

Building a Bug-Out Bag

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ALSO BY THE AUTHOR

'The Dax Hunter Files'

A League of Warriors

Red Talon

The Destinies of Men

Bastion Avenues

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WHO IS DAX?

Dax Hunter is a man of character and integrity. He would never enter a crowded room to steal the show or make a statement: he's there to meet interesting people. He's confident but not brassy; he's responsive but not gullible.

He's represented his country at the Olympics, flown helicopter gunships into battle, even served as a soldier of fortune. While he might not admit it, Dax has also averted one or two international crises. Old-school types would probably refer to him as a man's man. If a fire suddenly broke out in the kitchen, Dax Hunter would be the one running toward the flames.

What would you do?

Many of us know of people like Dax Hunter—a few of us might even have had the good fortune of meeting someone like him. I know I have.

I published 'A League of Warriors' in 2017. Blending fact with fiction, the story centers around the exploits of the hero, Dax Hunter. In reality, he is a composite character blessed with many of the traits and qualities of a handful of my closest friends.

The sequel, 'Red Talon,' was released in 2018 and the third title in the series—'The Destinies of Men' —followed in 2022. Bastion Avenues' —the fourth instalment in the popular Dax Hunter Files—was released in 2023.

Just when the odds are stacked against him, the everresourceful Hunter somehow finds a way to extricate himself from danger.

Are you ready, willing and able to Do It Like Dax?

Our ever-changing world is fraught with turmoil and uncertainty, and the threats we face are growing daily. Every book in the *Do It Like Dax* series will equip the reader with practical tips and solutions to a host of challenging, real-life situations.

Read the books, be prepared ... and Do It Like Dax.

Gary Albyn Visalia, California May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Would've, could've, should've.

Many of you will recall R.E.M's 1987 hit, *It's The End Of The World As We Know It,*' but how many of you remember the last part of the song title?

It's actually 'And I Feel Fine.'

So what's my point?

As clichéd as it sounds, there can be no doubt that humanity is undergoing a great transition. Whatever the outcome, it's almost certain that the world as we know it will never be the same again.

How prepared are you for the turmoil and disruptions that lay ahead?

Several years ago I read John Casti's thought-provoking book 'X-Events: Complexity Overload and the Collapse of Everything.' In it he explores eleven scenarios that would likely trigger the collapse of society as we know it. No prize for guessing that 'pandemics' and 'civil unrest' were two of the possible causes.

Don't be the one lamenting your poor preparation: it's up to YOU to give you and your loved ones the best possible chance of surviving an X-event.

While this book is aimed at providing you with useful hints and guidelines for building a decent Bug-Out-Bag, I must provide a word of caution. While the following suggestions and illustrations may prove to be extremely useful, they are a poor substitute for real-life, outdoor experience. But that's not to say you shouldn't bother preparing anyway. In fact, quite the contrary. Whether you're a novice or not, even a basic Bug-Out-Bag could make the difference between life and death.

At the very least, this book should help you assemble a half-decent emergency bag.

Before we delve into the details, I would like to emphasize an important distinction. Howsoever a crisis may arise, your first decision ALWAYS is to consider the following: 'Do I stay or do I go?' On balance, hunkering down is usually the better option. This book, therefore, is aimed at providing you with useful tips if, or when, you have no alternative but to 'bug out.'

Let's ask what defines a 'bug-out' situation? During these unsettling times the most obvious reason to bug-out would be due to mass societal upheavals or adverse situations: riots, insurrection, pandemics and so forth. Naturally, you might also have to bug-out due to earthquakes, fires, hurricanes or floods. Surprisingly, there are many deniers who either reject or don't agree with the probabilities associated with the occurrence of such X-events. If you're one of them, at least consider preparing a small Bug-Out-Bag for when your car breaks down in a remote spot.

Whatever the cause, you and your family may find yourselves with little or no choice but to evacuate your

current location. Are you prepared for such an eventuality?

In times of crisis, a well-stocked Bug-Out-Bag, or **BOB**, could make a world of difference. In a truly serious bug-out situation survivalists, preppers and outdoorsmen will tell you that one of the greatest challenges—at least in the first 48 hours—is overcoming the fear associated with your new-found circumstances. Facing your first physical challenge—whatever shape or form that may take—is not as important as a complete and honest acceptance of your situation. Armed with the correct frame of mind you can conquer almost anything. Denial, on the other hand, is a common mental defense mechanism used to block out painful or overwhelming circumstances. Succumbing to a state of denial could kill you as surely as exposure, starvation or extreme dehydration. Instead, you should attempt to:

- Focus on your situation and circumstances
- Assess all your options
- Decide on the best course of action
- Act decisively

If you're not in possession of any specific survival skills, you're almost guaranteed of succumbing to the psychological pressures associated with your situation.

Depending on your immediate needs, what ought to be your first priority? Shelter? Food? Water? Self-defense?

For most people thrust into an unexpected bug-out situation, slipping into a state of shock and denial is almost inevitable. Like a deer in the headlights, the mental anguish associated with their new reality could cause them to 'freeze' with indecision or panic. That's why it's

important to remember the FADA acronym.

And why a good BOB is essential.

Surviving the first few days of your new and unexpected circumstances is an important accomplishment: it'll calm your initial apprehension, lift your spirits and provide you with the fortitude to tackle your next set of challenges. A well-equipped bag will help alleviate much of your induced stress.

So, along the lines of R.E.M's afterthought—'And I Feel Fine'—make sure you Feel Fine as we rush headlong into an uncertain future.

Or, better still, don't end up saying 'would've, could've, should've,' when the SHTF.

1

THE BAG

Just as a house needs a solid foundation, so your BOB needs a good backpack. Choosing the right one will materially affect your comfort and survivability if—or when—you have to leave the grid.

Let's talk briefly about the weight of your BOB. While elite soldiers are regularly required to haul upwards of 70 pounds of gear, not all of us are as fit or well-conditioned. Ideally, with a fully-packed Bug-Out-Bag, the weight shouldn't exceed much more than 20 pounds. Lugging more than 10% of your bodyweight could become extremely tiring, especially if you're traversing rough or steep terrain. (Remember, as much as 5½ pounds of your BOB's total weight could be taken up by the empty backpack).

Of course, there has to be a compromise: it would be great to have 5 or 10 days' worth of food, for example, but our primary objective here is to make the first three days as uncomplicated as possible. In order to achieve this, you need to give careful consideration to your requirements. Factors which could influence your selection include, but are not limited to:

- Type of terrain you expect to traverse
- Weather conditions
- Number of members in your party
- Anticipated threat level
- Proximity to water

With this in mind, the reader will see that I assign the term 'Recommended' to a fair number of survival items, as opposed to 'Essential.' It is entirely up to you to weigh-up the benefit (or needs) of including these recommended items in your BOB. Similarly, some items are classified as 'Optional.'

Exchanging the safety of the grid for an uncertain and austere environment is likely to be an uncomfortable transition for most people. Space permitting, **'Optional'** items are indeed useful, but are not necessarily life sustaining. But they may just help ease the transition into full survival mode.

Back to your selection of bag. Make sure your backpack is of a sturdy construction. When everything is on the line, you can ill-afford having a jammed zipper or broken strap. Worse yet, imagine the consequences of having a burst seam.

Check that your bag is the right fit for your torso. Without adjustable buckles you will not be able to tension the shoulder straps. To avoid excessive fatigue and lower back strain, you'll want to adjust the position of the bag so that its base doesn't sag down onto your buttocks. The higher up your back, the better. A chest belt is essential and prevents the bag from swaying from side to side.

Before settling on a bag, check all the stress points and ensure that they have been double-stitched; for example,

where straps join the main body of the backpack, or where they are looped through a buckle and reattached to themselves. Check also that your bag is water resistant.

Avoid purchasing a backpack that doesn't have a MOLLE system. MOLLE is an acronym deriving from **Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment** and is currently used by a number of NATO armed forces, as well as the United States Army.

The system's overall functionality derives from the ease with which compatible pouches (of varying shapes and sizes) can be attached to the PALS, or **Pouch Attachment Ladder System**. These comprise rows of heavy-duty nylon loops stitched onto the exterior of the backpack, and allow for the fast and easy retrieval of kit and accessories from the pouches hung from them.

Get a bag that has plenty of pockets and compartments. Once you are familiar with the layout and design of your bag, you can start assigning critical items to key areas within your bag. For example, you don't want your First Aid pack buried deep at the bottom of your backpack.

Remember, the purpose of this book is to help you decide what items you want to include in your BOB. You simply won't be able to carry all the gear recommended in these pages. Once you have taken the time to carefully select all those items you believe are necessary—and, of course, given careful consideration to their overall weight—you can choose an appropriately-sized bag.

My bag of choice is the 55 liter **Rush72 Backpack** from **5.11 Tactical**.

2

WEAPONS & TOOLS

Chapter 2 is broken down into three categories:

- WEAPONS
- TOOLS
- SUNDRY

WEAPONS

Learning how to survive in the African bush was an important aspect of my Air Force pilot training program—and my course mates and I were fortunate enough to be taught by the best. Pete Clements was one of the founding members of Rhodesia's legendary Selous Scouts. Highly regarded in contemporary military circles, many of the Selous Scouts' tactics are still emulated by Special Force units around the globe.

Equipped with nothing but a pair of shorts and our FN FAL rifles, Clements sent us out into the bush to fend for ourselves. Since our training was being conducted in a war zone, we were instructed to only use our rifles for self-defense. "If you want to eat," he said, "go and forage for food or build a trap."

In anticipation of any fluid situation, it is vital that you always consider the worst-case scenario. If you are serious about your BOB, you simply have to include a firearm. Being the hunted—and not just the hunter—is a distinct possibility in a critical SHTF situation. While the trusty FN FAL served many countries' needs for many decades, it's just not an ideal survival weapon.



The author (top right) pictured with his pilot course mates after completing a grueling 10 day survival course somewhere in the Zambezi Valley

If I had to choose between a handgun and a rifle, I would opt for the rifle. In a survival situation, my go-to weapon is the Henry AR-7.

1. Henry AR-7 Survival Rifle (Essential)

Adopted by the US Air Force in the late 1950s, the AR-7 was deemed to be the ideal survival weapon for downed aircrew. In a typical Escape & Evade situation, this utility rifle is designed to serve two purposes: providing for the

pot and personal defense.

Although not a unique concept, the idea of a takedown weapon for survival situations is very appealing. Once dismantled, all the AR-7 components fit snugly into the hollow stock. Not only is it an easy carry at $2^{1/2}$ lbs., but its ammunition (.22LR) is exceptionally light too. That's an important consideration when calculating your BOB's overall weight.



Assembling and dismantling the Henry AR-7 takes less than 60 seconds

2. Combat Folding Survival Bow (Essential)

While on the topic of takedown weapons, it's worth considering the **CFSB** (Compact Folding Survival Bow) either as an addition or as an alternative to a survival rifle. Most designs are left and right hand compatible, and many are capable of unleashing arrows at an impressive 170 feet per second. Weighing in at around 2½ lbs., this stealthy weapon can be carried inside or outside your BOB. Unlike your rifle—where rationing your ammo is essential—your arrows are retrievable.

Historically, crises tend to resolve themselves within three

days of the initial event. The marshalling and mobilization of large-scale relief aid requires careful planning and coordination, and it may take that long before some semblance of order is restored. Although the suggestions contained in this book focus mainly on surviving the first 72 hours, preparing for a longer bug-out situation is just as important. Just as you might want to consider taking a small cleaning kit for your rifle, it may well be prudent to consider some of the following items for your Combat Folding Survival Bow.

- A spare bow string
- A few extra arrows
- A selection of broadheads (arrow tips)

3. Ammunition (Essential)

There are several reasons as to why the .22 caliber round, in all its configurations, is the world's most popular cartridge. But from a survivalists perspective, its energy to cartridge weight ratio translates to a versatile round capable of fulfilling two crucial roles: self defense and hunting for the pot. Granted, a more powerful rifle will take down larger quarry, but how much of that carcass will you actually be able to utilize? Remember, the noisy report from a large caliber rifle will not only scare-off the game for miles (if you miss), but will also give away your position. Combining the AR-7's low mass with the corresponding low mass of its ammunition is therefore a no-brainer. 200 rounds of .22LR weighs only 1½ lbs. That's an important consideration when factoring in the weight of all your other gear.

4. Survival Slingshot (Optional)

Even if you've never used a slingshot, the mechanics of firing this weapon are largely instinctive. With some dedicated practice it shouldn't be long before you're able to master this useful tool. Apart from being able to source some protein, it may also be used to dissuade four-legged prowlers from getting too close.

5. Pepper Spray (Optional)

Having selected a good quality backpack with a MOLLE system, you'll easily be able to secure variously-sized pouches to the exterior of your bag. Compact and lightweight, a police-strength pepper spray is a good addition to hang from the exterior of your pack. It's a great human deterrent and also works on wild animals.

TOOLS

6. Multi-purpose Survival Tool (Essential)

A typical 5 (or 6)-in-1 folding survival tool includes a shovel, axe, bottle opener, wood saw, hammer and pick. Some even include a whistle and compass (discussed later). There are numerous makes available, ranging anywhere from \$10 to \$100. A common complaint of those in the lower price range is that the working edges are often dull. Regardless, I do recommend including a lightweight blade sharpener in your BOB.



7. Survival Knife (Essential)

Whether you're working to a strict budget or not, don't skimp on your survival knife. In a SHTF situation, this important piece of kit will be worth its weight in gold. Make sure your knife is designed and built with a full tang. This is the tapered and hidden component of your blade that anchors into the handle. A full tang means that the wedge runs right through to the end of your handle. A well-designed, full-tang knife has a unique heft that balances perfectly in your grip. Consider too the quality of steel used in the blade. A brittle steel will chip easily and quickly lose its edge.

For a well-informed perspective on survival knives, read Matt Davidson's article, *The Best Survival Knife for Your Money*, 'at **knifeinformer.com**

By no small coincidence my survival knife of choice is the same as Matt's. It's the **KA-BAR Becker BK2 Campanion.**

8. Multi Tool Pliers (Essential)

It is the versatility of this tool which makes it such an important part of your gear. While the Leatherman might be the gold standard, there are many alternative brands out there that are equal to the Leatherman's reputation.



Of all the useful tools on this device, I believe it is the pliers that are the most valuable. You'll miss them when you don't have them. Apart from the needle-nose pliers, a well equipped multi tool should also have:

- Small saw
- Scissors
- Serrated knife
- Knife
- Wire stripper & cutters
- Can opener
- File
- Flat head & Phillips screw driver

9. Hatchet (Essential, if you don't have #6)

When your survival knife or saw (#6) are not up to the task, a hatchet is a must-have. Not only will this tool chop down small trees or baton branches, but it'll also save you from damaging your survival knife on those bigger jobs. If you don't go for #6, and want a dedicated hatchet, be sure to select the lightest one possible.

10. Portable Wire Chainsaw (Recommended)

While a little more energy is expended using this tool (compared to a bladed saw), it's still worth packing as a back-up to your hatchet. Where rough or sharp cuts might present a personal hazard—for example, on the frame of your lean-to shelter—this easy-to-use tool cuts cleanly.



11. 1st Responder Folding Blade (Recommended)

I recommend developing the habit of carrying one of these knives on a daily basis. Often referred to as an EDC (every day carry) the very affordable **S&W First Response Rescue Knife** is ideal for roadside emergencies, has a built-in glass-breaker, as well as a seatbelt cutter. The partially serrated blade also allows the user to cut through tougher or harder surfaces.



12. Eating Utensils (Essential)

As the name suggests, a *spork* is a spoon and fork combo. Made from titanium, sporks are extremely durable, lightweight, heat resistant and easy to clean. Even if you're travelling solo, pack a couple of spares. As for a knife, you can double-up by using your #11.



SUNDRY

13. Tactical Pen (Optional)

Designed to be a low-profile self defense tool, a tactical pen is another popular EDC item. The bodies of most tactical pens are heavily knurled for better grip, have a pocket clip for easy retrieval and, as you'd expect, write

like normal pens. My personal pen has a crenellated head: not only is this useful for delivering a painful blow, but will also retain some of your assailant's DNA if a sample is ever required. It also has a high decibel whistle, as well as a flint fire starter.

14. Night Image Enhancers (Recommended)

The ability to see in the dark has many practical advantages. While flashlights are an essential addition to your Bug-Out-Bag (discussed later), there may be occasions when you'd rather not betray your position.

Broadly speaking there are two types of Night Image Enhancing devices and each utilizes a slightly different process to harness and intensify the infrared light spectrum.

Image Intensifiers (typical Night Vision Goggles) work by collecting small amounts of ambient light, especially the lower portion of the infrared light spectrum. While imperceptible to the human eye, these glimmers of infrared light are concentrated and amplified to the point where an image can be easily observed.

Conversely, Thermal Imaging works by capturing the upper portion of the infrared light spectrum. (Not only does it have a different wavelength when compared to the lower portion of the spectrum, but this portion also emits more heat.)

So, whereas Image Intensifiers work by harnessing small quantities of reflected light, Thermal Imaging devices use the heat emitted by objects to generate an image.

Warm objects, such as humans and animals, emit more of this kind of infrared light than cooler objects like trees or buildings.

While both types of devices have their unique strengths and applications, Night Vision Goggles work best when there is good ambient light. Even starlight is sufficiently bright to generate the desired reflections. But as the intensity of the ambient light diminishes (think moonless nights with low, heavy cloud cover), so the quality of the image degrades.

Conversely, the images generated by thermal devices are not compromised under the same conditions.

Conclusion: Whereas Image Intensifying Devices require at least some ambient light to function, Thermal Imaging Devices are capable of detecting and converting small quantities of radiated heat into images. So long as your target has a heartbeat, it will create a thermal signature.

In such a technologically competitive market, devices can range from \$200 to \$6000. Given the intended purpose of our survival device, I recommend the highly functional AGM Asp-Micro TM160. Aside from using thermal technology, this handheld monocular device weighs 0.6 lbs. and retails for under \$500.

3

SURVIVAL

- WATER AND HYDRATION
- SHELTER & SLEEP
- CALORIES
- FIRE
- LIGHT
- CORDAGE, LINES & HOOKS
- ORIENTATION

WATER & HYDRATION

3:3:3 is the survivalist's mantra. Normal bodily functions (including brain and organs) will deteriorate to critically low levels after 3 weeks without food, 3 days without water, and 3 minutes without oxygen. And that's under ideal environmental conditions.

Imagine if you're having to exert yourself, find yourself battling adverse weather conditions, or are having to function under extreme fatigue? All of these will further draw on your reserves and erode your

condition. That's why having a 72 hour BOB is so vitally important.

The last thing you want in a SHTF situation is to become incapacitated by drinking contaminated water. Having multiple means of filtering and purifying water is not only advisable, it's essential. While you can't carry all the water you'll need, it is still advisable to have your primary canteen filled-and-ready for that unexpected departure.

15. Stainless Steel Water Bottle (Essential)

Boiling is a very effective way of purifying your water. That's why it's essential to own a good quality stainless steel bottle. While boiling eliminates most types of bacteria, you water may still contain sediments or organic particulates. That's why it's not a bad idea to have a second container (discussed later) for straining your water. Typical insulated steel flasks are designed to keep your hot drinks warm and your cold drinks cool. They achieve this by trapping a thin layer of air between two skins of steel.

RULE #1: WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT PURCHASE SUCH A FLASK FOR YOUR BOB.

Imagine you have found some stagnant water but first need to boil it up in your steel flask. If your flask is constructed with an inner and outer steel skin, consider what might happen to the air trapped between the two layers.

Yes, it too will heat up.

And we all know what happens to heated air. It expands. As you sit patiently beside your fire waiting for your water to boil, your flask is slowly being converted from a simple container into a pneumatic weapon. Even if your rapidly-expanding bottle doesn't injure you, you most likely will end up ruining your only means of carrying water.



My recommendation: the 40oz Klean Kanteen

Even if you have a single skin bottle, remember

RULE #2: NEVER SEAL YOUR FLASK WHEN YOU BOIL YOUR WATER.

16. Water Purification Tablets (Essential)

When time is of the essence, and you can't afford to stop and boil your water, these tablets are essential. They're lightweight, fast-acting, and allow you to purify your water on-the-go. Tip: If you've pulled your water from a questionable source, remember to filter it before drinking. Straining your water through a garment is a highly effective way of removing larger particulates. **Chlor-Floc Water Purification** tablets (also available as a powder)

eliminate giardia, as well as 99.99% of bacteria and viruses.



17. Portable Water Filter (Essential)

The Sawyer Mini Water Filtration System is capable of filtering up to 100,000 gallons of water. It removes 99.99999% of bacteria (salmonella, e-coli and cholera), and 99.9999% of protozoa (cryptosporidium and giardia), well exceeding EPA recommendations for removal rates.



SHELTER & SLEEP

Sheltering from the elements is fundamental to survival. Having a proper shelter will keep you warm, dry and relatively safe. If you're adequately equipped you'll avoid having to build your own shelter out of branches and

logs. As ever, you'll need to consider the weight aspect when deciding what tent to get.

18. Tube Tent/Survival Tent (Essential)

A minimalist tent will certainly do the job. Selecting the right size is obvious, but also try and find a tent that doesn't require poles. (However, if your anticipated duration in the wilds is likely to exceed 7 days, a framed tent is more durable). You're looking for something that's built to withstand the elements. Modern fabrics are specifically engineered for this purpose. Also, choose your color wisely: while natural tones will blend in nicely with your environment, a bright orange tent may attract unwanted attention—or rescuers—depending on what you want. Tube tents are quick and easy to erect but, as their name suggests, they are nothing more than tubes open ended on both sides. Consider instead getting one that zips up completely. For survival on-the-move, a super-compact, ultra-light backpacker's tent is a good choice.

19. Sleeping Pad (Optional)

Don't underestimate the value of a good night's sleep. While comfort certainly is a factor, a sleeping pad serves a much more important purpose. Laying directly on the ground will suck the warmth from your body. While you could gather up a layer of wilderness debris (pine needles or leaves) to place beneath your sleeping bag, a pad is a quick and effective insulator when natural materials are scarce. Don't bother with inflatable types; they'll only puncture. Using your MOLLE system, a rolled-up sleeping pad can easily be attached to the outside of your

BOB.

20. Sleeping Bag (Essential)

Given the physical and mental demands of your newfound circumstances, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of sleep. Simply put, if you're exposed, cold and uncomfortable, you won't sleep. Fatigue will eventually impair your vim and judgment. Choosing the right bag is important: while super-light bags are great for summer, those rated for lower temps are often double the weight. It comes down to balancing your sleep needs, the anticipated nighttime temperature where you'll be operating, and the weight you're prepared to carry. Constructed with lightweight technical fabrics, I carry the **Anvil Horn 0** sleeping bag. It's not only designed to increase thermal efficiency, but comfort too.

21. Zip Ties (Essential)

While Paracord (#37) is ideal for lashing and binding, it seems almost criminal to have to cut it into shorter lengths. Quick and easy to use, Zip Ties are light, immensely strong, and capable of creating extremely secure bonds. Instead of 'wasting' your precious Paracord, rather use your Zip Ties to bind small diameter objects, like branches, when building your shelter.

CALORIES

Food selection is important. While you need to keep your pack weight down, consider carrying enough calories to see you through the first 72 hours of hardship. We all

know how easily distracted we become when we're hungry. Our brains—just like our muscles—function best on a healthy balance of micro and macronutrients. And in a stressful bug-out situation, you need to maintain peak levels of concentration.

22. Calorie Dense Food Bars (Essential)

The great thing about a high quality, calorie dense food bar is that it not only meets your calorific needs, but also provides much-needed nutrients and protein. In order to maintain body weight, the average woman should consume about 2,000 calories per day, and a man about 2,500. Using this as a guideline, choose a meal-replacement bar that is packed with calories *and* protein. While taste is certainly a factor, remember it's more about the ability to get adequate nourishment into your body. Since they're relatively small and lightweight, aim to include at least 9 bars per person in your BOB. Three good options are **ER Emergency Bars** (as approved by the US Coast Guard), the **MET-Rx Big 100 Colossal Meal Replacement Bar**, and **Datrex Emergency Ration**.



23. MREs (Essential)

MRE is a military acronym that stands for MEAL, READY-TO-EAT. This self-contained, individual field ration was originally designed to be used in combat situations where organized food facilities were not available. Included with each ration pack is an FRH (Flameless Ration Heater). A chemical reaction occurs when a small quantity of water is added to the FRH. It is capable of raising the temperature of an 8-ounce entrée by 100 °F in twelve minutes.

The term MRE is now widely used beyond the old military establishment and describes any foodstuff that can be heated in this fashion.

While there are many to chose from, two of the more popular brands are Chef 5 Minute Meals and Valley Food Storage.

24. Collapsible Bowl (Recommended)

When space is as important as weight, the **X-Seal & Go** is a real no-brainer. It is not only collapsible but has an airtight seal. If your opportunities for cooking are limited, this device at least allows you to carry and store your foodstuffs for later consumption.

25. Aluminum Cooking Pot (Recommended)

Titanium, aluminum or stainless steel? When cost and weight are both valid considerations, aluminum cooking pots strike a good balance. Aluminum pots retain heat and cook evenly, thus making them ideal for preparing complex meals. Be sure to select a hard anodized (HA) pot. Being more durable and corrosion-resistant, they can

be packed away wet if you're in a hurry. My pot of choice is the **GSI Outdoors Halulite Boiler Pot.**



FIRE

It's no coincidence that anthropologists link the rapid rise of early human development to the harnessing of fire. From the ability to make meat more palatable, to the extended social interactions around a nocturnal campfire, ancient artifacts show a sharp rise in human advancement around this time. Just like our ancestors, humans today value fire for the same reasons: cooking food, purifying water, warmth and a primal sense of safety. Since it forms such an essential part of your BOB, I recommend having at least three independent ways to make a fire.

26. Waterproof Matches (Essential)

Forget about starting a fire if your regular matches get wet. Designed to burn for 10 seconds, **Coghlan's Storm Matches** are not only capable of withstanding high winds, but also full immersion in water. They also come in a waterproof tub.



27. FireSteel Fire Starter (Essential)

Even if you've never used a FireSteel before, it's an easy tool to master. It'll ignite dry grass, shredded paper, even tumble-dryer lint. Take all the usual precautions while practicing with your new FireSteel. My starter of choice is the **Swedish FireSteel**.



28. Electrical Lighter (Essential)

I carry a **Stealth Angel Arc Lighter** (SAAL) in my BOB. Thanks to its hardy waterproof case, this dual-arc plasma lighter can withstand rain, snow, wind and cold. With its simple plug-and-go USB technology, the SAAL gives you over 300 ignitions on a single charge.



29. Magnifying Glass (Recommended)

See #43 Quality Compass

30. Tinder (Recommended)

Although there are plenty of store-bought tinder tabs to choose from, one of the most effective materials can be taken right out of your tumble dryer. Start collecting the lint from your dryer's filter mesh and stuff it into a Ziploc bag or, better still, a waterproof container.

31. Waterproof Container (Recommended)

Available in a variety of different sizes, the **WaterSeals Waterproof Hard Case** by Lewis N Clark is ideal for keeping all your fire starting tools dry.

32. Portable Stove (Recommended)

If stealth is an important consideration then one of these is a great alternative to building a fire. Don't forget you'll also need to pack a few canisters of stove fuel. Despite its obvious usefulness I consider it a 'recommended' item only because of weight and space constraints.

33. Trioxane Fuel Bars (Recommended)

Trioxane fuel bars burn hot and clean with a soft blue glow. They're ideal for helping start your campfire, or can be used individually when dry tinder is unavailable. They ignite easily with a match, magnesium fire starter or FireSteel

LIGHT

When you're far off the grid, in the dead of night, illumination will provide you with a great deal of comfort and convenience. Whatever the cause, imagine having to evacuate your position in pitch black without a light source. Apart from risking an injury, you might inadvertently leave behind some important piece of equipment. Just as I recommend carrying three independent means of starting a fire, so too do I recommend three alternative means of illumination.

34. LED Headlamp (Essential)

Along with your other electronic devices, having a rechargeable LED headlamp makes perfect sense. Imagine a situation where you have to make an urgent repair in the middle of the night, but one hand has to hold a flashlight. That's why including one of these in your BOB is essential.

(See #85 Solar Power Charger).

35. LED Tactical Flashlight (Essential)

The intensity of light is measured in lumens. The higher the number, the brighter your light source. Get yourself at least a 500 lumen flashlight. Even if your headlamp is equally intense, still go ahead and add one of these to your BOB. You can maneuver your wrist (and hence the beam) far quicker, as well as more dexterously, than your head.

36. Glow Sticks (Recommended)

Mayday 12 Hour 6" Light Sticks are capable of emitting a glow for up to 12 hours. The chemicals used in glow sticks are non-toxic, do not produce heat and are non-flammable.

CORDAGE, LINES & HOOKS

Aside from all the necessary skills, climbing up or down a rock face (or building) also requires an assortment of specialized devices, ropes and safety equipment. I believe a hank of climbing rope—along with all the other equipment—would simply add too much bulk and weight to your BOB. Considering all the associated risks, I would urge you to stay away from any vertical or near-vertical climbs while operating in a survival situation.

37. Paracord (Essential)

Paracord is essential for emergency cordage, crafting and as a utility line. But for a real multipurpose cord I

recommend SurvivorCord by TITAN.

Titan's patented Military-Style 550 paracord has three potentially life-saving survival strands added to the inner core. A snare wire, fishing line, and waterproof fire tinder.



38. Yo-Yo Fishing Reels (Essential)

So-called because of the similarity in size to the everpopular yo-yo toy, this automatic fishing reel is an ideal emergency survival tool. An important aspect of food procurement is ensuring that your energy gain exceeds your energy expenditure. You can leave this automatic fisher unattended while you take care of other important issues like fire making or shelter building. To increase your chances of success, consider packing 2 or 3 **Yo-Yo Fishing Reels** in your BOB.



39. Hook, Swivel, Sinker Set (Essential)

You're going to have a hard time catching anything without hooks, swivels and sinkers. You could probably find a smaller kit, but for its sheer versatility, I recommend the Ready Hour Fishing and Hunting Kit from campingsurvival.com

Many of the items recommended in these pages are consolidated within this single kit.

- yo-yo automatic fishing reel
- 100 yards of 8-lb test line
- 20 feet of 50-lb test line
- 2 x1.5-inch foam floats
- 25 x reusable lead weights
- 30 x premium bait holder hooks
- 4 x jig heads
- 20 x swivels
- 1 x 6-foot nylon stringer
- 5 x artificial lures
- 5 x artificial grubs
- 5 x salmon eggs
- 1 x folding multi-tool
- 1 x slingshot band
- 6 x 3/8-inch slingshot ammo
- 4 x 4-inch zip ties
- 20 feet of snare wire
- 6 x screw eyes
- 2 x L-screws
- 5 x safety pins
- 1 x razor blade

- 15 feet of #36 bank line
- 1 x waterproof survival instruction sheet

40. Emergency Fishing Line (Essential)

If you don't go for #39, or you don't pack a Yo-Yo reel, it's wise to add a small reel of fishing line to your BOB.

41. Snare Wires (Recommended)

If you haven't already done so, take some time researching a few simple yet effective snaring techniques. Your overnight haul might yield some valuable protein.

42. Ball of String (Optional)

Instead of wasting your valuable paracord to tie smaller objects, consider packing a ball of string.

ORIENTATION

As already mentioned, a true survival situation could be caused by any number of X-Events. Although it provides us with countless benefits, our dependence on technology could actually be our Achilles Heel. The collapse of any one of our hi-tech systems could be catastrophic: the Internet; the banking system and the power grid, to name but a few.

Given the very real threat of a strike against our fleet of circling satellites, it makes sense that the US Government recently announced the formation of the US Space Force. Any attack directed toward our satellites would render useless a multitude of sophisticated systems.

For one, your car's GPS would cease to function. Sure, include a handheld GPS in your BOB, but make an effort to learn how to use a map and compass, if you don't already know how.

43. Quality Compass (Essential)



Brunton TruArc 15 Compass

A compass does way more than just point out magnetic north. That said, its value can only be truly liberated when used in conjunction with a detailed topographical map of the area in which you're located, or looking to traverse. Apart from a magnetized needle submerged in a bath of alcohol, a good compass has many other features. The tilting mirror (an integral part of many compasses), can double-up as a reflective signaling device (See #48). Look also for a compass that has a built-in magnifying glass (#29). It not only helps you read the small print on your map but can also be used to start a fire by concentrating the sun's rays.

44. Local Area Topographical Map (Essential)

There are maps ... and then there are maps! That world map hanging in your old classroom probably depicted the earth's surface at a scale of 1:20,000,000. In other words, every inch measured across that map represented 20 million inches (or about 316 miles) across the surface of the earth. Of course, at that scale, it's impossible to show anything except the most significant features on a continent: major cities; mountain ranges; political boundaries; and large rivers.

In order to orient yourself in unfamiliar terrain you'll need a much more detailed map: one that shows small towns, country roads, relief features, streams, plantations and the like. The smaller the map's scale, the more detailed it will be.

Wherever you're planning on heading, get a couple of maps spanning that area. More importantly, get to know how to read it and locate your position on that map.

Given the importance of carrying a detailed map in your Bug-Out-Bag, I encourage my readers to visit mytopo.com. With a full menu of map-building features to choose from (scale, grid patterns, topographical shading, folded, rolled, and even the ability to personalize your own map), MyTopo's step-by-step guide allows users to create their own fully customized map.

4

COMMUNICATIONS

Whether it's one-way (incoming/passive only) or two-way (interactive), humans need information to help them make decisions. In a survival situation it would be preferable to have both. Once you've gathered information from the outside world (radio broadcasts), you'll want to be able to share that information amongst your group members. In a worst-case scenario, cell phone networks may've collapsed. Worse still, your phone could be used to identify your location.

<u>2-WAY</u>

45. Two-Way Radio Set (Recommended)

Unless you're going solo, consider including a set of walkie-talkie devices in your BOB. If your team decides to split up, or you get separated, you'll at least be able to maintain communications. In most cases, according to **DiscountTwo-WayRadio.com**, a UHF (versus a VHF) radio set is recommended for the best overall coverage.

46. Cell Phone or Smartphone (Recommended)

Depending on the severity of the situation (or your level of paranoia), that smart phone in your pocket could be more of a hindrance than a help. If the network of supporting towers is still capable of providing a signal, you can obviously continue using your phone as normal. However, if you are truly intent on staying off the grid, don't forget that your phone could be used to triangulate your position.

USEFUL TIP: If you've been unable to raise help on your phone, and you're in a perilous situation, record a new voicemail message before your battery dies. Leave as much detail as possible regarding your whereabouts, your predicament, and your intentions.

1-WAY

47. AM/FM/NOAA Digital Radio (Essential)

I doubt any of us are truly comfortable with the prospect of having to fly blind. Information is a key component to the classic *Gather/Process/Decide/Act* loop. In a survival situation—where vital details could mean the difference between life or death—access to quality information becomes even more critical. Having a simple hand-held radio is the simplest way to harvest information from afar.

The **Kaito KA580** Emergency wind-up radio not only gives comprehensive AM and FM coverage but also broadcasts NOAA reports on 7 pre-programmed weather channels. Its features include a hand-crank generator,

solar power, 5V USB input, a 5V DC wall power adapter, as well as a built-in rechargeable battery pack.

48. Small Signaling Mirror (Essential)

See also #43 Quality Compass

Depending on your circumstances you may not actually want to attract attention to yourself. Regardless of your situation it's still wise to carry a signaling mirror. You may need to summon assistance (from a rescue plane or helicopter), or communicate with fellow bug-out companions when separated by distance.

49. Notebook & Pencil (Essential)

You may find yourself needing to record some important information, like the map coordinates of a fresh water source. Or what about leaving vital news at a predetermined drop point? Go to riteintherain.com for a large selection of writing paper and pens, all designed to work in the most adverse conditions.

50. Survival Whistle (Essential)

It may be low-tech but a shrill blast on your whistle is a highly-effective way of keeping in contact with your family or team members.

5

FIRST AID & PERSONAL

We tend to take for granted the array of conveniences that are available to us on any given day. Whether it be a household cabinet full of medical supplies or a sophisticated trauma unit at our local hospital, we seldom give thought to how we'd cope without them. But in a SHTF situation, that's exactly what we'll be facing. Being adequately prepared is certainly a step in the right direction. However, there's no substitute for hands-on, practical First Aid training. It's a valuable life skill. Let me elaborate.

Timm Smith is an extraordinary man. Rather than settling for a lucrative career as an advocate in the early 90s, he opted instead for a position with the Executive Protection Team of the South African Police Force. After several years guarding foreign and local dignitaries—including the late President Mandela—Smith ventured into the private sector where he opened the now-acclaimed Ronin Protective Services academy in Cape Town. Rather than succumbing to the temptation to squeeze-out as many future bodyguards as possible, he set the academy on a different course, choosing instead an image of excellence over volume. It wasn't long before

Ronin was drawing top candidates from around the globe. With classes never exceeding 16 hopefuls, the program is both intensive and challenging: and the dropout rate bears testament to the high standards he sets for his students.

But Smith's own path to excellence wasn't without challenge. In 1993, while protecting the Prime Minister of Portugal, an unexpected incident forced him to reset his own compass. Suddenly, one of the dignitaries clutched his chest and collapsed to the floor. Unsure as to what to do next, the bewildered group turned expectantly toward the bodyguard. After all, he was there to protect them, right? After calling the paramedics, Smith attempted to reassure the patient by loosening his tie and making him comfortable. However well-intentioned, he knew his interventions were totally ineffectual.

It was in that moment that Smith sensed the true meaning of the word 'bodyguard.' If you can protect your client from the outward threat, but not from the silent threat within, are you truly worthy of the title bodyguard?

With characteristic determination, Smith set about filling the gap in his already impressive repertoire of skills. Within three years he'd qualified as an Advanced Paramedic.

In fact, Smith places so much emphasis on paramedical skills that a full week of his bodyguard course is devoted to CPR, spinal immobilization, asthma interventions, splinting, establishing airways, suturing, chest decompressions, and plenty more beside.

As Smith's senior instructor between 2011 and 2014, I had the honor of training almost 400 dedicated bodyguards, several of whom I later worked with in a professional environment. From conversations with them—and others beside—I am aware of numerous

medical emergencies where their timely interventions helped save lives.

And my point is this: their ability to assess, decide and implement appropriate life-saving interventions can be attributed to the training they received during that one-week period.

At the very least, get yourself trained in basic first aid: remember, it's not for you; it's for the life you save.

Ronin SA's training facilities extend well beyond its campus on the outskirts of Cape Town. Each course offers practical training and drills in the streets and suburbs of the Cape peninsula, including hands-on ambulance duties. But the academy doesn't only train aspirant bodyguards and paramedics. Ronin's ever-popular **Self Reliance Course** is aimed at teaching the layman a host of valuable life skills.

Visit www.ronin.co.za

GENERAL

51. First Aid Kit (Essential)

There are literally hundreds of First Aid packs to choose from. Most reputable suppliers carry a variety of options ranging from a simple First Aid pack (Band-Aids, sterilewipes, antiseptic creams and bandages), right up to specialists' bags packed with an array of advanced lifesaving tools and medicines. Endeavor to carry a First Aid pack that matches your skill level. At the very minimum, make sure your pack contains the following essential

items.

- CAT Tourniquet (See **#52**)
- QuikClot (See **#53**)
- Wound Gauze (See **#54**)
- Burn Dressing
- Closure Strips (See **#57**)
- Flexible Fabric Bandages
- Forceps (See **#68**)
- Surgical Tape (See **#55**)

My bag of choice is the **Solo IFAK** (Individual First Aid Kit) by **North American Rescue**. Check out their website at **www.narescue.com**



The Solo IFAK from North American Rescue

Here's a list of additional items you need to add to your First Aid kit, if they're not already included.

52. CAT Tourniquet (Essential)

The **Gen 7 CAT** (Combat Application Tourniquet) was noted as the best pre-hospital tourniquet in the February 2008 supplement of *The Journal of Trauma*. It is a true one-handed tourniquet proven to be 100% effective by the U.S. Army's *Institute of Surgical Research*.

Utilizing a durable windlass system with a patented free-moving internal band, the **Gen 7 CAT** provides true circumferential pressure to the extremity. Once the bleeding has stopped, the windlass can be locked into place using a simple hook and loop system. This mechanism is ideal for solo application, especially when operating under stress or where fine motor skills have been compromised.

To reiterate a previous point, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the proper application of all specialized equipment. For example, a tourniquet is ineffectual when applied over a two-bone limb, i.e. the radius/ulna of the forearm or the tibia/fibula over the calf.



CAT Tourniquet available from North American
Rescue

53. QuikClot (Essential)

QuikClot® Combat Gauze is a safe and effective way to control life-threatening hemorrhage from wounds that are not amenable to tourniquet application. This soft, folded gauze is impregnated with kaolin—an inert mineral that does not generate heat—and contours well over all wound sites. It is indicated for the temporary external control of traumatic bleeding.



54. Wound Gauze (Essential)

aka *Gauze Sponges*, these lightweight pads can be placed over cuts and burns just prior to the wound being dressed. Apart from absorbing excess body fluids, they also provide a sterile barrier against dirt and bacteria.

55. Surgical Tape (Essential)

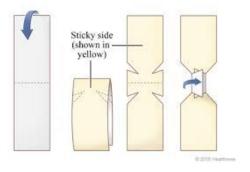
Surgical tape is a quick and effective way to hold bandages, wound gauze and other dressings in place.

56. Band Aids (Essential)

Attend to any small cuts and lacerations as soon as practically possible. Once you've cleaned the wound, keep it protected from infection by applying a Band Aid.

57. Butterfly Sutures (Recommended)

Also known as **Skin-Closure Strips** or **Steri-Strips**, butterfly stitches are narrow adhesive strips used to close the edges of small cuts. If a wound isn't too deep or severe, they are a good alternative to regular stitches. They do not work well on areas where the skin moves a lot, such as joints, or on moist, hairy or oily areas.



How to make a butterfly strip

58. Survival Antibiotics (Recommended)

Try and add a few packs of broad-spectrum antibiotics to your first aid bag. Drinking contaminated water, or leaving a wound to fester, could cause a crippling infection. Remember to administer the antibiotics according to the recommended dosage.

59. Alcohol Wipes (Essential)

Alcohol impregnated wipes are not only useful for cleaning congealed blood and debris from open wounds, but also as a first line defense against infection-causing bacteria.

60. Q-Tips (Recommended)

Daubed in ointment, salve or liquids, a Q-Tip is a handy way of administering delicate quantities to the site of a wound. Consider also the practical benefit of keeping your ears clean. In the dead of night, without a flashlight, you'll be glad your aural senses are still functioning normally.

61. Insect Repellent (Recommended)

Many nasty diseases are transmitted via insect bites. Nevertheless, even if you don't get infected, being feasted upon can be equally unpleasant. Before buying, be sure to check the ingredients of your repellent. DEET interferes with the receptors on an insect's antennae and mouth parts, effectively masking the chemical attractants exuded on your skin. Make sure your repellent contains DEET.

62. Sun Screen (Highly Recommended)

You're probably reading this book because you believe there may come a time when you'll have to move off the grid. That means being outdoors and exposed to the elements. Regardless of your skin type, varying degrees of UV damage starts to occur whenever you expose yourself to direct sunlight. Wear a hat, wear long-sleeved shirts,

and wear sunscreen.

Some of you may even remember Baz Luhrmann's popular song, 'Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen).' In his own inimitable words, "trust me on the sunscreen!"

63. Super Glue (Recommended)

If you're short of Band-Aids or wound dressing, Super Glue is a quick and effective way to seal up small cuts. It's also useful for repairing small equipment failures.

64. Vaseline (Recommended)

Of course it's great as an ointment or for soothing chapped lips and dry skin, but a small amount of Vaseline can also be smeared on your tinder to enhance combustibility.

65. Antiseptic Cream (Essential)

Make sure your First Aid kit has a tube of **Neosporin** (or equivalent). Before covering cuts or lacerations, apply a thin film to the wound to protect against infections.

66. Pain Killers (Essential)

Off-the-shelf pain killers are handy to have around when minor aches and pains arise. You might want to include something stronger in your First Aid pack for more serious issues.

PERSONAL

67. Personal Medication (Essential)

While many of us would probably get by if we missed a week or two of our meds, some prescriptions are essential. Make sure you've packed a few weeks' supply of all your prescription meds, especially those that are critical to your health and well-being.

68. Tweezers (Recommended)

Great for removing splinters or thorns that have become lodged under the skin.

69. Moist Towelettes (Recommended)

Expect to go at least a few days without taking a bath or shower. For an 'on-the-go,' lightweight solution to your hygiene needs, pack a dozen or so towelettes. In addition, don't forget to include folded (rather than rolled) toilet paper.



70. Soap (Optional)

Time and circumstance permitting, a quick bath in a lake or river will certainly lift your spirits. Pack a few small bars, but remember to ration yourself.

71. Mini Toothbrushes (Essential)

You'll be hard-pressed finding a dentist during a civil crisis, so make an effort to look after your oral hygiene. An infected tooth can be crippling, so maintain a healthy first line of defense against infection. Also pack a few mini tubes of toothpaste—and be prepared to ration yourself. For the same reason, throw in a roll of dental floss. It's also a durable substitute for cotton when sewing up tears in thicker fabrics.

72. Tampons (Essential)

Creek Stewart is a Senior Instructor at the Willow Haven Outdoor School for Survival, Preparedness & Bushcraft. His passion is teaching, sharing, and preserving outdoor living and survival skills. For its sheer ingenuity, I direct you to an article he wrote titled 'Yes, That's a Tampon in My Mouth: The Swiss Army Survival Tampon—10 Survival Skills.'

Check it out at artofmanliness.com/articles/survival-tampon/

- Survival Use #1: Medical Bandage
- Survival Use #2: Crude Water Filter
- Survival Use #3: Fire Tinder

- Survival Use #4: Crude Survival Straw Filter
- Survival Use #5: Wick for Improvised Candle
- Survival Use #6: Cordage
- Survival Use #7: Blow Dart Fletching
- Survival Use #8: Blow Tube for Coal Burning Containers
- Survival Use #9: Waterproof Match & Fire Tinder Case
- Survival Use #10: Survival Fishing Bobber

73. Daily Supplements (Recommended)

Since you'll probably be functioning on a limited diet, a lack of essential nutrients could lead to a compromised immune system.

According to nutritionists, these are the 7 essential MVMs (multivitamin/mineral supplements) our bodies need.

- Vitamin D
- Magnesium
- Calcium
- Zinc
- Iron
- Folate
- Vitamin B-12

O.N.E Multivitamin by **Pure Encapsulations** packs all of the above, and more beside. Their vegetarian capsules are also Gluten and GMO free.

74. Sunglasses (Essential)

Whatever you do, safeguard your eyes. Sunglasses will not only protect your eyes from harsh sunlight or snow glare, but they're also an effective barrier against whippy branches, dust and flying debris. Since they're so light, consider packing a spare pair.

75. Spare Pair of Corrective Lenses (Essential)

How are you around the house when you misplace your spectacles? A bit lost, right? Imagine now you're in a survival situation and you lose (or break) your only pair of glasses. Don't compromise your effectiveness—always pack a spare pair. Same applies to contact lenses.

SPECIALIZED

If you've received some formal or advanced First Aid or Para-medical training, you may feel confident enough to include some additional specialized devices or medicines in your bag. But a word of warning. In accordance with the law, emergency life-saving situations requiring specialized intervention and/or skills are the domain of highly-trained and registered professionals only.

Rooted in ancient Roman law, there is a common legal concept known as 'The Reasonable Person Test.' According to Wikipedia, this person "belongs to a family of hypothetical figures in law including: the 'right-thinking member of society,' the

'officious bystander,' the 'reasonable parent,' the 'reasonable landlord,' and the 'fair-minded and informed observer.'"

Exercising average care, skill, and judgment, this hypothetical person is considered to be someone who would consistently act in a manner befitting society's expectations of the 'reasonable person.'

When weighed against the prudence and good judgment of this hypothetical person, the 'Reasonable Person Test' seeks to establish whether a normal citizen—a reasonable person—acted negligently, or not.

As I cannot offer legal advice, I merely pose the question: Would such a 'normal citizen' be afforded the benefit of the 'Reasonable Person Test' if he or she acted decisively (and reasonably) in a life-threatening medical emergency, far away from professional help or rescue?

In that context, I recently came across a great educational tool from **trueskinsuturekit.com**

According to True Skin's website, 'Suturing is a Critical Survival Skill. The True Skin Suture Kit is the best way to learn suturing skills. When medical help is unavailable, suturing can be necessary to adequately stop wound bleeding.'

6

CLOTHING

While considering what garments to pack, please don't forfeit any essential survival items for multiple changes of clothes. That's just a luxury you can't afford. Limit yourself to one set of durable attire. For the sake of weight (and personal hygiene), pack a few changes of underwear.

76. Boots (Essential)

Given all the important items you need to carry, it's unlikely that you'll have space for your boots. So tie them to the outside of your BOB ... for now. The moment the SHTF—and you need to bug-out on foot—change into your boots immediately.

Having invested heavily in your BOB, be sure to spend the same amount of time and effort in the selection of a pair of good-quality hiking boots. You won't regret it. A word of advice: if you're buying new boots, break them in as soon as possible.

77. Socks (Essential)

Given the kind of conditions you're likely to encounter, it makes perfect sense that you not only have the right boots, but also the right socks. The 'thickness' built into **Thorlos** socks is not simply about using thicker yarns or material: it's about the patented engineering pads that have been ergonomically positioned to protect the foot from the stresses and strains of different activities. Thorlos' five-element design matrix also takes into consideration the anatomical difference between men and women's feet. I recommend packing at least 2 pairs of **KX Hiking Socks**, 3 if you have the space.

Check out their website: www.thorlo.com

78. Quick Drying Travel Underwear (Essential)

Quick-drying underwear does exactly what it says. As soon as you've had a chance to wash them, tie them to your pack and move on. In this manner, you'll probably be able to get away with carrying only one spare set of underwear. My own choice is **Men's Quick Dry Boxer Briefs** by **Separatec.**

79. Sewing Kit (Recommended)

Based on my recommendation, you probably haven't packed a spare set of clothes in your bag. But instead of lasting only 3 days, the crisis appears to be dragging on. Your clothes are starting to show signs of wear and tear. Under such circumstances, you'll be happy you packed that small traveling sewing kit.

80. Safety Pins (Recommended)

While you're at it, slip half a dozen heavy-duty safety pins in with your sewing kit. They'll get you through a minor fashion emergency until you've got time to sew a permanent patch over your tear.

81. Survival Gloves (Recommended)

I've already mentioned the importance of looking after your eyes. The same goes for your hands. Because they're so light, consider packing two pairs of gloves: a durable pair that'll protect your hands during harsh manual work, and a well-insulated pair for when the temperature starts to plummet. **Mechanix** carry a great selection of gloves that not only meet these requirements, but are designed to allow for maximum dexterity.

82. Beanie/Stocking Cap (Recommended)

MYTH: Mom always said to wear a hat in the cold because we lose 80% of our body heat through our head.

"That's not true," says Richard Ingebretsen, MD, PhD, a wilderness medicine expert at the University of Utah School of Medicine. "The real reason we lose heat through our head is because most of the time when we're outside in the cold, we're clothed. If you don't have a hat on, you lose heat through your head, just as you would lose heat through your legs if you were wearing shorts."

BUSTED!

But I'm still going to pack a beanie for when the temperature drops.

83. Bandana (Essential)

Will Brendza's great article *How To Use A Survival Bandana To Save Your Life*' gives no less than 23 uses for a bandana. Don't leave this garment out of your BOB.

See his article at skilledsurvival.com/survival-bandana/

84. Body Warmers (Essential)



Qclick to enlarge

Almost light enough not to be noticed, a few packets of **Body Warmers** are essential items in any BOB. But use them sparingly: their value will be truly appreciated when it gets *seriously* cold, and you're close to becoming hypothermic. You simply cannot afford to lose your fingers or toes to frostbite, especially in a survival situation.

85. Poncho with Hood (Essential)

Made from waterproof and breathable material, the **Ultra-Lite2** poncho features an integrated, adjustable hood with cord locks. Side snaps are also included for a secure but breathable fit. A stuff sack is provided for easy toting.



My preference is the **Ultra-Lite2** poncho by **frogg** toggs®.

86. Long Sleeve Fleece (Recommended)

Despite being slightly bulky, a quality fleece offers excellent insulation against the cold.

7

MISCELLANEOUS

If you have the space, or are prepared to add an extra pound of two to your BOB, the following items will certainly make your life a little easier.

UTILITY

87. Portable Solar Charger (Recommended)

While it's advisable to carry a fair selection of fresh batteries, most new age devices can be recharged via an independent power source. In exchange for the weight of all your spare batteries, consider getting a portable solar charger to keep your GPS, cell phone, and flashlight fully charged. Compact enough to fit in your pocket, the **Patriot Power Cell** is an excellent backup power device that charges in the sun. It's made out of robust materials and can withstand drops, splashes and spills. With two charging docks, it's suitable for use with any USB-compatible device.

88. Carabiners (Essential)

In Chapter 1, **The Bag**, I discussed the versatility of the MOLLE system. Having half-a-dozen carabiners will ensure that you get the most out of this simple yet effective system. By hanging some of your gear from the outside of your bag you free up space for those items that need to be protected from the elements. Since you may need your carabiners for climbing or pulley work, it's worth spending a few dollars extra and getting half-a-dozen high quality, no-snag, screwgate carabiners.



The RockLock Screwgate Carabiner by Black Diamond

89. Rechargeable Batteries (Recommended)

Do an inventory check of all your electronic gear and make a list of their various battery sizes. Make sure each appliance has a corresponding set of spare batteries.

90. Duct Tape (Recommended)

Duct tape probably has 100 more uses than the original inventors ever envisaged. If you can't conjure up at least a

dozen applications in a survival situation, here are a few to help:

- Makeshift butterfly bandage strips
- Splint a broken tent pole
- Mend shoes or clothing
- Attach a splint to a broken limb
- Fashion some makeshift fletching for your arrows

91. Survival Playing Cards (Highly Recommended)

Do you recall the (true) story about Christopher McCandless, the adventurer who lived in an abandoned bus in Alaska? It was made into a movie titled *Into The Wild.*' Here's an interesting aside. Amongst a worldwide legion of fans, there arose a burning desire to embark on a pilgrimage to the site of that bus. Sadly, over the years, a number of those pilgrim-tourists were either seriously injured—or worse, perished—while trying to reach the remote spot. Due to the burden of launching numerous rescue missions, a recent decision by the Alaskan authorities has seen this 'deadly tourist lure' removed from the Stampede Trail. (It is now on display at the Fairbanks campus of the University of Alaska.)

Why do I mention this? A scene toward the end of the movie suggests that McCandless might have misidentified a type of edible plant species, and instead ended up consuming a similar but poisonous relative. The mistake proved to be fatal.

It is for this reason that I rate these playing cards as highly recommended. The back of each playing card

features 52 different edible plants found in the North American wilderness. Not only is each plant depicted in full color for easy identification, but a map identifies the geographic areas where the plant grows in the wild. A condensed set of warnings, characteristics, uses, plant parts, aliases and special cooking hints are also included on the back of each card. (And you can also play solitaire if you get bored!)



You'll find these cards at campingsurvival.com

PERSONAL

92. Cash & Valuable Metal Coins (Recommended)

The onset of a true crisis is likely to herald a state of upheaval: the unraveling of civil society; a breakdown of the supply chain; or a collapse of the currency are just three scenarios. Whichever way it goes, it's a good idea to have something valuable to barter with. High value metal coins (like the Silver Eagle) are heavy, but so too is ammunition and food. Items like these could prove to be

beyond price in an unconventional situation. Along with some minted coins, it's advisable to pack a few \$100 bills for those unforeseen emergencies.

93. Personal Credit Cards (Recommended)

If normality returns and order is restored after a SHTF situation, your credit cards may once again be of use to you. (But don't bank on it!) Pack them anyway, just in case.

94. Jump Drive (Recommended)

There's no telling what awaits us on the other side of a major crisis. While you might want to consider packing your passport and driver's license, there just isn't enough space to carry all your other important documents—the list of which could be endless. Save all of them to a jump drive and stash it away in your waterproof container. Don't forget to save images of sentimental value, like family photos.

CHECKLIST

E = Essential, R = Recommended, O = Optional

1	Henry AR-7 Survival Rifle	Ε		
2	Combat Folding Survival Bow	Е		
3	Ammunition	Е		
4	Survival Slingshot			0
5	Pepper Spray			0
6	Multi-purpose Survival Tool	Ε		
7	Survival Knife	Ε		
8	Multi Tool Pliers	Ε		
9	Hatchet	Ε		
10	Portable Wire Chainsaw		R	
11	1st Responder Folding Blade		R	
12	Eating Utensils	Ε		
13	Tactical Pen			0
14	Night Image Enhancers		R	
15	Stainless Steel Water Bottle	Ε		
16	Water Purification Tablets	Е		
17	Portable Water Filter	Е		
18	Tube Tent/Survival Tent	Ε		
19	Sleeping Pad			0
20	Sleeping Bag	Ε		
21	Zip Ties	Е		
22	Calorie Dense Food Bars	Ε		
23	MREs	Ε		
24	Collapsible Bowl		R	

25	Aluminum Cooking Pot		R	
26	Waterproof Matches	Е		
27	FireSteel Fire Starter	Ε		
28	Electrical Lighter	Ε		
29	Magnifying Glass		R	
30	Tinder		R	
31	Waterproof Container		R	
32	Portable Stove		R	
33	Trioxane Fuel Bars		R	
34	LED Headlamp	Ε		
35	LED Tactical Flashlight	Ε		
36	Glow Sticks		R	
37	Paracord	Ε		
38	Yo-Yo Fishing Reels	Ε		
39	Hook, Swivel, Sinker Set	Ε		
40	Emergency Fishing Line	Ε		
41	Snare Wires		R	
42	Ball of String			0
43	Quality Compass	Ε		
44	Local Area Topographical Map	Е		
45	Two-Way Radio Set		R	
46	Cell Phone or Smartphone		R	
47	AM/FM/NOAA Digital Radio	Ε		
48	Small Signaling Mirror	Ε		

49	Notebook & Pencil	Е		
50	Survival Whistle	Ε		
51	First Aid Kit	Ε		
52	CAT Tourniquet	Ε		
53	QuikClot	Ε		
54	Wound Gauze	Ε		
55	Surgical Tape	Ε		
56	Band Aids	Ε		
56	Band Aids	Ε		
57	Butterfly Sutures		R	
58	Survival Antibiotics		R	
59	Alcohol Wipes	Ε		
60	Q-Tips		R	
61	Insect Repellent		R	
62	Sun Screen		R	
63	Super Glue		R	
64	Vaseline		R	
65	Antiseptic Cream	Е		
66	Pain Killers	Ε		
67	Personal Medication	Ε		
68	Tweezers		R	
69	Moist Towelettes		R	
70	Soap			0
71	Mini Toothbrushes	Е		
72	Tampons	Ε		

73	Daily Supplements		R	
74	Sunglasses	Ε		
75	Spare Pair of Corrective Lenses	Е		
76	Boots	Е		
77	Socks	Е		
78	Quick-Dry Travel Underwear	Е		
79	Sewing Kit		R	
80	Safety Pins		R	
81	Survival Gloves		R	
82	Beanie/Stocking Cap		R	
83	Bandana	Ε		
84	Body Warmers	Ε		
85	Poncho with Hood	Ε		
86	Long Sleeve Fleece		R	
87	Portable Solar Charger		R	
88	Carabineers	Ε		
89	Rechargeable Batteries		R	
90	Duct Tape		R	
91	Survival Playing Cards		R	
92	Cash & Valuable Metal Coins		R	
93	Personal Credit Cards		R	
94	Jump Drive		R	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Albyn has authored and ghost-written a number of books. He also puts his engineering background to good use as a professional technical writer. Originally from Rhodesia—Zimbabwe today—Albyn is an avid traveler and adventurer whose life has encompassed many divergent interests, careers and experiences. His life-long passion for aviation started as a trainee pilot with the Rhodesian Air Force in the late 70s. Besides delighting in rotary flight, Albyn has held board-level positions in the corporate arena; worked as a civilian coalition contractor in the Second Gulf War; consulted with TV documentary crews on two continents; presented internationally on conservation matters; won the South African Camel Adventure in 1992; and spent over three years as the senior instructor at one of the world's foremost bodyguard academies in Cape Town, South Africa. As evidenced in Manzovo—his first acclaimed title—Albyn is also passionate about wildlife conservation. He lives with his wife Cathy in California, USA.



Logo by Tim Repsher

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