



Core Survival Skills

FIRE: 🔥

Ignition Sources: Matches, lighters, ferro rod, magnifying glass, battery/steel wool.
Friction Fire: Bow drill, hand drill – requires significant practice and specific wood types.
Tinder Collection: Gather fine, dry materials like dry grass, birch bark, cottonwood fluff, or fine wood shavings.
Kindling: Use small twigs, feather sticks, and pencil-sized branches to build up the flame gradually.
Fire Lays: Start with a Teepee for quick ignition, then transition to a Log Cabin for stability, or a Star for long burns.
Location: Clear a minimum 10-foot radius of combustibles, protecting your fire from wind, ideally near natural wind breaks.
Extinguishing: Douse thoroughly with water, stir ashes to expose embers, and feel for any residual heat before leaving.
📌 Pro Tip: Always collect three times more fuel than you think you'll need; a fire consumes wood rapidly.

WATER: 💧

Finding Water: Follow animal trails (often lead to water), look for low-lying areas, or collect rainwater in tarps.
Dew/Transpiration: Collect dew from plants in the morning, or tie a plastic bag around leafy branches for condensation.
Snow/Ice: Melt snow or ice thoroughly before consuming; avoid eating directly as it lowers body temperature.
Boiling: Boil all collected water vigorously for 1-3 minutes to kill most harmful pathogens.
Filtration: Use a commercial filter, or improvise with layers of cloth, sand, charcoal, and gravel to remove particulates.
Chemical Tablets: Iodine or chlorine dioxide tablets are effective for purification but require specific contact times.
Water Storage: Use durable, sealable containers such as plastic bottles, canteens, or improvised animal bladders.
Rationing: Prioritize hydration by sipping water; avoid overexertion, and eat less if water is scarce to conserve fluids.
📌 Pro Tip: Dehydration is a rapid killer; prioritize finding and purifying water over food in a survival situation.

SHELTER: 🏠

Purpose: A good shelter protects you from wind, rain, snow, sun, and extreme temperatures.
Site Selection: Choose high ground for drainage, away from deadfall, and naturally sheltered from prevailing winds.
Natural Options: Caves, large rock overhangs, or dense evergreen trees (especially in snow) can offer immediate refuge.
Debris Hut: Construct a sturdy frame, then pile thick layers of leaves, grass, and debris for critical insulation.
Lean-to: A simple structure with a ridgeline and sloping roof, ideal for quick protection from rain or wind.
Insulation: Pack dry leaves, pine needles, or dry grass tightly inside your shelter and under your body for warmth.
Ground Barrier: Use natural materials (pine boughs, dry leaves) or a tarp to separate yourself from the cold ground.
Security: Ensure your shelter is stable and secure against strong winds; block off any large openings to prevent heat loss.
📌 Pro Tip: Build your shelter before dusk; it's your primary defense against the elements and requires daylight.

NAVIGATION: 🧭

Map Orientation: Align your map's north with true north using a compass or by identifying natural indicators.
Compass Basics: Understand the needle, housing, and baseplate; know how to read bearings and account for declination.
Taking a Bearing: Point your compass at a distant target, rotate the housing to align, read the bearing, then follow it.
Sun Compass: Use a stick and its shadow to find cardinal directions (east in the morning, west in the evening).
North Star (Polaris): Locate the Big Dipper and Little Dipper; Polaris is always true North in the Northern Hemisphere.
Landmarks: Identify prominent features (mountains, large trees) and use them as waypoints for navigation and re-orientation.
Handrails: Use linear features like rivers, ridges, or roads to guide your travel and prevent getting off course.
Pacing: Know your pace count (number of steps per 100 meters) to accurately estimate distances traveled.
📌 Pro Tip: If lost, stay calm, stay put, signal for help, and mentally retrace your steps before moving further.

FIRST AID: 📄

ABCs: Prioritize Airway, Breathing, and Circulation to ensure the casualty is stable.
Bleeding Control: Apply direct pressure with a clean cloth to severe bleeding; elevate the injured limb if possible.
Fractures/Sprains: Immobilize the injured limb with an improvised splint (e.g., sticks, torn cloth) to prevent further damage.
Hypothermia: Remove all wet clothing, insulate the victim with dry layers, provide warm drinks, and share body heat if safe.
Dehydration: Administer small sips of water frequently; use electrolyte solutions if available to restore balance.
Burns: Cool minor burns with clean, running water, then cover loosely with a sterile dressing; avoid breaking blisters.
Signaling: Three of anything (fires, whistle blasts, mirror flashes) is an international distress signal for help.
Emotional Support: Keep the injured person calm and reassured; maintain a positive outlook to reduce panic.
📌 Pro Tip: Prevention is the best first aid: dress appropriately, know your physical limits, and always tell someone your plans.

FOOD & FORAGING: 📄

Rule of Thumb: Never eat anything you cannot positively identify as safe; when in doubt, go without.
Universal Edibility Test (Last Resort): A slow, methodical process to test small amounts of unknown plants for adverse reactions.
Local Foraging: Focus on common, easily identifiable edibles native to your region like specific berries, nuts, or greens.
Water Indicators: Certain plants (e.g., cattails) often indicate proximity to water sources.
Trapping/Snaring: Set simple snares on active animal trails; check them frequently, ideally daily.
Fishing: Improve hooks from bone or metal; use fishing line or fibrous plant material for improvised lines.
Insects: Many insects are edible and protein-rich; avoid brightly colored, hairy, or stinging ones.
Preparation: Cook all meat thoroughly to kill parasites; clean fish and game immediately after harvesting.
📌 Pro Tip: Food is secondary to water and shelter; prioritize immediate survival needs before extensive foraging.