

# URBAN PREPPING 101

## for Families and Beginner Preppers

10-STEP GUIDE TO FILTER WATER, STORE FOOD,  
STOCKPILE MEDICINE AND CREATE A  
DISASTER-READY HOME TO

BE PREPARED FOR ANY SUBURBAN SHTF SCENARIO



SHTF FUNDAMENTALS

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DISASTER-READY HOME TO BE PREPARED FOR ANY SUBURBAN SHTF SCENARIO



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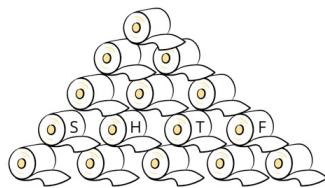
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## FEEDBACK FROM REVIEWERS SO FAR....



*5.0.out-of-5-stars*

### ***-Easy-and-entertaining-read***

It's not often that you find a prepping book that is not only easy to read, but is enjoyable without being "preachy"! Much too often preppers seem to have the mentality of "guns and ammo" to protect against the "zombie hoards" so when I started this one, that was what I was expecting. Was I ever wrong!! Definitely written from a mother's point of view, this book deals with the areas that matter the most, preparing the entire family for a crisis! Highly recommended read for anyone who is unsure about how to "prepare with children" and is looking for assistance.

*5.0.out-of-5-stars*

### ***-A.great-guide.and.reference.for-the.days.ahead***

After reading Urban Prepping, I found that there were a few things I was lacking and behind in. This book would serve as a great beginning as well as a reference long after. I recommend for anyone that wants to be prepared for what lies ahead to grab this book and use it to stay ahead of whatever comes our way.

*5.0.out-of-5-stars*

### **-Very-helpful-and-thorough**

I love that this book is so thorough. It covers the basics but also gives very comprehensive lists and tips. I'm not a beginner, but this guide is also helpful because it covers all the different aspects. People prep for different reasons. I prep for hurricane emergency, but I think this has something for everyone.

*5.0.out-of-5.stars*

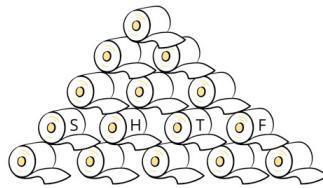
### **-I-love.this.book!**

The author has written a book that not only teaches, but keeps one engaged and wanting more! I thought I was ready for TEOTWAWKI, but she taught me otherwise! Thank you!

*5.0.out-of-5.stars*

### **-Excellent-and-Timely-Information!**

This book is from a "Momma Bear's" point of view. It offers many practical ideas and solutions for the majority of recently awakened preppers who aren't necessarily planning to 'head for the hills,' but are beginning to see the handwriting on the wall and the possible repercussions an economic collapse (or even a natural disaster in one's area) could present to the everyday citizen. Well thought out and well written! I highly recommend this book for your Prepper Library!



If you would like to join in the applause and help this book immensely in its beginner struggle up the ranks, hopefully not to be abandoned and forever forgotten in what is known affectionately by other authors as the "Amazon graveyard," then please [click on this link](#) to the review page whenever you have a spare moment !

Every review is like a drop of water in the desert - so much appreciated, and all reviews will be taken as encouragement and feedback for the upcoming prepping books in this series. Also, do feel free to contact me at any time if

you have ideas for which topics would serve you most in your prepping challenges!

Thanks for your support, and good luck with your prepping!

“Prepper Emma”



# SIGN UP FOR OUR 14-DAY PREPPING CHALLENGE!

**SHTF FUNDAMENTALS**  
STAY CALM & KEEP PREPPING

# 14 Day Challenge

get prepping today!

**14 DAYS OF PREPPING: MUST-HAVES AND NECESSITIES TO SURVIVE A SHTF SITUATION**

Complete lists of foods, water supplies, medicines and products needed to have you completely prepped and ready for any emergency situation in 14 days!

[www.shtffundamentals.com](http://www.shtffundamentals.com)

**#1 WATER: STORAGE, FILTRATION AND PURIFICATION**

STORE 1 GALLON (3.78L) OF WATER PER FAMILY MEMBER PER DAY IN CONTAINERS THAT IS OUT OF DIRECT SUNLIGHT. THIS IS AROUND 56 GALLONS OF WATER FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR FOR 14-DAYS.

"Water is one of the basic necessities that we cannot live without. It has a functional role in flushing out body waste, regulating our body temperature, and assisting with our brain function. We have seen with the current COVID-19 pandemic, even flowing into the anxiety caused by war and inflation, how many people, regardless of their preparedness level, stock up on water."

**#2 FOOD PANTRY AND STOCKPILE**

STORE AT LEAST 2,000 CALORIES OF FOOD PER PERSON PER DAY WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY 10,000 CALORIES OF FOOD PER FAMILY MEMBER FOR 14-DAYS.

**FOOD CONTAINERS**

- Glass containers.
- Vacuum sealed bags.
- Enveloped metal cans.
- Mylar bags.
- Hydrating food.
- Dehydrating.
- Vacuum sealing.
- Freeze drying.

*"In any emergency situation, eating the right food enables you to maintain strength, which ultimately assists with survival."*

**FOOD TIPS:**

- Label foods and eat them within 18-24 months.
- Store away from heat.
- Check expiration date.
- Store in a variety of prepared, nutritional dietary restrictions.

**#3 FIRST AID AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES**

ALWAYS INCLUDE A FIRST AID KIT & BASIC FIRST AID MEDICAL MEDICATION TO PREPARE FOR ANY SHIT HIT BUMPTY.

**MEDICAL SUPPLIES**

- Alcohol wipes.
- Bandages.
- Antibiotic creams.
- Burn treatments.
- Eye drops.
- Tissues.
- Medical tape.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Sterile saline.
- Bandages.
- Eye drops.
- Cold and heat packs.

**MEDICAL TIPS:**

- Include first-aid remedies.
- Store away from the sun.
- Change the remedies every year.
- Store in an easy-to-reach place.

**#4 INCONVENIENCIAL SANITATION AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS**

ALWAYS INCLUDE PLASTIC WASTE BAGS TO CONTAIN LITTER, DIAPERS AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS FOR AVOIDING.

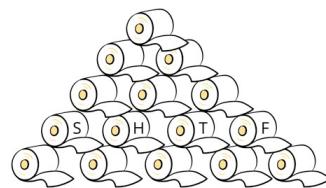
HYGIENE SUPPLIES TO INCLUDE:

- Feminine.
- Sanitary.
- Toilet Paper.
- Hand Sanitizer.
- Sponges and infant supplies.
- Extra Sheets.
- Laundry Detergent.
- Surface Cleaning Wipes.
- Hand Sanitizing Agents.
- Face Masks.
- Feminine Products.



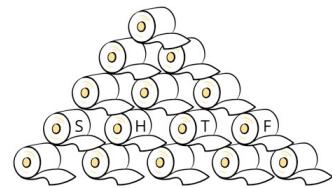
## **GET PREPPING TODAY WITH THIS FREE QUICK START GUIDE TO:**

- Water Storage, Filtration & Purification
- Food Pantry Stockpile
- First Aid & Medical Supplies
- Home Security & Self Defense
- Energy Supplies & Alternative Cooking
- Sustainable Sanitation & Hygiene Products
- Bonus Material: Lists and Tables from this Book



*"Preparedness, when properly pursued, is a way of life, not a sudden, spectacular program."*

*Spencer W. Kimball*





*My heartfelt thanks to Melanie Robbins for her tireless help with editing, proofreading, and researching many parts of this book. Melanie is a direct descendent of the pioneers from England who bravely set sail to the new world on the Mayflower on September 6, 1620, and I am honored to have had her on board!*

*May the true prepping spirit of these brave adventurers accompany us all on our journey to be prepared for any and all SHTF scenarios!*

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# ABOUT

When I started *SHTF Fundamentals*, I used to be in your shoes. I was overwhelmed by the amount of untrustworthy, unrealistic, or otherwise dubious online resources dealing with prepping for the unknown. I understand the needs and frustrations of people with little to no experience with survival tactics and preparation.

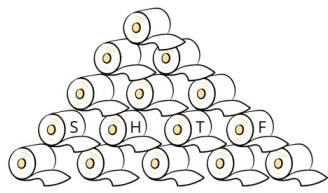
Everything you see on our website ([shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com)), including this 10-step guide, is compiled from highly reputable survival, homesteading, and preparedness experts with advice and knowledge that applies to a broad spectrum of people, places, budgets, and scenarios.

Some are more prepared than others, with knowledge and training on surviving all kinds of SHTF situations. But many of us are suburban families looking for ways to prepare for emergencies effectively, in affordable and appropriate ways.

Let's set aside ideas of bunkers and fighting to the end for water and the last pack of toilet rolls and learn how to prepare correctly as a beginner urban prepper.

Emma Crawford, 21. April 2022

(Author of this book and founder of SHTF Fundamentals)



# PREFACE

The life we have experienced pre-pandemic will never return, and how we live has been changed. Many now face the reality that *The End of the World as We Know It* (or TEOTWAWKI) is not a myth.

Changes in the world we were accustomed to have resulted in uncertainty for the future. Many were shocked by swift job losses, foreclosures, evictions and having to work and study remotely. Nothing would be the same, and everything felt as if it were "hanging by a thread." The only thing that has remained steadfast is the ability and growing necessity to prepare for a worst-case scenario or emergency. The world birthed a new pattern: adapt, survive and prepare.

By the end of March 2020, over 100 countries had gone into lockdown, with restrictions differing in each. Billions of people were affected. Popular YouTube channels like *ABC Action News*, *WQED Pittsburgh*, and *PBS NewsHour* documented the vast effects on many families, including food and sanitary shortages, while inflation ripped into many homes.

Two years have passed, but we are far from a future free of global crises.

## **BUT WHAT EXACTLY WILL WE DO IF A GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS OCCURS?**

As a young married mother living in the suburbs, I was filled with trepidation as I wondered about my children's future. But, being an insomniac, I decided to use my sleeplessness for something productive.

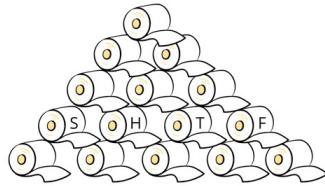
There had to be a solution for prepping for my family without emptying our savings account of its last dollars.

Inspired by a quote from Stephen King, "*there's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst,*" I spent hours on Google researching recipes involving rice and beans and DIY hygiene products before I stumbled upon a gold mine. In the following weeks, I found myself immersed in a world of preparations for the worst-case scenario.

Apart from considering the measurements for a bunker (which was vetoed by my toddlers in a family meeting), I began drafting a plan for suburban ways in which I could become prepared. As a result, I learned many valuable, sustainable and practical methods to prepare for the uncertain future.

At a dinner party I hosted, one of my friends questioned me about the busy project on the back porch. I went rambling on about all that I had learned, to which she jokingly remarked, "You should write a book about this,"

And so, I did.



# INTRODUCTION

**B**efore we grapple with the how-to and methodology, I'd like to share my story.

As I mentioned, I first entered the world of "prepping," ignited by apprehension and filled with apocalyptic fear-induced predictions about doom and disaster. The majority of emergency preparedness books on *Amazon* seem to deal with preparing us for escaping into the wilderness with a backpack, minimal supplies, and a few essential survival tools.

I experienced new and overwhelming challenges of living in modern times in which global pandemics, climate crises, and the threat of mass starvation and even nuclear war on the horizon have become part of my daily life. During the lockdown, whenever my kids would ask when they would return to school, I was filled with added heaviness.

There were more problems I was beginning to face, apart from needing to mentally and physically prepare my family for prepping, and now, to top it all off, I had become a full-time teacher, chef, and cleaner.

My partner could always sustain us on his salary, but I had to pick up a few extra part-time jobs that would allow me to work from home as I was a full-time mom actively involved in her children's well-being. So, despite having many friends, we were all absorbed with our own challenges as we began grappling with the new way of living.

As a mother to two four-year-olds who did not understand what was unfolding before them, I had to move a lot of mountains. However, it

became easier the more I practiced mindfulness, and I decided to see those mountains as something I would climb and not carry.

I remember the day I felt a massive shift in my heart. It was late in October 2020, seven months into the pandemic, when I looked at my meal prepping list for the week. I became increasingly agitated as the kids ran around the kitchen while I fidgeted with my calculator. Eventually, I set the pair down in the living room and turned on a random children's show before resuming my activities.

It did not matter how many adjustments I tried to make to our grocery list; inflation was still adding to our bills. I peered up at my two toddlers as they sat watching *Dora the Explorer*, and I was saddened knowing how young they were and how much exploring they still had to do themselves. They were yet to discover the true potential of life, and all the doom and gloom had to have a solution. Humans are too far evolved not to find a solution to a problem.

I wanted my solution to be practical and sustainable for my family and their needs. However, we do not know what tomorrow brings, so we must find a way to cope with any potential crisis for ourselves and future generations.

At first, I thought I was the only one thinking along these lines, but I felt relieved and less alone when *TikTok* emerged with its own *#PrepTok* community. I also discovered more and more communities on *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Telegram*, and online forums where experienced preppers shared their wisdom. With the plethora of information at hand, I decided to make arrangements that would benefit my family, using what we had and spending as little as possible on any miscellaneous preparation items needed. Apart from the strategies I needed to implement, I had to work within the urgency of time while my children were schooling from home. *Amazon* became my best friend.

My main concern apart from this was space. I live in a duplex apartment with a tiny backyard, porch, and one-vehicle garage, occupied by my 19-something Ford, which still works perfectly. My partner assisted me in reselling many of the twin's abandoned toys that occupied the garage, building shelves to house our resources.

When I told my partner that I also wanted to start a small vegetable garden, he laughed before recognizing the seriousness in my tone. Then, being the supportive man he is, he asked, "what do you need for it?" I listed the essential supplies, and we began a search online to compare the prices of products we needed to start an economical and sustainable mini-garden.

There were many times that I felt unheard by people who were closest to me, as many believed I had become a naive victim of the latest conspiracy theories. I found an alternative way to connect with like-minded people via the various social media groups in which I had become an active member. People of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of preparedness dedicated to answering questions and sharing reputable information extracted from prepping books, blogs, and government websites became my new online family. Forums started springing up in which new platforms and communities of like-minded preppers would meet to discuss budget-friendly prepping methods and eagerly share their knowledge based on direct personal experience. I gained a unique and invaluable community of long-term friends and experts who were physically, mentally, and spiritually prepared for the uncertain future.

This led to the creation of my own *Facebook* group and website, which goes by the name of [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com). Undercover preppers like myself use this platform to exchange ideas, advice, and a knowledge base of our favorite books, videos, and blog posts to support our efforts in preparing for the future.

What started as a means of saving money became a lifestyle in which I do not have to sacrifice the health and well-being of my family. My twins, now nearing six, partake in holistic learning and love participating in the vegetable garden, canning and dehydrating process. In January of 2022, we welcomed their little sister into the world, and I found myself with the added sustainability challenge of providing for a newborn.

Now well-established and ever-growing, the online community provided me with all the solutions and tips I needed to feel confident about the future, all of which I will share with you in the following chapters. My kids have a long life ahead of them, and so do yours. If we live correctly, sustainably, and prepare for the unknown, we can also pave the way for them to have a future.

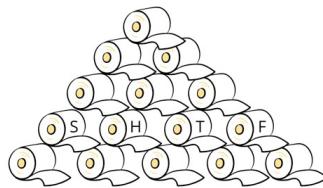
In this book, I will be sharing everything I learned in ten easy-to-follow steps presented in these categories:

1. Water Storage, Filtration, and Purification
2. Food Must-Haves and Do's
3. First-Aid and Medical Supplies to Patch Up the Unknown
4. Home Security and Personal Defense Items to Combat all Forms of Danger
5. Energy Supplies Needed to Stay Lit and Warm
6. Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene Products
7. Financial Prep
8. All Things War Related: Evacuation, Weapons, and Treating Radiation
9. All Hands on Deck: Integrating Your Family for Prepping
10. Mental Health and Wellness Support

While this might seem overwhelming, remember there is no "one shoe fits all" method. This book is intended to serve as an easy-to-follow guide that introduces the most important steps to ensure your family's survival in short- or long-term emergencies - even when living in a city or suburban area.

*Are you ready to learn more?*

Let's dive into what to do if and when the sh\*t hits the fan (SHTF).



# WHY BECOME A PREPPER?

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*"Be Prepared... the meaning of the motto is that a scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise."*

*- Robert Baden-Powell*

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The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* released a preparedness program in 2017. As urgency has grown in governments worldwide and environmental strategies, more people are beginning to wake up to what was always there. Of course, emergencies and disasters have always existed, but the magnitude thereof is growing.

In conversations with friends, they often complain that being a prepper is too expensive. As a frugal individual, I can't entirely agree. So call me *Saving-Sue* because if there is a store special or means of obtaining something cheaper, I probably know and have it in my *Amazon* cart. Or it's already shipped, and I've yet to tell my husband.

As I embarked on a journey of becoming a prepper and began my scouring of the web for reliable information, I came across an interesting description of a prepper in the *Urban Dictionary*:

**P—repare** for any natural or manufactured disaster.

**R-espond** without fear.

**E-valuate** every possible scenario.

**P-ack** like you won't have supplies for a year.

**P-lan** for the unexpected.

**E-nvision** a happy outcome.

**R-emember** to always have hope!

One of the most common misconceptions is that preppers are people with underground bunkers who are preparing for the end of civilization and have stocked up on years of supplies to sustain them in a post-apocalyptic world. As appealing and safe as a bunker sounds, I don't think my kids would allow me to move their swing-set to dig an underground fort, not to mention the astronomical expense.

Think back to March 2020 when social media erupted with videos of people who tapped into animalistic behavior for survival as they mauled shelves and one another to get their arms around the last pack of toilet rolls as if their lives depended on it. Many began speaking of doom and gloom scenarios as apocalyptic news took over, declaring lists of essentials alongside the infamous toilet rolls required to make it through the pandemic.

Upon the official announcement of a global pandemic and the first lockdowns, my first concern was food above all. At the same time, the more experienced preppers and survivalists cleared shelves of all other essentials. I remember the shock of walking into *Target* and *Costco* and seeing shelves totally wiped out. Everything related to pasta and tomato sauce was missing, rice and beans were sparse, and there were long stretches of empty space in the hygiene department.

I felt like an awful mother who hadn't considered the essential products we might need in emergencies. I had used coupons throughout my life, but something as basic as toilet paper never came to mind. So many found themselves sitting at home with shelves packed with shampoos, soaps, and washing powder while thinking about how to barter with their neighbors for edible supplies.

Clearly, I did not want to participate in the food wars at the local *Walmart* or have to face the possibility of zombies busting through my front door (don't laugh, according to the CDC website, it's a distinct possibility; just head over to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and put "zombies" into the search bar to find out for yourself). I just wanted the comfort of knowing that my family was safe and cared for, regardless of any SHTF scenario.

It was time to get prepping, so where do I begin? What type of prepper did I actually want to become?

At one end of the spectrum, we have the preppers who have bulletproof bunkers built in their backyards and are more than ready for alien invasions to come to town. In contrast, less extreme preppers understand the fragility of our resources and supply chain system better than others, especially when it comes to emergencies, and make their preparations accordingly. These individuals recognize the possibility of a global crisis and prepare basic supplies, including sanitary, healthcare, and some extra shelf-life groceries that one can store in the pantry. These preppers clearly differ from the bunker boys who have enough weapons and gas to last a lifetime in their "secret" hideouts. But, like so many other characteristics known to man, each prepper is unique.

They might require something you don't based on their needs, family structure, or geographical location. And that's okay. For example, my one son is autistic and only eats a particular type of spaghetti for lunch daily. When we saw the increasing panic, we splurged a little to ensure that he would have his "safe" food needs met, which is crucial to autistic individuals. Do we now have two large storage containers filled with spaghetti? Yes, and our son is happy and comfortable, which is vital for our family.

Many individuals have intolerances, such as gluten and lactose, with numbers increasing globally. Whether short-term or long, obtaining necessities for dietary conditions must be considered and appropriately planned, as they can be costly and challenging to find, especially if supply chains are disrupted.

While preppers vary greatly in their prepping styles, there are broad categories that each falls under::

- *Basic preppers*: These people are starting to build up or maintain essential household items like food, water, and first aid in emergencies. These individuals generally have basic supplies for specific emergencies or some natural disasters.
- *Short-term preppers*: These individuals typically house supplies for emergencies, global crises, and natural or manufactured disasters. Their stockpiles can last anywhere between a few weeks to three months.
- *Long-term prepper*: These individuals prepare for most curveballs thrown their way. Supplies should last for a minimum of a year, and they spend more time building self-sustainability and working on methods to make their stockpiles last longer, such as water filtration systems and food dehydration.
- *Off-the-grid preppers*: These preppers can only sleep well at night once they feel they are well established for apocalyptic scenarios, including surviving off the land. Movies like *Mother/Android* represent our "off-the-grid preppers," where a young pregnant woman and her partner struggle to stay alive in the forest, void of cellphone connection and power.

And then there is the basic everyday prepper, much like myself, who routinely plans ahead for family trips or expeditions for that "just in case" moment. If you have been camping, you know how important it is to have a medical kit and other survival and safety tools with you, as you never know what you will encounter.

My partner and I were backpacking around the Grand Canyon, where we camped for a night, and during the descent, I twisted my ankle. Thankfully we had the resources necessary to tend to it before reaching the bottom. While it is not best to always consider the negatives and the possibility of harm, life is unexpected. That experience taught me it is always better to plan for all eventualities, regardless of their magnitude.

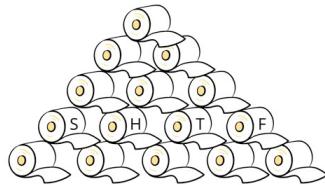
Before I embarked on my preparedness journey, I realized how dependent we had become on the stores to provide for our needs. When the pandemic hit, I was shocked by the rising costs and low supplies stored in many supermarket warehouses. We are all more reliant on the market than we would like ourselves to believe.

As a result, more and more people are starting to create their own inexpensive, sustainable, and long-lasting generic products to circumvent the costs of inflation or limited supplies. When I got into prepping, I recognized that it was up to me to decide if I would have just the bare necessities at my fingertips or if I would be preparing for a lifetime of living without modern amenities. That is what you need to ask yourself before a disaster strikes.

So many stigmas are attached to individuals who decide to take prepping into their own hands and choose a sustainable lifestyle. Many forget that our modern society filled with technology is still pretty recent. People have survived for countless generations without access to shops, roads, electricity, running water, sewage systems, or many other modern amenities that we take for granted.

As an urban city dweller limited to storing emergency supplies in an attic, garage, and tiny pantry, I find myself comforted, knowing that if SHTF, my family will be okay for at least a few weeks, if not months.

This leads me to my first prep tip; building a self-reliant home on a budget.



# HOW CAN I BECOME A PREPPER IN AN URBAN AREA?

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*"Plan ahead: It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark."*

*- Richard Cushing*

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My lifestyle decision to be prepared for a SHTF situation baffled many of my friends and family simply because they assumed a sustainable lifestyle was more about being a homesteader with a battalion of goats and chickens running around the backyard. I remember talking to my mother, a devout tree-hugger, about starting a garden and her first question was, "where would you put it?"

Despite having been a girl scout and an experienced hiker, I was nowhere near prepared for an "end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it" scenario. I was not even sure where to begin. In many of the numerous conversations I have had where the subject of prepping is brought up, I found that most people are misinformed about the basics tailored to beginner preppers like you and me.

Let me just say that I did not have to make too many significant changes; I merely had to think "outside the box." Thankfully, building a self-reliant lifestyle is not nearly as complicated as many would have you believe.

You don't have to purchase expensive equipment or hide out in an underground bunker to "preserve humanity" as in *The Colony*; you only have to assess your needs and increase the supply of things you already use and consume.

Before making any purchase for our prepping supplies, my partner and I sit down and consider how we would use them and if it would be best for our family. The right mindset is the most critical factor when it comes to prepping. You do not want to enter panic mode, purchasing shelf products that may expire within a year or two and won't fit in your meal plans.

TV shows like *The Last Man on Earth*, *The Walking Dead*, *the 100*, and *Survivors* are fantastic post-apocalyptic TV shows that set the pace for survival and its accompanying mindset. Many survival or doomsday shows spark innovation in our minds as we are left considering what we would do ourselves in a similar scenario. We are left grappling with how to live a life based more on essentialism and feeling gratitude for the necessities we often take for granted.

Besides your everyday prepper, there are also many celebrity preppers, including Ryan Seacrest, Steve Huffman, Antonio Garcia Martinez, and Roseanne Barr. Even Teddy Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States, understood the importance of emergency preparedness, as should we, and remarked in a famous quote, "make preparations in advance ... you never have trouble if you are prepared for it."

Before considering a self-reliant home, decide whether you want to be prepared just for emergencies or for long-term, uncertain future events. Once that is settled, draw up a list of foods, medical supplies, and necessities your family cannot live without. This will enable you to not only know what methods you need to look at employing, but it will also help you to structure your self-reliant home.

One thing that has comforted me most throughout my lifestyle transition into prepping is community. I am comforted by knowing that millions of people from all walks of life are starting to take preparedness seriously. There is a growing movement based on self-reliance.

Our world is changing, and all we can control is how prepared we are for that change. Prepping is more about reducing the chances of significant life disruptions and helps better recover from disorders when they occur. That's it! Even something as simple and ordinary as a fire extinguisher in your kitchen counts — most prepping has absolutely nothing to do with bunkers and bullets.

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO HAVE AND LEARN WHILE PREPPING

Prepping is a much more physical and mental activity than it is about stockpiling. Your stockpile won't protect you against every SHTF situation, while specific skills and traits will increase your survival ability. Remember that person in every horror movie who blindly runs into danger? Don't be that person!

These are twelve vital skills and traits to have as a prepper:

1. *First-aid skills*: Knowing how to administer first aid can literally save lives. Whether basic knowledge or more advanced, wound care or herbal home remedies, it all makes a difference in a crisis.
2. *Gardening Skills*: Being self-reliant and self-sufficient is a skill that will undoubtedly work in your favor if stores close or you face a food shortage crisis.
3. *Basic Fix-It Skills*: Knowing how to pound a nail or remove a screw are just two of the hundreds of fix-it skills that will help you make needed repairs. They are also marketable skills that can make you an asset to a community, which works well for any future bartering needs.
4. *Cooking Skills*: This goes without saying as people have to eat, and being able to cook something from scratch is an unmatched skill.
5. *Self-defense Skills*: From zombies to pantry thieves, self-defense is a fundamental skill that will keep you safe and sane.
6. *Outdoor Survival Skills*: We never know if the sh\*t that hits the fan will force us to take a step back in evolution, so knowing how to thrive outdoors is a bonus for survival. Practicing these skills can

also make a family camping trip more fun and adventurous if the world as we know it doesn't come to a grinding halt anytime soon.

7. *Stamina*: Coupled with perseverance, being able to stay determined and physically capable of fleeing from danger is something that is required in emergencies.
8. *Frugality*: Using your resources wisely, not only in terms of consumables but the use of time, will help you avoid costly habits and enjoy a simpler life.
9. *Compassion*: If the pandemic and war in Ukraine showed anything to the world, it is the ability of humans to have compassion toward others. This is also needed for survival, for when people are unable to care for themselves, you can help the more vulnerable among us.
10. *Interpersonal Skills*: Humans are not islands; we can circumvent loneliness, isolation, and depression by having social skills. This enables you to build good community relationships as you never know when you might need "a cup of sugar" from your next-door neighbor.
11. *Problem Solving Skills*: In any situation, being able to think on your feet is critical. If you can realistically identify whether or not to evacuate, it can provide the difference between living, surviving, and dying.
12. *Self-knowledge Skills*: Knowing your strengths and weaknesses helps you to communicate better with your family and others and allows you to see where you might fall short. Knowing this, you can create a plan before it becomes vital to your survival.

### **A few simple and practical ways to build a self-sustaining home include:**

- Purchase products that serve multiple uses. For example, we use lemon juice and apple cider vinegar for cooking and as cleaning agents.
- Be energy efficient.
- Have a source of water on your property. Utilities such as a rainwater collector, water tanks, and filtration systems make up the fundamentals of water prepping. Several friends visiting and residing in South Africa mentioned a grave water emergency as

rivers started to dry up. There was a water shortage where municipalities awaited '*Day Zero*' or the day when water taps ran completely dry. People began investing in water tanks to collect rainwater and use that as their primary supply. As humans, we have always been competent enough to find an efficient and sustainable way of using our resources, but then "dig our own graves" by opting to use the easiest method.

- Manage your waste. A composting toilet not dependent on a sewer system can be used for compost in gardens to grow plants and food. We also have a large container for fruit and vegetable scraps, dry leaves, grass, and eggshells as compost for our vegetable garden. This enables us to save a few bucks and practice sustainability and recycling, which are crucial in emergencies where you cannot access a store or are off the grid.
- Produce your own food. You can start small by planting vegetables or even having a simple greenhouse in your backyard. If space is a problem, you can use a vacant window sill and plant small-scale herb gardens. The easiest vegetables to grow include lettuce, green beans, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes. We started our garden with green onions, which grew on our kitchen window sill, and tomatoes on the back porch. Once we got the hang of basic gardening, we expanded, tried new vegetables, and sought the advice of other green-thumbed preppers.
- Find ways to provide heat and light. In a power shortage, having emergency lights, candles, or making use of a fireplace is essential.
- Re-purpose items. Recently, we have repurposed a few of the boy's favorite shirts, which they have outgrown, to make a lightweight quilt. Not only do the boys have additional warmth, but we can keep most of their clothing and enjoy the many associated memories.
- Recycle plastic containers. For example, you could collect empty soda bottles, cut them in half, and use the bottom part for your garden. Or put plastic takeaway trays to good use as containers for growing sprouts and seedlings.
- Learn how to sew, crochet or knit so that you can produce your own clothing. Additionally, the skill behind sewing allows you to easily patch-up old clothes so that they last longer.

## HOW SHOULD A SELF-RELIANT HOME LOOK?

Everyone's home will look completely different based on needs, taste, and budget. However, these six valuable characteristics make up the basic requirements:

- *Responsible*: It is intelligent and normal to get ready for emergencies. This enables you to solve problems and make decisions that consider all avenues.
- *Valuable*: Prepping strives to reap benefits to ensure the strategies you put in place provide the most value to your family.
- *Easy*: Finding the most straightforward means of achieving an end is intelligent and a great prepping skill. Where possible, take the easy road and keep things simple.
- *Affordable*: As a budget queen, I always look for generics or cheaper alternatives. Many are profiting off prepping, but in my experience, it is possible to budget prep if you purchase wisely.
- *Comforting*: Your mental and emotional well-being has to be the cornerstone in considering a lifestyle change. You have to ensure total peace of mind so you and your family are ready and able to reap more positives from the switch.
- *Fun*: It's challenging and fun to figure out how to become more self-sufficient, which doubles when you have children. I've made sure to integrate my brood of "mini-preppers" into the process in a way that is interactive and filled with engagement.

Don't merely download random checklists off the internet and try to stick by them. You have to personalize prepping to be less of a chore and more of a positive change in your mindset and lifestyle.

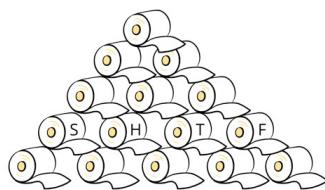
You will save yourself a lot of wasted money and time and be better prepared if you take a little time to learn from others instead of making the same mistakes most beginners make when they try to "skip the vegetables." The real trick to prepping well is knowledge and following the right path, not putting a ton of gear in your closet.

So, now you're probably wondering what actions you can take in your household to kick off the path to prepping.

**Here are a few basic steps to begin prepping your self-reliant home:**

- Build a solid personal finance and health foundation. Aim to set aside a savings account for emergency health issues or prepare the supplies yourself.
- Get your home ready for at least two weeks of self-reliance. Build up food, water, and sustainable hygiene and health products that will be able to last you and your family for a couple of weeks.
- Be able to leave your home at only a moment's notice ("bug out bags"). For peace of mind, we have our emergency suitcase under the staircase right beside our front door. This bag houses all our necessary documentation (IDs, passports, and birth certificates), a first aid kit, some money, and a change of clothes for each family member.
- A similar bag can be left in your car containing emergency supplies, cash, and a change of clothes. It is wise to carry safety gear such as a knife, pepper spray, or taser.
- Learn core skills and practice with your gear. Think about having a fun *Scouts Survival* game with your family in which you learn valuable survival skills while practicing emergency exits or drills.
- Share knowledge and recruit different perspectives while continuing to learn independently. Learning is essential for prepping, so always be ready to discover new things from someone else.

It's perfectly fine if you constantly have to change and update your prepping plans; as long as it works for your family and you are progressing to become more prepared, that is all that matters.



# STEP 1: WATER STORAGE, FILTRATION, AND PURIFICATION

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*"Too often we bask in our comfortable complacency and rationalize that the ravages of war, economic disaster, famine, and earthquake cannot happen here. Those who believe this are either not acquainted with the revelations of the Lord, or they do not believe them. Those who smugly think these calamities will not happen, that they will somehow be set aside because of the righteousness of the Saints, are deceived and will rue the day they harbored such a delusion."*

*- Ezra Taft Benson*

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Water is one of the basic necessities that we cannot live without. It functions in flushing out body waste, regulating our body temperature, and assisting with our brain function.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic, including the anxiety caused by war and inflation, we have seen how many people, regardless of their preparedness level, have stocked up on water.

Unopened commercially bottled water is considered the safest, but it is not best for long-term consumption as it can become contaminated and not safe to drink. When it comes to these commercial water bottles, the golden rule is to consume within six months to two years maximum, and if they are not used, toss them out. The U.S Food and drug administration, which regulates bottled water, recommends storing according to the degradation of plastic.

It is not recommended to be consumed after two years if it is still water and only up to a year for sparkling water.

## **HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD BE STORED FOR EMERGENCY USE?**

When I started my prepping journey with my family, I was concerned about the many things on the priority list.

We are afforded no insight into how long global crisis last, or the scarcity of our resources, so storing necessities in the right way with the proper quantities becomes imperative.

For the bare minimum, you should aim to store 1 gallon (3.78 liters) per family member per day with a two-week supply in storage, where possible.

When considering this, we aimed to have around 4 gallons of water stored each day for a week, which required a place of its own to stand. This was based on the FEMA's findings suggesting that homes have enough water to last three days in the event of water disruption, including natural disasters.

You will require more water depending on the climate region you find yourself in or if you are lactating, pregnant, or live with individuals with auto-immune diseases.

When you are holding water in water tanks or containers, you should try to replace them every six months if not consumed.

### **How to Store Water for Long-Term Use**

When prepping water, it is crucial that the storage environment is appropriate to ensure that all your prepping is actually worthwhile.

#### *Storage Container:*

As a more knowledgeable prepper, I recognize the importance of the storage container. This is where your market analysis to find the best option available for you and your needs becomes crucial.

The best containers for storing water for long-term use are:

- Food-grade plastic bottles.
- Glass bottles (provided they have not stored non-food items and are placed in a safe place so they do not break.)
- Fiberglass water storage containers.
- Enameled metal water storage containers.

### *Labeling Water*

Labeling your water according to your needs is essential. Some examples of labels are 'sanitation,' 'drinking,' and 'cooking.' This helps assist you in easily identifying its intended usage.

In addition to placing a name on your container, it is recommended a date be included. Stored water for drinking purposes needs to be replaced within six months of non-use.

### *The Appropriate Temperature:*

When storing water, you must ensure that the place it is being kept has a temperature ranging between 50–70°F (or 10-21°C).

Your storage containers have to be away from direct sunlight. This is because plastic containers contain BPA, which leaches into the water when they are in the sun. Additionally, it will significantly impact the taste of the water.

### *Placement of Water Storage Containers:*

In addition to proper storage temperatures, your containers mustn't be stored close to any toxic substances, such as gas, pesticides, or batteries. For example, we currently have around four 55-gallon barrels in our garage which we have placed on wooden pallets. This avoids the passing of chemicals between barrels and the garage's cement. It also serves as a ledge so our children cannot access the top that houses the opening.

## **HOW TO FILTER WATER**

Now that you have water stored, you're probably curious about how to filter it for drinking needs.

Filtering water is crucial as the maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG), a human carcinogen, is typically 0.0mg/l. But the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows tap water to be 0.01mg/l. This means that there are potentially harmful chemicals in the water that have the potential to make you sick. In addition, dependent on the city you reside in, some pipes might have lead leaks or bacteria that have not been filtered properly.

Filtering helps to improve water's taste and smell and remove any chemical contaminants or germs, including debris. Regardless of whether there is an emergency or not, it would be best if you aimed to filter water before consumption.

There are several DIY methods that you can use to filter your water.

These include:

## *Boiling*

This is the most common form of filtering water and takes a couple of minutes to boil and cool down. You can boil water as you use it for emergency water, and it can simply be done over a stovetop, fire, or kettle.

I became more conscious about germs since having children as they get sick much more easily than adults, and I make a point of boiling any water that does not come from commercially bottled supplies. According to some, tap water is either safer than bottled water, or it's a percolating brew of radioactive metals and poison. So, doing some research on your local supply is not a bad idea.

A fantastic bit of emergency survival gear we added to our *Amazon* shopping list is *The Kelly Kettle* - a kettle of Irish origin for outdoor use on an open fire. It consists of a jug made of sheet metal with an internal tube and a custom-fit burner base, also made of sheet metal. The contents of the pot can be heated faster than regular campfire kettles by using the chimney effect. Stoves of this type have been used in Ireland for over 100 years, and to the present day, nothing fundamental has changed in the design of these devices.

## *Distilling*

Distilled water is great in preventing mineral build-up in machinery and converts any water source, be it river water, lake water, salt water, or wastewater (i.e., urine), into clean drinking water. In addition, distillation will remove bacteria, viruses, cysts, heavy metals, radionuclides, organics, inorganics, and particulates, leaving all chemicals, toxins, and waste behind and creating pure, clean water.

If you live in an area with hard tap water, you quickly discover the importance of having an ongoing supply of distilled water.

Under present circumstances and from an economic standpoint, a home distiller could be a good investment, and it is considered by many to be very good for your health.

## *Water Purifying Tablets*

There are water purification or disinfecting tablets that you can purchase, generally known as:

- Sodium dichloroisocyanurate;
- Chlorine dioxide;
- Iodine;
- Tetruglycine hydroperoxide.

Instructions differ depending on which brand of tablet you purchase, so it is always best to read the package instructions before adding them to water.

## *UV Treatment*

This method allows ultraviolet sunlight to shine through water. This approach removes the DNA of harmful germs. In addition, you can add lime or lemon juice to hasten the solar treatment.

## *Activated Charcoal*

This filtration method allows you to remove toxic compounds, germs, and even smells. In addition, it assists in reducing the levels of fluoride and heavy metals found in water.

You put charcoal in a cotton pouch, sock, or cloth bag and then let the water seep through it into another container. It is important to mention that it is not the most effective method for removing bacteria, viruses, or hard water minerals.

## *Sediment Filters (Suitable for Travel)*

These can be purchased in-store or on Amazon and are merely designed to remove germs or bacteria from the natural water found outdoors. Most of these filters can be used multiple times, depending on which one you choose to purchase.

There are various types of filters, including:

- A hand-pump machine that you manually filter water with, such as the *Sawyer Mini*.
- A bottle that has a filter installed into it.
- Pouch filters that you have to squeeze to filter water through.
- A water-filtering pitcher such as the *Brita* filter jug.

You can make your own filter system by layering gravel, play sand, or activated carbon into a bucket with holes at the bottom that will allow the water to filter into a clean container beneath the holes.

Now that you understand how to store and filter your water let's dive into the next step in the process - emergency water consumption.

## HOW TO CONSUME LONG-TERM STORED WATER

Once you have water stored in a suitable container, you can use it for consumption anytime within six months.

Ensure that the container's seal has been closed correctly and that no leaks are found near it. Once you are sure of this, you can drink the water. If you have several storage containers, use water from the first container as it will 'expire' before the others.

It would be best to have a narrow neck opening to your container or a tap on its side to access the water efficiently. However, you can use a clean scoop or jug to take out water if you do not have either. Ensure that you do not touch the water, as this will contaminate it with bacteria. You can wear medical or plastic gloves while collecting water for additional safety.

Once you have obtained the water, ensure that you close the container properly and check for leaks.

After this, you can filter your water using any of the above methods to ensure additional safety for consumption.

## HOW TO FIND ADDITIONAL WATER SOURCES IN EMERGENCIES

*Inside the Home:*

Water that is safe to consume inside the home includes

- Water from the water heater tank.
- Melted ice cubes from the freezer. Before drinking, check that there is no residue from any meat product.
- Liquid that comes from canned fruit and vegetables.
- For sanitation, swimming pool or jacuzzi water can be used for cleaning and personal hygiene.

Always listen to the news about possible water precautions for household water. Occasionally water is shut off from the main valves to avoid contaminants entering the pipes, so staying informed is always the best route to follow.

*Outside the Home:*

Regardless of how clean water from rivers or streams might be, it can come into contact with waste, sewage, and chemicals. These lead to illness! Water has to be treated before you can safely consume it. You can treat water by boiling it, using one of the filtration methods mentioned above, or by distilling it.

Possible water sources include:

- Rainwater
- Streams or rivers
- Ponds
- Natural springs

## **How to Test Water to Ensure That It Is Safe For Consumption**

Unsafe water can include:

- Cloudiness or any debris floating in the water.
- A slimy texture after washing water with soap.
- White or slightly brown-looking water.
- A pungent or unusual smell.

You can test the quality of water using chemical tests. There are several budget options available and are well worth the investment.

There are different test formats to check if water is suitable for drinking. These include test strips, color disk kits, and hand-held digital instruments. They are generally lightweight and portable, so you can easily include them in your SHTF evacuation bag.

*UNICEF* recommends that you prioritize fluoride, arsenic, and nitrate when it comes to chemical monitoring of water. These will monitor the overall quality of water, including any naturally-occurring metals, iron, manganese, and total dissolved solids. In addition, in a chlorinated distributed system, you must monitor the pH level as well as any chlorine in the water.

## **ADDITIONAL WATER STORAGE TIPS**

There you have it - all the water storage tips required for an emergency. If your water supply should last longer than six months, you can treat it with a

water preserver (generally eight drops per gallon), extending the storage life up to five years.

Depending on the space available, you can store several water containers, provided they are not subject to direct lighting (preferably in a dark place).

Once you have used a storage container, make sure it is appropriately cleaned (with natural products such as lemon and hot water) before adding more water to be stored. If you see any signs of mold in a container, it is best to toss it out rather than attempt to resurrect it to avoid causing any sicknesses.

Stored water will taste differently from fresh water, and if at any point, even after filtering, there is a putrid or swamp-like odor and a terrible taste, replace the entire storage container.

If you have large storage containers, investing in a *Sawyer Mini Water Filter* is recommended as it can filter 100,000 gallons of water. This is perfect for filtering large amounts of water at once.

Other options are *Brita* countertop filter jugs or the much-praised *Berkey Water Filter* in a significantly higher budget category. However, when it comes to a showdown, *Berkey* filters are the winner hands down in quality, longevity, long-term affordability, and filtering capability.

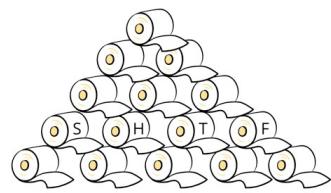
Water itself cannot technically expire, but it is always best to change stored water at least once a year to avoid any microscopic bugs or contamination (which is unavoidable when it comes to long-term water storage.)

Choosing a water storage method that meets your budget is essential. Price comparisons online and in-store help ensure you get the best possible deal. In addition, asking a community of individuals on prepping platforms is beneficial, as plenty of expert preppers are always willing to help.

When it comes to preparing for any emergency, water is something that you cannot go without. So always be prepared and do not take any risks when it comes to having water readily available for any event.

To save you time on product research, you can find links to the various filter systems that my community of experts, fellow preppers, and I have

tried and tested, as well as a library of videos with sound advice and DIY tips on creating your own filters by visiting [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com).



## STEP 2: FOOD MUST-HAVES AND DO'S

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*"The revelation to store food may be as essential to our temporal salvation today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah."*

*- Ezra Taft Benson*

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A mistake that I see many beginner preppers make - which I have been guilty of - is storing food incorrectly or not planning a menu or meal plan before storing large amounts of food.

In my early prepping days, despite extensive research, I found myself wasting quite a bit of produce due to unfavorable storage conditions or not sealing products properly. A positive aspect of humanity is learning more from our failures than we let ourselves think.

In any emergency situation, eating the right food enables you to maintain strength, ultimately assisting with survival.

### **BEFORE PREPPING, KNOW HOW-TO:**

- Plan your meals properly to include a variety of nutritional foods.

- Try to plan menus that allow you and your family to eat at least one balanced meal daily.
- Consume enough liquids.
- Aim to consume high-calorie meals.
- Include vitamins, minerals, and protein supplements.

## BULK STAPLES THAT EVERY PREPPER NEEDS

Purchasing in bulk can be less expensive, but you must know the shelf life of the products you intend to store. Most wheat, corn, and beans can last for years, with natural salt and honey having an unlimited shelf life. Living off these basics will significantly assist with survival.

These are a few staples that you should have in your pantry:

### *Grains*

- Wheat
- All-purpose flour
- Farro or wheat berries for long-term storage
- All-purpose flour
- Teff
- Cornmeal
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur
- Barley
- Rice: long grain, short grain (sushi), and basmati (Indian)
- Quinoa (great for gluten-free menus)
- Rolled oats (also consider getting the gluten-free variety)
- Instant mashed potatoes/ Hash-browns
- Potato flakes
- Popcorn kernels
- Dry pasta
- Rice vermicelli and other types of gluten-free pasta

### *Beans and Legumes*

- Kidney beans
- Chickpeas/Garbanzo beans
- Pinto beans
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Lima beans
- Soybeans

### ***Fats***

- Coconut oil
- Olive oil
- Ghee
- Lard
- Shortening (Crisco)

### ***Proteins***

- Canned meats (SPAM, Dak Ham, Yoder's Bacon, canned chicken, etc.)
- Dried and dehydrated meats (beef jerky, salami, pemmican, etc.)
- Freeze-dried meats
- Canned tuna
- Canned salmon
- Sardines
- Mackerel
- Freeze-dried eggs

### ***Fruits & Vegetables***

- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruits and apple sauce
- Dried fruits
- Dried mushrooms
- Canned Tomatoes

- Dried Tomato powder

### ***Natural Sweeteners***

- Honey
- Stevia
- Maple syrup
- Cane sugar
- Brown granulated sugar

### ***Spices and Seasoning***

- Salt
- Bouillon products
- Black peppercorns (requires a pepper mill)
- Italian seasonings (rosemary, oregano, basil, thyme)
- Dill weed and dill
- Bay leaves
- Cinnamon powder and sticks
- Garlic powder (freeze-dried)
- Ginger powder
- Onion flakes (freeze-dried or dehydrated)
- Curry powder and garam masala
- Chili powder and flakes
- Cayenne red pepper (and crushed red pepper)
- Paprika
- Cumin
- Turmeric

### ***Condiments***

- White vinegar
- Apple cider vinegar
- Rice wine vinegar
- Soy sauce
- Tamari

- Oyster sauce
- Tabasco
- Ketchup
- Picante and salsa
- Mayonnaise
- Mustard
- Pickle Relish

### ***Important Extras***

- Baking powder and baking soda
- Corn starch
- Yeast
- Vanilla extract
- Powdered milk
- Instant coffee and tea
- Cocoa
- Kool-Aid, Gatorade, and other electrolyte waters
- Vitamin D, C and Multivitamins
- Infant food (cereals, baby food, and canned liquid formula concentrate)
- Pet Food (assuming you have a furry friend in the family)

### ***Perfect Snacks For Short-term Stockpiles***

- Granola bars
- Crackers
- Peanut butter
- Almond butter
- Cashew butter
- Nutella
- Dried fruit
- Nuts and trail mix
- Boxed juices
- Sports drinks
- Beef jerky

- Cereal
- Protein bars

## **HOW TO STORE FOOD FOR FUR-FAMILY MEMBERS**

It is best to keep all pet food in the bag that it came in, and if opened, place it in an air-tight container (plastic or stainless steel) to keep it pest-free and protected.

Mylar bags are practical for long-term pet food storage, but you will still have to rotate the storage every three months. In addition, you can use mylar bags to freeze-dry foods for a few years. Mylar bags, or foil pouches, are used to deflect light and remove oxygen from food, which allows its shelf-life to be extended. Add an oxygen absorber to the container and then vacuum seal to keep it air-tight. For every gallon of food, you add one 300cc oxygen absorber. If the food being sealed is powdery, you should use a heat-sealing device, not a vacuum sealer, to ensure a proper seal. When storing these bags, check that the seal is closed correctly; you should not be able to pry it open easily once sealed. But, if you have the budget and space, a freeze-drying machine will be your best friend. These friends start around the \$2000 mark and range up to \$5000 and beyond, so they may have to wait a couple of Christmases before they make it to the party!

Vacuum sealing your pet's food extends the shelf life to a year, provided it is resealed within six weeks of opening.

## **HOW MUCH FOOD TO STORE FOR EMERGENCIES**

This depends on the number of people you intend to feed, the duration of prepping you are considering, and how much space you have available for prepping storage.

The benchmark of food storage will vary with each prepper. For example, our minimum goal in my home was to have at least a week's food supply for each family member. Currently, we have enough non-perishables to last three months, if not more, so we are above our "benchmark goal."

When it comes to a 72-hour emergency stockpile, the foods you should aim to have in your pantry should be both high in calories and proteins to sustain your body and energy in the short term. These include peanut butter, healthy candy bars, canned meat, and dried fruit.

### **How to Correctly Store Food For Long-term Use:**

As I have mentioned, I hit many learning curves in my food storage process, but I have found ways to ensure that I am making the most out of the time and money spent on containers for storage. Of course, the safety of food is essential, and the following sections cover the main ways to store your food for the long term:

- Dehydration.
- Canning.
- Vacuum Sealing.
- Freeze-Drying.

### **DEHYDRATING YOUR FOOD**

As avid hikers, we have an entire storage container filled with dehydrated meals that we typically take on journeys. These tend to have a shelf life of four months to a year, and we have labeled and set them in order according to their expiration dates. Dehydrated meals are pretty affordable and only require boiling water before consumption. Since these foods have little moisture, they can last up to five years or longer if properly stored. In addition, they are great options (lightweight with a variety of meal plans) if you think you might have to evacuate.

Dependent on the food you are dehydrating, the method will vary. It is recommended that dehydrated vegetables be cooked first, which increases the storage duration by up to ten years, and then stored in a cool and dark space. This is undoubtedly better than commercially purchased canned food that generally lasts less than five years.

The most crucial part of dehydrating food is proper preparation, drying, dehydrating, and then the correct storage of your product. You can pack the

food into clean canning jars and close them tightly. These foods are safe to consume.

If you are looking to dehydrate meals of your choice, purchasing a dehydration machine, you can look to spend anywhere from \$100, which is an excellent investment for long-term food storage.

Apart from this, whenever we purchase food strictly for prepping, we remove all dry goods such as wheat, rice, oats, salt, and sugar and place them into air-tight glass containers. This creates a form of proper oxygen and moisture barrier and prevents toxins from leaching into the products. Additionally, it serves as a barrier to pests.

If you are reusing old glass jars, wash and dry them properly before storing anything inside them. For all of these, we add the date of storage and the expiration date on the product packaging before placing them in food boxes or crates and storing them in the garage on our DIY shelves. Our only other space for storage is in the attic, but since it gets too hot as it is insulated, it will degrade the food. It is better to store food containers under beds or in closets as it is much cooler and suitable for long-term food storage.

Always check that the seals of all plastic bags, containers, and packets are correctly closed before storing them away.

## **HOW DOES CANNING FOOD WORK?**

Pressure Canning and water bathing are storage methods that allow the preservation of fruits, vegetables, and meats that preserves them for a couple of years. These are also a more affordable home preservation method compared to home freeze-drying, which starts at a few thousand dollars for equipment.

Before modern pantries existed, small and dry rooms known as 'larders' stored all preserved food, and it was an essential space in every home where trips to the market were often impractical. These families had to learn how to have their pantry food last and remain fresh. Many used canning.

Most commonly canned foods include jams, pickles, and fermented foods. Canning is achieved at high heat by applying pressure to the lid of a jar and

packing meats and vegetables in a vacuum-like seal as the food cools down. This removes all microorganisms while simultaneously inactivating any enzymes that can cause food to spoil.

## Using a Pressure Canner

I have always been anxious about heating glass, fearing it would shatter. But these days, most manufacturers have improved safety measures in their products. The canning process needs a certain amount of simple equipment to get started, the most important of which is a good pressure canner. These devices are similar to pressure cookers but are significantly different in that they are designed to cook food at a higher heat and pressure, causing the food to cook faster and ensuring that potential pathogens are completely killed off.

Master Food Preserver and author of many excellent books on the canning process Christina Ward explains the following: "Pressure canning works on the scientific principle of changing the pressure of the environment surrounding the jar of food so the temperature is elevated beyond boiling and will kill any pathogens. The pressure change also drives the oxygen out of the jar to create an anaerobic environment. While the no-oxygen environment prevents many pathogens from growing, there are dangerous pathogens that can grow in anaerobic conditions (botulism), which is why the high-temperature part of the process is important."

## Importance of Understanding High Acid vs. Low Acid Foods

In order to avoid any misunderstanding on this subject, I have taken a quote directly from NIFA-USDA (National Center for Home Food Preservation) website:

"Whether food should be processed in a pressure canner or boiling-water canner to control botulinum bacteria depends on the acidity of the food. Acidity may be natural, as in most fruits, or added, as in pickled food. Low-acid canned foods are not acidic enough to prevent the growth of these bacteria. Acid foods contain enough acid to block their growth or destroy them more rapidly when heated.

The term "pH" is a measure of acidity; the lower its value, the more acid the food.

- Low-acid foods have pH values higher than 4.6. They include red meats, seafood, poultry, milk, and all fresh vegetables except for most tomatoes.
- Most mixtures of low-acid and acid foods also have pH values above 4.6 unless their recipes include enough lemon juice, citric acid, or vinegar to make them acid foods.
- Acid foods have a pH of 4.6 or lower. They include fruits, pickles, sauerkraut, jams, jellies, marmalades, and fruit butters."

## **Canning Recipes and Information**

Everyone knows that the internet is ripe with information that simply isn't true. The same goes for home canning recipes. Expert recipe contributors and many home canners are often qualified and go through proper processing protocols. However, this is not always the case, so it is of the utmost importance that you fully understand the science behind the process before getting started and find a trusted source of information for your research.

According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation, unopened jars of canned food made in a pressure cooker typically have a shelf life of one year and should be consumed before two years. Therefore, adding dates to your products is vital, and arranging them so you can use the meals you canned earliest is a good idea. Any canned food, including store-bought ones, should be stored in a space away from direct sunlight in temperatures around 50°F (10-11°C).

This subject needs a thorough amount of research before getting started, but it is very much worth the effort and should be part of every serious preppers skillset when it comes to long-term food storage.

## **VACUUM SEALING FOOD**

When you vacuum seal your food, it removes all the air, which in turn eliminates the possibility of having a freezer burn on food while extending the storage period.

There are four real benefits to vacuum sealing food as part of your prep:

- Reducing waste
- Saving you a few bucks
- Preserving and protecting food
- Saving space during storage

## How to Vacuum Seal Food

Once you have purchased a vacuum sealer suitable for your needs, including zip-top or freezer bags, seal food according to their consistency.

Fill a bowl or pot with water with paper towels or a kitchen towel nearby for solid food. Place the food you intend to seal in the zip-top or freezer bag in an even layer. Push out all the air you can see to almost fully seal it. Then, hold the bag by its unsealed edge and slowly lower it into the water while removing more air. You know that you have successfully sealed a bag when you lift it from the water, and it is like a second skin to the food it is housing. Once the corners are sealed, check that there are no leaks or holes before storing.

For liquids, fill about three-quarters of the bag and once again, press out any air and place it in the water to completely seal the bag closed.

## These Foods Should Not Be Vacuum-Sealed

There are so many benefits of vacuum sealing your food that you might be tempted to do your entire pantry. Like all things, there are exceptions. These foods should not be sealed:

- Raw mushrooms
- Fresh bananas
- Raw garlic
- Raw onion
- Soft cheeses (blue cheese, brie, ricotta, and any other soft cheese)
- Freshly cooked vegetables (these would have to be at room temperature before sealing)
- Whole apples

## **FREEZE DRYING FOOD**

This is another simple yet effective way of storing food for long periods. It works by removing liquid from food, and preserving it for up to 25 years.

*How to freeze dry food:*

Start by cutting food into smaller pieces or chunks to remove moisture.

If you have a freeze-dryer, place the cut food onto the tray and place inside for about a full day (24 hours) at -40 to -50 degrees. Seal them in zip-top, freezer, or mylar bags once complete.

If you have a home freezer (including a deep freezer), you can place cut food onto a tray or plate and freeze it at the lowest temperature that your freezer allows. This has to remain in this position for 2-3 weeks. Store them in zip-top, freezer, or mylar bags once complete.

If you are using dry ice, place your cut food into freezer bags and then into a cooler with the dry ice. After 24 hours, you can safely store them.

If you use a vacuum chamber to freeze food, spread cut food onto the tray and freeze until it is solid. It should be at around 10°C. It has to remain in a chamber for a week minimum. You can store the food in air-tight containers once complete.

You can freeze-dry meals that you've already cooked in the same manner.

METHOD	DURATION	STORAGE
FREEZE DRYER	24 HOURS	Zip-top, freezer or mylar bags
HOME FREEZER	2 - 3 WEEKS	Air-tight container in freezer bags in freezer or pantry
DRY ICE	24 HOURS	Removed from bags and stored in freezer
HOME FREEZER	1 WEEK	Vacuum sealed bags in an air-tight container

## Food Safety and Sanitation in Emergency Stockpiles:

The last thing you want to encounter in an emergency is food poisoning. Bacteria can grow in food when the temperatures are between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit, and this can cause additional sh\*t - no pun intended - to a SHTF situation.

### What To Do:

When in doubt - throw it out! I know that it can be tempting to try and save food, but your health is far more important than a tasty roast meal. These are a few basic tips that you should keep in mind:

- Always keep your food in covered and sealed containers - even dry-shelf foods like beans. Everything should be sealed.
- Keep all your cooking *and* eating utensils clean and dry to avoid a build-up of bacteria and germs.
- Toss out any food that has come into contact with water, especially flood water. Be sure to wrap it in a bag before throwing it in the garbage to avoid a smell and bug infestation.
- Even if the food does not smell but has an unusual odor or texture, throw it away. Your soup should not be firm, and no - it cannot be saved, so toss it out.

- Use a thermometer to check the refrigerator's temperature if the power has gone out, and try moving produce into the freezer if the refrigerator becomes warm. This will help extend the fresh produce's life a little and reduce the odor of molding food.
- Throw away any food like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or leftovers if they have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for longer than two hours as they are no longer safe to consume.
- Wear gloves to avoid an ice burn when using dry ice or to touch any frozen food. Additionally, be aware of how much dry ice you need and how long it will last during a power outage. Generally, twenty-five pounds of dry ice will last about three to four days if stored properly. You can place dry ice in your freezer; even if there is a power outage, it is the best place for storing food and ice - without it becoming messy with leaks and spills from melting ice.
- Include foods in your stockpile that do not require cooking so that you can save on resources and have variety.

## **Don't:**

- Eat food from damaged, swollen, or corroded cans, even if the contents inside look perfectly safe to consume.
- Depend wholly on flour as it does not store well over the long-term, so be sure to include items like grain and a mill so that you are able to make your own flour when the time comes.
- Only store one type of food - having a wide variety like dry-iced meals, frozen meals, dehydrated meals, and some fresh foods is excellent for extending the kinds of meals you have and broadens the possibility of storing food for the long-term.
- Eat foods that have the latest expiration date first. When consuming from a stockpile, always eat the food you have canned or sealed. The principle of "first in, first out" is the key.
- Let garbage accumulate inside. This is not only a fire hazard but a large concern for sanitation reasons. If there is no means of heading out to take the trash outside, filling garbage bags and leaving it in the carport or on the porch will be the best.
- Start fires inside if you do not have a designated fireplace. While this seems like common knowledge, a SHTF situation can drive people to make reckless decisions with the hopes of staying alive. Using your porch or backyard with a fire pit or barbecue is the best. Always check that fires are properly put out before leaving the area.
- Forget to clean up after a feast. I find that the most important thing to remember to include is cleaning agents and tools so that surfaces and utensils can be cleaned properly after cooking. You can add extra garbage bags to your stockpile to dispose of any empty containers and leftover food.

## **Additional Food Safety Tips:**

Always have a jar of frozen water in your freezer, so if the power goes out, you can use this to monitor the condition of your frozen foods. Once the ice has melted, your food is not frozen and is no longer suitable for

consumption. If and when the power comes back on and all the meat products are thawed, you should throw them out. It is not safe to refreeze any product that was already defrosted.

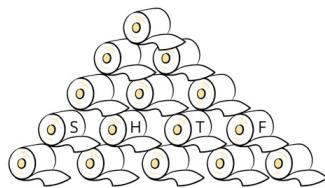
As a general rule, food stored in the refrigerator will be suitable for consumption for up to four hours after a power outage. So, be sure to set a timer or keep watch of the time so that you know if four hours have passed or not.

If a flood has impacted your house, do not consume anything from the refrigerator. However, you can consume any undamaged commercially-canned food.

If there is a power outage caused by a snowstorm, as tempting as it can be to place products in the snow, it is not ideal. This is because the outside temperature constantly fluctuates, and food can quickly become contaminated. Additionally, if the snowstorm continues, it is possible that you will find it challenging to retrieve your buried goods, and let's be honest; no one wants to freeze in an attempt to rescue a pork chop.

Please keep in mind that if an actual SHTF situation occurs, food *must not* be wasted for any reason. Even if it has gone bad, it can go towards feeding animals (dogs, cats, pigs, etc.), and if the unthawed meat is still cold (45 degrees or lower), even though unthawed, it can be cooked thoroughly and used in recipes.

For more information on the methods introduced in this chapter, check out the video library of preppers in action on the [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com) website - watching someone can or dehydrate their food will demystify any questions you may have if this is unfamiliar territory for you. You will also find checklists and links to the products I use and love and recommendations that have been tried and tested by other preppers in the community.



## STEP 3: FIRST-AID AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO PATCH-UP THE UNKNOWN

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*"More than ever before, we need to learn and apply the principles of economic self-reliance. We do not know when the crisis involving sickness or unemployment may affect our own circumstances. We do know that the Lord has decreed global calamities for the future and has warned and forewarned us to be prepared. For this reason the Brethren have repeatedly stressed a 'back to basics' program for temporal and spiritual welfare."*

*- Ezra Taft Benson*

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**A**s a mother, I am tempted to wrap my children in bubble wrap as there is nothing more alarming than a loud bang followed by deadly silence and then the even more piercing wails of a child. First aid is one thing you should always be prepared for, especially if you have children who are yet to understand that fires are, in fact, hot.

First aid plays a vital role in stabilizing an injured person before additional assistance can be provided. If we consider a natural disaster, if one uninjured family member knows first aid, it can buy an injured person more time by reducing infection, further injury, or bleeding out.

Many are unaware of the basics of survival first aid. For example, how many people know that removing an object that has been stabbed into someone is similar to removing the cap from a shaken bottle of soda? It will potentially allow the person to bleed out, even though our rational mind

wants to remove the item so that the pain will stop. Knowing first aid increases the chances that the "cap will remain on the soda" until more advanced medical care can be administered.

## **MEDICATION AND PRESCRIPTIONS**

As part of an emergency stockpile, we have included items to assist any family member with allergies, chronic conditions, or illnesses. In addition to known conditions, you might want to visit your local doctor to assess whether any family member is allergic to pharmaceutical products. Try to purchase additional allergy medication, as many do not require a prescription, and store them away in a dark and cool place.

We want to ensure that all bases are covered - this means considering the quantity of medication. Many medications have legislation governing the scheduling and dispensing of prescription drugs. This is dependent on substances with a moderate to high potential for possible abuse or causing addiction; therefore, the State will regulate and control the supply. In the United States, this would fall under a Schedule I and Schedule II substance which includes methaqualone, peyote, hydromorphone (*Dilaudid*), meperidine (*Demerol*), oxycodone (*OxyContin*), fentanyl, *Dexedrine*, *Adderall*, and *Ritalin*.

(According to the *DEA.gov* website, "Drugs, substances, and certain chemicals used to make drugs are classified into five distinct categories or *schedules* depending upon the drug's acceptable medical use and the drug's abuse or dependency potential.")

Adding all-important medications and the family member who takes them to a notebook or filing system is best, especially when rationing.

These are basic over-the-counter (OTC) that every prepper should stock up on:

- *Acetaminophen/NSAIDs/Aspirin* used for primary pain, fever, and sprains;
- *Dextromethorphan (Delsym, Mucinex, Triaminic, Vicks VapoRub, and others)* is the main ingredient used to control a cough;

- Oral decongestants (either pill or liquid) for head and sinus congestion;
- Antipyrine/benzocaine is a combination product used to clean the ear canal and treat middle ear infections. It reduces pressure, congestion, inflammation, pain, and discomfort in the ear;
- Diphenhydramine (*Benadryl/Claritin/Zyrtec/Allegra*) treats sneezing, runny noses, and watery eyes;
- *Pepto-Bismol/Phazyme/Dramamine/Emetrol* is used to treat an upset stomach from nausea, gas, and indigestion;
- *Kaopectate/Imodium A-D* and *Pepto-Bismol* for relief from diarrhea;
- *Nasalcrom* to treat nasal allergies;

Adding the expiration date on your medicine storage container in a file is perfect for keeping your stockpile fresh. However, if you are in a predicament where you need medicine but only have expired ones, the FDA suggests that you should not be tempted to take this as it will not be as effective or safe. This finding contrasts with a Harvard study which suggests that the actual effectiveness will decrease over time, but much of the potency will remain even a decade after expiration. If you are in this pickle, I suggest that you judge based on the overall appearance of the medication before deciding to consume it or not.

For the best-storing methods, keep them in a dark and dry environment. Dr. Michael Rhodes, assistant medical director for the South Region of Intermountain Healthcare, suggests that storing in a vacuum seal preserves medication effectiveness for the longest possible, so if you can, use this method.

## **FIRST AID KIT**

When I started prepping, I bought basic first aid kits that soon had to be replaced and updated, not to mention boosted with many essential items that weren't even included. And as budget-loving queens, we want to stay within the affordable yet prepared scene, so after my experience with the premade kits, I highly recommend assembling your own one so that you

have a complete overview of the quality and contents. So, what should be in your first aid kit?

- Medication includes *Ibuprofen*, *Imodium*, *Benadryl*, and aspirin.
- Tweezers
- Medical tape
- Duct tape
- Sanitized wipes
- Bandages of varying lengths and materials that are suitable for different body parts.
- *Polysporin* antibiotic ointment.
- *PriMed* gauze - is top on the market, so it should be top in your kit.
- A variety of bandaids in all shapes and sizes (don't forget the crocodile and panda bar ones to make it all seem like more fun!)
- *Steri Strips* to close wounds before getting medical attention.
- Caromeds bleeder pack to tend to those traumatic wounds and combat germs from entering.
- *Emergen-C* or any electrolyte replacement
- Vitamins
- Alcohol wipes
- Nitrile gloves
- Antiseptic cream
- Burn treatment
- Eyewash
- Face masks and breathing barriers
- Cold and heat packs
- Cough drops
- Ammonia inhalant or smelling salts
- Antihistamines
- Plastic bags
- Scissors
- Thermometer
- Turkey baster for flushing wounds
- Syringe
- Hydrogen peroxide to disinfect
- Anti-fungal cream
- First-aid manual

You can use this as a skeleton for building your own kit:

FOR BLEEDING AND WOUNDS	ONGOING WOUND TREATMENT	OTC MEDICATION
MEDICAL TAPE	SPLINTS	ACETAMINOPHEN
NITRILE GLOVES	ACE BANDAGES	ASPIRIN
ROLLED GAUZE	RUBBING ALCOHOL	ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATION
GAUZE PADS	PEROXIDE	ANTI-DIARRHEA MEDICATION
TRAUMA SHEERS	TRIPLE ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENT	COUGH SUPPRESSANTS
NEW SKIN	ALOE VERA ESSENTIAL OILS	ALLERGY MEDICATION
5X9 ABDOMINAL GAUZE PADS		
STYPTIC POWDER		
TOURNIQUETS		

## NATURAL MEDICATIONS

While commercially bought products are the easiest to get your hands onto, when prepping, we consider all *SHTF* scenarios - including ones where we need to kick it old school and soothe ailments by using natural remedies and medicines.

The best natural remedies include the following:

*Aloe Vera*: Best for tending to irritated skin and burns. In addition, it assists with the digestive system and can provide immune healing;

*Echinacea*: Stimulates the production of white blood cells, which fights off infections and illnesses. This is suitable for several issues, including

arthritis, a sore throat, and the common cold;

*Honey*: Apart from being absolutely fantastic on pancakes or in a warm cup of tea, honey has several healing properties, including gut health, skin rejuvenation, and antibacterial properties;

*Apple cider vinegar*: Serves as an excellent energy booster and assists with digestive problems. A mix of lemon juice, sparkling water, and apple cider vinegar also makes a surprisingly good-tasting electrolyte drink;

*Comfrey*: Packed with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, it will assist you with a speedy recovery and prevent infection;

*Peppermint oil*: This is perfect for tending to sore muscles and assisting with headaches and sinus-related problems;

*Salt*: Not only does it balance electrolytes, but it contains magnesium which assists in reducing inflammation and supporting muscle functionalities;

*Garlic*: Tasty in food, garlic serves as a potent antibiotic with antiviral properties that helps your gut and oral infections and can assist pain if added to gauze and wrapped on a wound;

*Coconut Oil*: Besides its nutritional benefits, it improves your gut health and assists with skin care. Also great for the ancient practice of oil pulling, which involves swishing oil in your mouth to remove bacteria and promote oral hygiene;

*Cayenne Pepper*: The best for preventing and fighting diseases and wounds. In addition, it provides impressive digestive support and aids sore throats;

*Arnica*: The best for treating swelling, bruising, and general muscle soreness;

*Chamomile*: With mild sedative properties, it is the best for calming you, providing digestive help, and alleviating cramps associated with menstruation and nausea in pregnancy;

*Dandelion*: Several impressive health benefits come with this plant, including a reduction in cholesterol levels, stabilizing blood sugar, and reducing symptoms associated with gout;

*St. John's Wort*: Impressive anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties that soothe wounds when applied;

*Gelatin*: Whether you make it or use commercial ones, gelatine is packed with protein and amino acids that assist with bone and joint pain, brain function, and skin;

*Marigold*: Combined with other plants such as peppermint, it can be used to treat fevers, and with apple cider vinegar, it reduces inflammation when applied to open wounds;

*Calendula*: The best herb to prevent infection and even heal body tissues. With its anti-fungal and antimicrobial properties, it is known for having anti-inflammatory and antioxidant components;

*Thyme*: A power tool for soothing sore throats and fevers while benefiting the nervous system. What's even better? It assists with skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, and burn wounds;

*Sage*: Strong antiseptic properties that benefit oral health, reduces fever, and assist with stomach problems;

*Slippery Elm*: A substance that becomes gel-like if mixed with water is perfect for soothing any ear, nose, throat, or stomach problems as it contains anti-inflammatory properties;

*Nettles*: A problem-solver for reducing any allergy symptoms while treating skin conditions. Helps with joint and muscle aches while assisting with immune function;

*Oil of Clove*: Cloves have been used for pain relief for centuries. The clove was inserted into an infected tooth or cavity, providing temporary relief thanks to the active ingredient eugenol. Another valuable perk to cloves is the excretion of alcohol from the body, which is helpful for hangovers.

*Licorice Root*: A complex yet potent herb with over 300 chemical compounds, it is the most effective for healing stomach problems and fighting off infections;

*Tea Tree Oil*: The best anti-fungal and antiseptic qualities, often used on cuts and wounds. Additionally, it can be used as a sleep aid when someone

is sick;

*Elderberry*: Last but not least, some herbalists believe elderberry to be the best plant for medicine, being implemented for such diverse disorders as the common cold, "the flu" (influenza), and H1N1 "swine" flu as well as for HIV/AIDS and boosting the immune system in general. It is also used for sinus pain, back and leg pain (sciatica), nerve pain (neuralgia), and chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). The list goes on with hay fever (allergic rhinitis), cancer, as a laxative for constipation, to increase urine flow, and to cause sweating. In addition, it is used for heart disease, high cholesterol, headache, toothache, and weight loss and can be applied inside the mouth for gum inflammation. And as if that wasn't enough, elderberry fruit is also used for making wine and as a food flavoring!

## **FIRST AID TOOLS IN THE KITCHEN**

Sometimes just what is needed to tend to a wound or ailment is lurking in the kitchen pantry. These are five simple recipes to assist with health:

CONDITION	HERBAL REMEDY
<b>UPSET TUMMY</b>	Ginger, chamomile or peppermint tea.
<b>PAIN RELIEF AND REMOVING DISCOLOURATION FROM WOUNDS</b>	Onion slices added onto the gauze or bandage.
<b>INFLAMMATION AND SWELLING REDUCTION WITH PAIN RELIEF</b>	Raw grated potato added onto a swollen area.
<b>EAR INFECTIONS</b>	Mix rubbing alcohol and apple cider vinegar together and pour 5 to 10 drops into the infected ear using a clean syringe.
<b>CONSTIPATION</b>	Hot milk with 4-5 prunes and honey.
<b>MOSQUITO BITES</b>	Hold half a lime over the flame of a stove of a fire, once charred let it cool before rubbing onto the bite.
<b>COUGH</b>	Basil leaves and ginger in warm water.
<b>HEARTBURN</b>	Dissolve one teaspoon of baking soda into a cup of water and drink.
<b>COMMON COLD</b>	A glass of lemon juice a day to increase your body's resistance and onion juice to avoid a cold.

## LEARNING FIRST AID

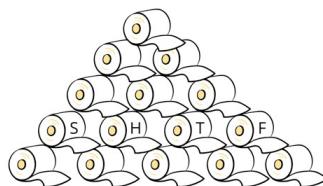
Besides having many of the tools required to tend wounds, it is crucial to know how to use them. Depending on your financial stance, taking a class with the entire family would be beneficial. Otherwise, the expansion of social media allows the odds to be in our favor, as many free courses and videos can be found on various social media platforms.

Naturally, my website [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com) is no exception. I have assembled a library of videos from medical experts and naturopaths, which I have found highly informative and essential to my knowledge base and skills. The lists of highly acclaimed products in our prepping community are equally helpful to create your own first aid kits efficiently and without overspending on low quality. For those of you who prefer good, old-fashioned print, public libraries always house a variety of medical books that are free to borrow.

You should also have smaller medical kits containing basic supplies stored in your car and personal carry-on bags that you intend to grab in case of an emergency.

As daunting as it may seem, you can prepare yourself and your family to overcome any hurdle, including medical ones. Equipping yourself with the relevant kits and knowledge may help to save a life, which you should be more than competent to do once you have covered the basic elements and themes in this chapter and by checking out the knowledge base on the accompanying website.

Who knows, the life that is saved may be your own.



## STEP 4: HOME SECURITY AND PERSONAL DEFENSE ITEMS TO COMBAT ALL FORMS OF DANGER

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*"There's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst."*

*- Stephen King*

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As comforting as building castle-size walls with bulletproof windows around your home might sound, it is not the most efficient, nor is it needed. In times of distress, people may be willing to do anything to survive, including breaking into others' homes and raiding them for food. *Rain*, a popular TV show, features a post-apocalyptic world where we see how desperate others become just trying to survive. Groups of individuals would rally together to steal food and essentials from others, unfortunately for the brother-sister duo who had their survival pod ransacked while locked in one of the rooms during a raid on their space. As preppers, we never want to find ourselves in this pickle, or well, pod.

Before considering what you think you might need - consulting an expert about household safety is critical. Many cost-effective ways will protect you and your loved ones to varying degrees. The following statistics and guidelines are not intended to instill doom and gloom but rather serve as a manual to help your prepping bloom.

### DATA FOR BURGLARIES IN THE USA IN 2022

The following somewhat alarming statistics have been compiled from a wide range of government resources:

- In 2017, the FBI reported 1,401,840 burglaries, with 57.5% of all burglaries involving forcible entry. (*Criminal Justice Information Services Division*)
- There are 2.5 million burglaries annually in the United States. (*FBI*)
- Every 15 seconds, a home burglary occurs in the United States. (*Crimepreventiontips.com*)
- A break-in occurs every 26 seconds in the US. (*FBI*)
- Homes without a security system are 300% more likely to be broken into and burglarized. (*Alarms.org*)
- 46.9% of people don't have a home security system installed. (*The Zebra*)
- 83% of would-be burglars check for the presence of an alarm system before attempting a break-in. (*FBI*)
- 34% of burglars use the front door when breaking into a home. (*Bureau of Justice*)
- There are 2.5 million burglaries annually in the United States. 66% of these are home invasions. (*US Department of Justice*)
- Police solve only 13% of reported burglary cases. (*Pew Research Center*)

## **SECURITY ESSENTIALS FOR HUMAN DISASTERS**

As you read above, "homes without a security system are 300% more likely to be broken into and burglarized".

There are many different options for home security ranging from the most basic to sophisticated high-end luxury variants. *Ring Ring* is one of the best DIY home security systems on the market that is all-encompassing and affordable. It comes with a base station, contact sensor, keypad, motion detector, and range extender. You can then customize and purchase additional components to meet the security needs of your home and family. It works through a motion sensor sending alerts to mobile devices or, if you

choose the more expensive option, to a professional monitoring service. You can then arm and disarm it by voice and listen in for any activities within your home while you are away. While these are feasible options, there are so many other ways that you can protect your family.

## **FIREARMS IN YOUR HOME?**

Firearms are possessed by millions of Americans who believe in their right to practice the Second Amendment. The number of individuals who have applied for weapon licenses has risen by over 60% since 2020, indicating a massive move toward the need for personal security.

David Hemenway, the director of the *Harvard Injury Control Research Center*, and Sara Solnick, an economist at the University of Vermont, analyzed national government surveys involving more than 14,000 people in 2015. They found that guns are actually used for self-protection in less than 1 percent of all crimes that take place in the presence of a victim. They also found that people were more likely to be injured after threatening attackers with guns than if they had called the police or run away.

Despite this, if any adults in your family are willing and feel the urge to get a firearm, obtaining a license and practicing at a firing range would be the best way to learn non-lethal private defense skills. Although it might be challenging depending on the regional laws, it is undoubtedly an advancement for your safety given the uncertain times we face if stored safely and practiced with great respect and caution.

## **ALTERNATIVE WEAPONS AND SECURITY TOOLS**

Owning a firearm means you understand and have confronted yourself with the possibility of killing another person. While extreme circumstances may push this, we should intend to maintain life and not destroy it - plus - there are some other practical and less drastic ways of deterring thieves.

We want to ensure that whatever means we use are appropriate to the circumstances. Could you imagine if you tried to shoot pepper spray at a

tornado trying to blow your roof off? It certainly won't do much. So, how do we decide what weapons to take up? It depends on four things: intimidation, distance, convenience, and damage.

### ***Intimidation***

Whether physical or mental, humans are coded to divert the possibility of experiencing pain at any cost. If someone were innocently unloading their grocery cart into their car and noticed out of the corner of their eye that they were being charged at manically by an aggressor, there would be little care about asking what the individual wants. An automatic flight mode would ignite you to run away. So, to avoid these situations, obtaining something like a personal alarm for your keys, as well as pepper spray or a taser, might make you feel more secure about such encounters, knowing that you are equipped to deter them and gain time to escape.

Now, once again, proportionality is essential. You want to be able to meet the level of aggression appropriately. If you are already intimidated by existing crime in your area and fear that someone might potentially break into *Pam's Prepared Pantry* if *SHTF*, you need to take preventative measures that will counter this in advance, such as installing burglar bars over windows or putting up electric fencing.

### ***Distance***

As we know, burglars tend to attack first and not be interested in questions. So, if faced with a pandemic break-in, knowing not to yell, "Hey, what are you doing?" might be a good place to start.

Enforcing security measures such as a panic button to alert authorities or using a stun gun or taser would be best. It's good to have safety measures that keep the distance between you and your possible attacker.

"Improvised distance weapons you might already have with you, such as hair spray and perfume, can be sprayed into the eyes of an attacker to blind them so you can make your escape. Pens, pencils, manicure scissors, nail files, and other objects can be used effectively to injure or disable an attacker so you can escape," - Peter Canavan, IT Security, and Personal Safety Expert.

## ***Damage***

It's vital to remember that self-defense protects you from an attack and should always be proportionate. You never want to come to a knife fight armed with a stick. You need to create enough harm that it deters the trespasser from entering any further. You can purchase several weapons with more bark than bite, as many intruders won't stick around too long if they hear something they perceive as "life-threatening." Of course, being a prepper means being prepared for any situation you might encounter, including those that are threatening. It's vital to stockpile an array of safety and security tools strategically placed throughout the home and to know how to use them.

## ***Convenience***

This is the most crucial part of including safety measures in your home. You need to be able to reach and use the mechanisms you have put in place for security. If you decide to arm the pantry, you should ensure that it is out of plain sight but still in an area that is accessible in case of emergency. If an attack wakes you in the middle of the night, grasping for the nearest object will come out of instinct, and perhaps grabbing this guide to ward off an intruder wouldn't be the best choice.

Based on your needs and the level of crime in the area, the choice of security might vary. For example, my partner and I have panic buttons, pepper spray, and a pellet gun under our bedside table. And, of course, our pantry is armed because we are prepared for stockpiling thieves if and when an apocalypse comes our way.

Panic buttons are excellent and convenient safety measures. Depending on the settings and type of system, as soon as it is pressed, it alerts the police or security company, who will come out as quickly as possible to check and secure the premises. As we live in a technology-centered world, more panic buttons have been developed to be accessible in things such as keyrings, and as soon as it is pressed, emergency services will meet you at the location from which the signal was sent.

This is undoubtedly the perfect self-defense tool to equip children with, as all they need to do is press a button. It might take some teaching to help

them understand that it is not a toy and to grapple with that concept first.

## **SECURITY ESSENTIALS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS**

There is not much you can do besides try to prepare for the unknown when it comes to natural disasters. Unfortunately, the same method of detecting and defending (as in self-defense) will not be as effective when faced with tsunami waves. So how can we find a way to prepare for something we cannot control? By applying the same principles and identifying what is needed. Indeed the basic ground rule of every prepper is to prepare for SHTF in every way possible.

The essentials for combating a natural disaster start with the following:

1. Construct a home with locks on cabinets and doors, so your household items don't join the party when SHTF.
2. Secure all windows by adding window locks to them. Again, it is worth the investment if you can afford the extra costs of having shatterproof or "unbreakable" windows that can withstand almost anything. Otherwise, window shutters or sturdy blinds can block much of the debris.
3. Create a safe space for your furry family members, such as a crate. In the midst of a disaster, use it when you evacuate with your animal.
4. Fortify your doors by placing heavy objects or wooden pallets against them. Adding a security bar or door jammer works well and provides more time to find shelter or evacuate.
5. Have rechargeable and battery-operated lights to use during a power outage.
6. Ensure that your car is always filled with gas and that you have a spare tank in the trunk. Additionally, adding a getaway bag for each family member stowed in the trunk is beneficial if you have to relocate to a more secure area.
7. Always keep your yard clear from any lawnmowers, trampolines, and tools, especially if you are given a warning about a natural disaster, as these

objects can cause additional harm to buildings or people.

8. Include DIY alarms (*Abode Essentials Starter Kit, Ooma Smart Security Starter Pack, Blue* by ADT, *SimpliSafe*, and more) or bells so that if you lose your family due to a storm or earthquake, you can ring your bell and better locate your loved ones, especially those who might be injured and unable to speak.

9. Include a fireproof safe with all your documentation, which you can copy and place them in emergency bags, but have peace of mind knowing that the original is secure. Also good and portable when on the run, a waterproof and fireproof document bag for keeping your documents and valuables as safe as possible would be an excellent item to have in your kit.

## AFFORDABLE HOME IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE SECURITY

These are some affordable and simple improvements that you can add to your home to advance security:

- Secure your boundary. Building it upwards is a good idea if you do not already have a wall or fence. If you live on a rental property, speak to your landlord about improvement options. There is an anti-climb or non-drying, thick and oily paint that doesn't permit anyone, including children, to climb up the wall successfully. If you're willing to live out a Viking design, adding wall spikes is cheap and effective for keeping out all intruders, perhaps even raccoons.
- Gravel your driveways. I am yet to hear someone walk on gravel who can do so softly. If you are a light sleeper, being able to hear footsteps and prepare yourself for combat or escape is an excellent way to increase security.
- Window alarms. A fully-fledged alarm system can be a bit pricey compared to window alarms fitted to your windows' glass panels. Small yet effective, they are triggered by vibrations and let out a siren loud enough to scare off anyone.
- Lighting. Knowing anything that creeps around at night does so to avoid being seen; exposing their tactics by having a motion sensor

light is an inexpensive solution.

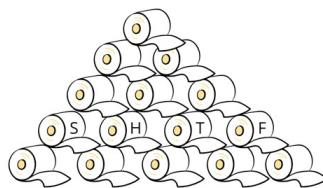
- Install a dummy alarm. Keeping costs down is one of the most important parts of prepping, and sometimes installing a cheap dummy that looks authentic can deter burglars.
- CCTV systems. You can opt for a fake one placed next to your dummy alarm or a real one. Some companies like *Nest Cam* maintain records for up to 30 days, and *Ring* allows you to have complete control, including voice features. Comparing the prices of different companies is a good idea so you can be sure to get the best deal.
- A fox sprayer. This ingenious device pours out a powerful water jet triggered by motion in the target area. You can find some that produce a loud clicking noise which may deter animals and burglars alike.

## **How to Equip Your Family to Defend Themselves**

No safety measure is 100% bulletproof, but knowing what to do and having the tools to do so increases the possibility of being able to deter what comes your way.

In addition, taking a self-defense class that is child and beginner-friendly is a great way to introduce precaution and adds to your arsenal of ways to deter harm to the entire family as you are placed in different scenarios.

Further security ideas, DIY tips, instructional videos on self-defense techniques, and products you may not realize exist (thanks to one of these videos, I now always have a tactical pen in my handbag) can be found on the [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com) website video library.



## STEP 5. ENERGY SUPPLIES NEEDED TO STAY LIT AND WARM

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*"Knowledge is the key to survival; the real beauty of that is that it doesn't weigh anything."*

*- Ray Mears*

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Whether due to a natural disaster or severe weather, not having power will significantly impact your family. When it comes to any emergency, it is crucial to see the danger to divert it. There are several options for selecting emergency power sources that suit your and your family's needs. These may include generators, deep-cycle batteries, flywheel energy storage, and fuel cells.

The *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)* recommends you seek out an alternative location with power, if you can, along with all the basics you will need, such as documentation, clothes, and food. All of your important information must be written in a journal or kept in a waterproof folder, as electronic devices could become useless in an emergency due to a lack of signal and charging facilities.

### **Safety First**

According to the *Consumer Product Safety Commission*, 60 to 70 people die annually from generator-associated carbon monoxide poisoning. If you have a generator, use it safely and check for any leaks before use while keeping it away from anything flammable.

You should use a generator as far as possible from home and not move it closer when there is a power outage. Building upon this, you should try to keep your generator at least 20 feet from any doors or windows.

As soon as the electricity cuts, switch off the main plug/breaker for all electricity in the house and unplug all appliances. Everything with electrical circuitry should be removed from the power grid. This prevents possible damage to appliances or fires starting if electricity surges back on and short circuits occur. Stay in contact with neighbors, where possible, and once you see that power has been reinstated, you can restore power by reversing your "removal" process.

Jack Rico, the host of *Consumer 101*, mentions that you should avoid being a sitting duck in the dark when there is a power cut. Regardless of the light being used, any light is better than none. This is because there are safety hazards involved when homes are left in the dark, and you need to see to defend yourself.

## **BLACKOUT ESSENTIALS**

### ***Alternative Lighting***

While candles assist with additional heating and light, they are not the safest option, particularly around children and animals, and need to be replenished often. Other forms of lighting that you can use include:

- Flame light sources like dual fuel lanterns or propane lanterns
- Rechargeable solar lights
- Flashlights
- Oil lamps
- Headlamps
- Manually powered lights that operate using solar
- Perpetual light sources

In addition, you will need power banks to charge lights, extra batteries, matches, and plentiful supplies of *BIC®* Lighters.

## ***Backup Power***

There are some incredibly powerful and helpful tools to get your hands on before the power goes down, ranging from simple charging stations to home-standby generators capable of powering your entire house. These include:

- Solar panels (including portable chargers)
- Generators
- Powerbanks (suitable for mobile devices and tablets)
- Spare battery packs

When using solar devices, ensure that you do not overcharge them and keep them in a cool and dark space. For anything you plug into your generator or solar equipment, ensure that it has short cables to reduce accidents.

## **STAYING WARM**

Many regions experience power outages during storms or natural disasters, which is undoubtedly a real *SHTF* situation if prolonged.

## ***Insulate Spaces***

The best and most important thing you can do is eliminate heat loss. Keeping the windows shut and attempting to avoid opening and closing doors as much as possible is essential. Close all the doors of the rooms inside your home as that ensures the maximum heat remains inside each space. You can block out drafts by placing rolled towels in front of doors and windows. This prevents gusts of air and cold from entering and keeps any heat from escaping. Closing the blinds and curtains also helps to insulate your rooms. If you have one, the warmest place will be a finished basement, as there is less chance for drafts.

## ***Co-sleep***

Sleeping in the same room as your entire family will conserve warmth as our bodies emit heat. Choosing a room with the least amount of windows or the smallest space is best for insulation. For the happy campers among us, going that step further and erecting a tent indoors for all to snuggle up in will have you all sweating and in T-shirts in no time!

## **ADDING HEAT**

Wearing additional layers or using insulated sleeping bags at night helps significantly in blocking out the cold. In addition, pulling out the extra blankets and wearing thick socks and woolen hats is a great protective layer against the severe cold.

If you have a hot water bottle, using this is excellent as they last for a couple of hours and can certainly heat the body. Another excellent way to stay warm is by drinking warm beverages and eating hot foods, such as soup, to heat up the body from the inside. Using a gas heater, depending on solar, or starting a fire (if you have a fire pit or place) boosts the heat inside, while heating packs are as effective and often used by campers.

## COOKING WITHOUT HEAT

Some of the ways in which you can cook without heat include:

- *Cooking bags*: You can purchase portable cooking bags such as self-heating hot pots or MREs that make cooking a hot meal, regardless of whether there is power or not, as simple as can be.
- *Heating canned foods over a fire*: Empty cans can be repurposed to heat food after eating the contents; all you have to do is give it a little wash, and it's perfectly operational.
- *A wood-burning stove*: This can be worth its weight in gold for its increased heat output from fire compared to an open wood-burning fireplace. In the long run, you'll also save on firewood costs as you can control the fire more effectively in a wood stove. You can also use them for cooking food, even if they aren't specifically designed for it. Any wood heat stove with a large enough flat surface on top (to hold a pot) can be used for cooking.
- *Solar cookers*: These ingenious inventions allow you to cook using UV rays whether you have electricity or not. It is a highly cost-effective method that uses the energy of direct sunlight to heat, cook or pasteurize drinks and other food materials. A "must have" for serious preppers!
- *Propane stoves*: Propane functions as a heat source as well as a means of cooking. Grills, stoves, and cooktops that run on propane are much better for preparing dishes that require a delicate touch due to their precise flame level adjustment capabilities. Additional caution must be exercised as propane is highly flammable, and all methods require proper ventilation.
- *Rocket stove*: Portable stove, which allows you to cook using almost any type of fuel, including branches, twigs, small wood scraps, and just about any small combustible material which can be burned, making it popular with avid outdoor types like myself.

In addition to the above, there are many natural ways to stay warm, such as snuggling or just by keeping your body moving. You are limited only by your imagination.

## STOCKING UP ON ESSENTIALS

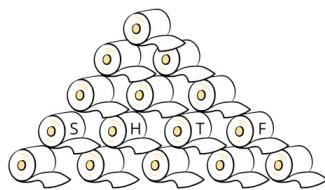
The following essentials will come in extremely handy in the event of a grid-down situation and are well worth adding to your prepping supplies:

- Warm clothing, particularly if made of wool;
- Additional blankets and sleeping bags;
- Foods that will be able to keep you warm, including soups and stews that are stored in ways mentioned in previous chapters;
- Bodywarmers;
- Portable chargers and power banks;
- Flashlights and batteries;
- Backup heat and cooking supplies.

While having these things purchased and already in your home is a huge advantage, you must still have a plan of action if the power goes out. This includes storing these items in an accessible spot to avoid a manhunt for supplies in the dark.

Activities such as card or board games are a great way to keep entertained during the outage and build a connection with others. It's the only time when I would be thrilled to see *Twister* being wrenched out from the back of the games cupboard.

There is plenty of information on different types of lighting and power-producing gear that our community members have tried and tested. Visit our extensive library of informative videos on the [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com) website for more ideas.



## STEP 6: SUSTAINABLE SANITATION AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS

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*"Preparedness, when properly pursued, is a way of life, not a sudden, spectacular program."*

*- Spencer W. Kimball*

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In any emergency, having good personal hygiene and sanitation is vital to prevent the spread of illnesses or infections. It becomes increasingly essential during natural disasters where sanitation should be placed only second to safety. However, sanitation is correlated directly to health and wellbeing. So, let's dive into hygiene and sanitation during emergency settings.

## ESSENTIAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS TO KEEP ON HAND

- Hand washing supplies may include alcohol-based rubs, soap bars, and hand-wash. You can make a temporary station to wash hands in, such as a bucket with the hand washing supplies.
- Alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Toilet paper. We have seen the necessity of toilet paper in the COVID-19 pandemic, and it truly plays a vital role in any *SHTF* situation. Indeed, so much so that I just couldn't resist having a stockpile of them plastered on the front cover of this book!
- Disposable mini towels. What an incredible discovery these compressed towels have been. They can be hydrated with just a few drops of water and serve as a great space-saving alternative to toilet paper, napkins, washcloths, hygienic wipes, and facial tissues.
- Diapers and infant supplies.
- Latex and nitrile gloves.
- Towelettes.
- Wipes (that serve dual purposes for cleaning surfaces or bathing).
- Face masks or respirators.
- Household cleaning agents.

If needed, add prescription eyeglasses, dentures, and hearing aid batteries.

## **FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS DURING EMERGENCIES**

Monthly visitors have little regard for emergencies and will continue regardless of the situation. But, what do we do when we are out of menstrual products or are planning to prep and unsure which would be the best and most cost-effective product?

Mentioning menstruation remains taboo but is one of many people's natural occurrences. It has to be said that running out of your house with a crate filled with pads and tampons in an emergency will not be the most strategic action plan.

Menstruation products have the added benefit of serving a dual purpose in emergency kits. They can be a great survival item for temporary wound closures or plugging up a bloody nose.

So, what are the best products to use for emergencies?

## **BEST MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS FOR EMERGENCIES**

Several period products are sustainable and reusable, with more and more innovative product developments continually flooding the market.

PRODUCT	PROS	CONS
ONE-USE PADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use.</li> <li>• Can be worn for 6 to 8 hours max.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulky and take up a lot of space.</li> <li>• Ruined if any water gets into them.</li> <li>• Disposing of them in a SHTF situation will be challenging.</li> <li>• May leak, particularly if you are active.</li> </ul>
REUSABLE PADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use.</li> <li>• Can be used for several cycles if washed and stored properly.</li> <li>• Doesn't take up much space for storage.</li> <li>• No need to find a means to dispose of them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require water to clean them.</li> <li>• Can be messy if not stored properly after use or if you do not change them often enough.</li> </ul>
MENSTRUAL CUPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most last 5 to 7 years.</li> <li>• Only have to be emptied every 6 to 12 hours.</li> <li>• Takes up very little space.</li> <li>• A number of ways to empty, and only requires water to rinse before using again.</li> <li>• Able to withstand water and won't become damaged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will need water to wash your hands and cup before using it again.</li> <li>• Can be a bit of a learning curve for first-time users, which will be messy.</li> </ul>
PERIOD PANTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to reusable pads, period panties take up little space and are comfortable to wear.</li> <li>• Minimal environmental impact.</li> <li>• There are different absorbency levels and styles to choose from.</li> <li>• Perfect for postpartum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require 24-48 hours to dry properly before you can use it again.</li> <li>• Will be a bit of an investment, to begin with, as you will require more than one pair to get through your cycle.</li> <li>• Must be washed straight after use.</li> <li>• You have to purchase the correct size to avoid leaks.</li> </ul>
PERIOD DISCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More comfortable than menstrual cups.</li> <li>• Wear time of 10 to 12 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costly.</li> <li>• Can be very messy when removing.</li> <li>• Requires water to rinse and to wash your hands before and after insertion.</li> </ul>
TAMPONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be inserted with an applicator.</li> <li>• Worn for 8 hours max.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will need to purchase many boxes.</li> <li>• If they get wet, they are ruined.</li> <li>• Depending on your flow, will have to be changed often which might not be possible in a SHTF situation.</li> <li>• Risk of toxic shock if not changed timely.</li> </ul>

## ALTERNATIVE FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS

Despite prepping for your monthly, you may either run out of or lose feminine products. What do you do then?

If shops are not operational or you are required to leave as quickly as possible, the following are the best DIY products to make your period as comfortable as possible.

### ***Socks filled with cotton wool or toilet paper***

Use an old sock tied once filled with cotton wool or toilet paper as a makeshift pad. These can last for an hour or more, so you know that you're good to go, at least for a short while, despite shit hitting the fan.

### ***Used cleaning rags***

These have been designed to handle liquid, whether microfibre or an old dishcloth, so they will work perfectly fine for your cycle. Be sure that it is clean before using it to avoid any infection. Once used, you can rinse it out and let it dry before creating a new one and repeating the process.

### ***Medical gauze***

Stacking cotton wool or gauze, as well as other similarly absorbent materials, can work as a DIY sanitary pad. You can wrap these materials, which will serve as the inner of the product, in toilet paper or paper towels.

## FEMALE HYGIENE DURING EMERGENCIES

Finding ways to maintain health when frequent showers or hot baths are not possible is crucial. However, it's also important to think ahead and find a solution before it is needed.

### ***Hand washing***

When possible, reserve water already in your stockpile only for hygiene purposes, be sure to wash your hands both before and after changing feminine products.

Apart from people who menstruate, every family member should practice good hygiene, washing hands frequently or as often as possible to avoid the spread of germs and diseases.

### ***Storage***

Depending on the products you choose to use, place them in ziplock bags before stacking them in a sealed container that will prevent water from seeping in. Including smaller products like cups or discs in emergency medical kits would suffice.

### ***Disposal methods***

Many products are not environmentally friendly, and even after a zombie apocalypse, there will be generations after us. Therefore, conserving the state of the earth is essential.

If there are no trash cans nearby, try carrying small bags (diaper or animal waste) to dispose of used tampons and/or pads. With reusable pads and menstrual underwear, a zip lock bag for storage allows it to be easily washed out without odor or contamination of other products in your stockpile. Menstrual cups and discs allow you the freedom to dispose of them anywhere, toss out the contents, give them a rinse, and they are ready to be used again.

## **CHILDCARE HYGIENE PRODUCTS DURING EMERGENCIES**

While children can use the same products as adults, they are much more sensitive to germs and will contact illnesses more quickly. Therefore, when

prepping for children, be aware that they will require more "kid-friendly" products and possibly in higher quantities than adults need.

### ***For infants***

As gross as they sound, reusable diapers have become one of the best and most cost-effective methods ideal for emergencies. When it came to bringing our freshly born babe home, we had many gifts from friends and family members, including one-use diapers. Considering that our dear pooping princess goes through three to five of them daily, it was not the best financial move to sustain our household.

Once they were finished, we purchased around thirty cloth diapers, which can easily be washed and reused. Of course, sh\*t first hit the fan when literal shi\*t seeped up my baby's back which isn't restricted just to this eco-friendly option. That this stuff can defy the laws of gravity continues to amaze me. Regardless, this is the perfect solution for emergencies if stores are inaccessible.

Infants typically feed between 6 to 8 times a day, so having a food supply that lasts at least three days to a week is ideal. Ensure that you have a means of heating water to prepare the formula, whether over a gas stove or fire. If you cannot boil the water to sterilize it, purchasing tablets or drops from *Amazon* or any drugstore works just as well and prevents any additional germs from making your baby sick.

Avoid giving an infant under six months old water only; it can cause hyponatremia or water intoxication.

### ***For toddlers and older children***

It is generally easier with older children, but still follow the same precaution when dealing with food and drinks, and always check that it is safe for consumption.

If you have started potty training, including a portable potty in your stockpile is worth considering.

## **GENERAL EMERGENCY SUPPLIES FOR CHILDREN**

- Cleansers and sanitizers that are suitable for children.
- Face masks suitable for the age of your children.
- Noise reduction headphones or earmuffs.
- Medicine.
- Safety equipment and clothing such as helmets and life jackets.
- Rain jackets and boots.
- Mosquito nets, sunscreen, and bug spray that is suitable for children.
- Diapers in the quantity of at least 10 for cloth and at least 100 for disposable ones.
- Multivitamins.
- Wipes.
- A portable medical kit that can be placed in your diaper bag.
- Trash bags for disposal of used wipes and diapers (if using disposables or storage of dirty diapers (if non-disposable)).
- Tupperware for washing pacifiers and toys.

## **SANITATION ALTERNATIVES IN EMERGENCIES**

### **Waste Management**

When considering alternative waste management, it might spark an image of being costly or difficult to obtain or make. However, not having access to adequate and proper sanitation can lead to chronic problems, including the spread of illnesses. Through much research, I have found (in my opinion) the best, most accessible and affordable options for suburban preppers.

#### ***Packet Latrines***

Purchase a stack of human waste bags that are single-use and biodegradable. These bags allow you to bury or toss them out quickly and are lightweight and straightforward to transport. They definitely win points by avoiding the need to grab a shovel and start digging up the backyard.

#### ***Bucket Latrines or Elevated Toilets***

This is a temporary structure built of a large tank or container that has to be filled with a replaceable but sizeable plastic bag. This allows more waste storage but must be transported to a sewage disposal site when filled.

### ***Composting Toilets***

This dry toilet follows the biological process of turning human waste into compost by organisms that break it down. Generally, two people who use this full-time will have to empty it every three weeks. While this will come at a cost, it is beneficial even outside of emergency use and can save you a few bucks on water and compost in the long run.

### ***Chemical Toilets***

This is a portable unit with water-tight excreta-holding containers or tanks that each have a chemical solution that helps break down waste and reduce the odor.

### ***A Hole***

The easiest, cheapest, and most ancient method of removing waste in emergencies is placing it back on earth by digging a hole, completing your business and closing the hole back up.

## **WATER**

In water shortage emergencies, reusing and repurposing water is vital. Saving the bath water for use in your garden or washing clothes by hand while showering are a few examples.

Collecting rainwater is a great way to maintain and preserve resources. Some people use rainwater to water plants, clean, and even as drinking water. However, any rainwater system must be adequately maintained, and the water quality should be appropriate for its intended use.

Rainwater as drinking water is not safe until it has been appropriately treated. Numerous contaminants can be washed into your "catch basin" (imagine bird/rat poop from your roof ending up in your water barrel or

tank). Water is also prone to carrying parasites, viruses, bacteria, and chemicals that can make you sick.

The risk of getting sick from rainwater may differ depending on your location, how frequently it rains, the season, and your method of collection and storage. Try to place your rainwater collection barrel where it won't come into contact with toxic roofing and gutter materials, such as asbestos, lead, and copper.

Before using collected rainwater for drinking, bathing, or cooking, consider whether treatment is needed to make it safe. Water should be tested to determine if it has harmful germs, chemicals, or toxins. Water treatment options include filtration, chemical disinfection, or boiling. Filtration can remove some germs and chemicals. Treating water with chlorine or iodine kills some germs but does not remove chemicals or toxins. Boiling the water will kill germs but will not remove chemicals.

So, proceed with great caution if you decide to harvest your rainwater for drinking purposes and try to combine a variety of filtration methods.

## **DISPOSING OF SOLID WASTE**

Garbage is smelly and an eyesore, but when SHTF, how can you dispose of trash, especially if a natural disaster disrupts refuse collection?

Sorting through it by flattening boxes and cans to reduce space is the best starting point for maximizing the existing space in your trash can. Any vegetable or fruit scraps can be used as compost, so they should be saved and transported to your garden.

The placement of your garbage can is another factor that you should consider. Keeping your trash away from your house is ideal. In our home, we leave it in the backyard but far from our garden or children's toys so that we don't smell any decomposing waste or have to deal with swatting flies.

Burning household garbage is considered dangerous to your health and the environment, and in many states, it is against the law. However, in a real SHTF scenario, it may be your only option; so if you decide to burn your trash, do so in a safe area such as a burn barrel, wood stove, or fire-pit to

avoid another SHTF situation in your backyard. Placing it into separate garbage bags and securing it as tightly as possible will greatly assist in removing the odor and keeping flies to a minimum.

Items such as cereal or cardboard boxes should be stored separately and kept to make fires to stay warm or cook with.

If there is an ongoing crisis and you can barely see your backyard or wherever you keep your trash, burying it is another option. Doing it away from your home would be ideal if you elect to do this. Remember to look out for all pipes when digging to avoid hitting them.

## KEEP THOSE EMPTY CANS

I couldn't resist adding a few of the ingenious ideas I came across on various prepper forums, which should inspire you to think twice before throwing away an empty can. Here are just a few of the best ideas:

- *Storage*: Screws, nails, sand, herbs, matches, utensils- the list of prepping supplies we could store in a tin is endless.
- *Makeshift Knife*: If you need to cut something and don't have a knife, just use the edge of a tin can's lid.
- *Fire Transportation*: If your supply of matches or lighters is running low, you'll need to devise more creative ways to start a fire. One idea is to carry your fire in a tin. Make four or five holes in the bottom and sides and carefully place the burning cinders from another fire into the bottom of the can. These coals will burn for hours, and you can keep them going by adding tinder and kindling.
- *Water Filter*: Punch a few holes in the bottom of the can and fill it up with several layers of sand and gravel. When you pour water into the can, the makeshift filter will remove larger pieces of debris and unwanted matter.
- *Cooking Pot*: Hang it over a fire by adding a wire handle, and you can cook food, boil water, make soup or coffee, and sterilize medical instruments.

- *Mini Stove*: Instead of putting the can over a fire, you put a fire inside the can. Fill the can with sand, and soak it with a flammable liquid like alcohol. Add tinder on top and light it. You will have a flame burning for five to ten minutes, long enough to cook food on a small skillet above the pan.
- *Hobo Alarm*: Set up a perimeter of wire, cordage, or string around your garden and attach tin cans and lids to it. The rest is self-explanatory.
- *Scoop or Shovel*: As we know from previous paragraphs, the need for shovels for *SHTF* can be pretty common, so there are no excuses for not having the means to dig a hole as long as you have an empty can or two.
- *Seed Starter*: Poke some small holes around the bottom edge of the can for drainage, add your soil, and plant your seeds.
- *Garden Pot*: For smaller plants, thoroughly cleaned-out tin cans make ideal garden containers.
- *Target Practice*: For those of you who opted for firearms for home security, line up some tin cans on a fence, take aim and improve your shooting skills. Less appropriate in an urban setting than in the wilderness.
- *Intercom*. I know I'm scraping the bottom of the can with this one, but it's my favorite. Make a hole in the bottom of an empty tin, put a string through the hole, and tie a knot inside the can. Take care not to talk too loudly about your secret stockpile in the cellar.

## LAUNDRY MANAGEMENT

I constantly feel there is always laundry, and whether we are at home or away for the weekend, dirty washing continues to pile up. But what if the trusty old washing machine is no longer operational because of a power outage?

### Alternatives to Washing Machines

#### ***The Tub***

One of the oldest methods of cleaning clothes happens to be by hand. The best is to fill a tub or bucket with water and soap and give clothes a good scrub before rinsing and hanging.

If access to water is a problem, using a bath or dishwater is an alternative, or if you live close to a creek, lake, or ocean, you can fill tubs with it, heat the water over a fire, and wait for it to cool down before washing clothes by hand.

Sort through clothes and separate them by color and fabric before starting. You can use almost any soap, hand washing powder, baking soda, *Borax*, or laundry ammonia. Be sure to keep at least one tub or container for rinsing so that all the suds can properly leave clothes.

### ***Non-Electric Washers***

I am constantly in awe of the innovations that people can come up with, including non-electric washers. These are typically portable hand washers that function as regular washing machines; they do smaller loads of washing at once. Water can be heated using fire, solar, or, if you're in suburbs where the sun shines, in a bucket in the backyard or balcony.

### ***Plunger Washer***

This is a portable washing machine that is human-powered. It consists of a bucket that holds water for washing and a plunger that agitates the clothes. You can adjust the design by placing holes in the top to avoid splatter. Then, all you do is add the clothes to the sudsy water and begin plunging up and down, and bam, you have clean clothes!

### ***Pressure Washers***

These come in various sizes and can typically hold a small load of laundry. It is a little faster than following the tub method and uses less water, undoubtedly a crisis win. Once you've added your dirty clothes, washing powder, and water to the machine, you tighten the lid and press down the handle for a few minutes.

When the wash is complete, you can toss out the used water and fill it with clean water before rinsing in the same manner, without adding any soap water before rinsing in the same manner. In the same way a salad spinner

works, the washer will build up pressure which, in essence, cleans your clothes.

### ***Sailors Method***

Do you have a black garbage bag, dirty clothes, and soap? You just fill the garbage bag with water, soap, and clothes, and leave it in the sun, which will do all the agitating for washing. Then you are all set for this method of cleaning laundry. This is undoubtedly an excellent method for large items like blankets or coats and, naturally, sailor's uniforms.

### **CLOTHING LINES**

There are several makeshift options that you can follow just by having a sturdy rope and two poles, trees, or solid objects opposite each other to tie it to. If you would like something a bit more permanent, investing in retractable clotheslines or dryer racks is worthwhile considering whether in an emergency or not. Remember, if you are drying clothes indoors, leave windows open to avoid stuffiness and a build-up of mold, which can make you sick.

### **SHOWERING**

If you run out of water that you have stocked for emergencies, having a rain shower is probably the best way to go. You can fill up buckets, containers, or barrels with rainwater, heat it over a stovetop or fire, allow it to cool down a little, and then do a cowboy splash in a bucket or bathtub.

A sponge bath or simply using body wipes will suffice if you run low on supplies. However, survival is the number one priority in an emergency, even if that means having to look like *Chucky* on a rampage for a short duration.

### **SHTF HAIR CARE**

Using a dry shampoo - whether bought or made from supplies with wheat or cocoa powder - will minimize the discomfort you might encounter from not being able to shower as frequently as normal.

Many swear by the benefits of using apple cider vinegar as a shampoo replacement, even without an emergency, and here are just some of the features it is praised for:

- *Promotes a healthy scalp:* May offer healing properties for the scalp and help prevent the build-up of dandruff.
- *Reduces color fading:* Can help close hair cuticles, thus maintaining your color's vibrancy if you are fighting rather than celebrating your gray hairs as a sign of maturity and wisdom.
- *Detangles:* With the help of a wide-tooth comb after your ACV (apple cider vinegar) treatment, you will be rid of gnarly knots and tangles.
- *Strengthens and softens:* ACV coats the cuticle, leaving the hair soft and shiny.
- *Fights frizz:* Can help smooth the hair and keep the frizz at bay.
- *Reduces hair loss:* Thanks to ACV's ability to balance the skin's pH level and clear the hair follicle from debris, it may help to reduce hair loss.
- *Deep cleanse:* Can be effective at getting rid of gunk on the scalp without stripping color and removing the build-up of products.

### ***How to Make an Apple Cider Vinegar Hair Treatment:***

- Mix one part water to five parts vinegar in a spray bottle
- Spray it evenly over your scalp
- Work the vinegar into the hair with your fingers - if it burns your scalp, make sure to dilute it a little more
- Allow the mixture to soak in for two to five minutes
- Rinse your hair and scalp with cool water

## **CLEANING AGENTS FOR EMERGENCIES**

Before SHTF, you want to start stockpiling the following cleaning ingredients from this list:

- Borax
- Baking soda
- White vinegar
- Apple cider vinegar
- Bars of soap
- Castile soap
- Rubbing alcohol
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Lemon
- Glycerin
- Vodka
- Essential oils

## **BEST ESSENTIAL OILS AS CLEANING AGENTS**

- Lemon oil
- Lemongrass oil
- Orange oil
- Grapefruit oil
- Tea tree oil
- Eucalyptus oil
- Lavender oil
- Peppermint oil
- Rosemary oil
- Oregano oil
- Thyme oil
- Pine oil

- Wild orange oil
- Cinnamon oil

Now that we have the basics for cleaning agents, you need the following gear:

- Microfiber rags
- Toothbrushes
- Scrubbers or sponges
- Pump bottles
- Jugs
- Bucket
- Hand grater
- Disposable gloves

## **RECIPES FOR CLEANING AGENTS**

AGENT	USE	INGREDIENTS
<b>DISINFECTANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Windows</li> <li>General surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1/2 cup white vinegar</li> <li>4 cups of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>1/4-1/2 teaspoon of peppermint essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>DISINFECTANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disinfecting surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1/4-1/2 cup of rubbing alcohol</li> <li>32 oz water</li> </ul>
<b>DISINFECTANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toilet bowl</li> <li>Stovetops</li> <li>General surfaces</li> <li>Shining wood floors and surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup of baking soda</li> <li>1/4 cup of castile soap</li> <li>1/4-1/2 teaspoon of lemon, lime and/or orange essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>TOILET BOWL CLEANER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning and sanitising toilet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baking soda</li> <li>Suds Sal</li> </ul>
<b>SUDSY SAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All-purpose cleaner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 tablespoon of sal suds</li> <li>4 cups of water</li> </ul>
<b>DEEP CLEAN SCRUB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toilet bowl</li> <li>Shower</li> <li>Mold</li> <li>Nooks and crannies</li> <li>Rat repellent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1/2 cup of baking soda</li> <li>1/3 cup of castile soap</li> <li>1/4 cup hydrogen peroxide</li> <li>3/4 cup of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>1/4-1/2 teaspoon of lemon, lime and/or orange essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>DRAIN CLEANER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning drains</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup of baking soda</li> <li>1 cup of white vinegar</li> <li>Hot water (for cleaning reaction)</li> </ul>

AGENT	USE	INGREDIENTS
<b>ALL PURPOSE CLEANER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disinfecting surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 cups of white vinegar</li> <li>•</li> <li>• 2 cups of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of tea tree and/or lemon essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>LEATHER POLISH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leather</li> <li>• Wood furniture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup of baking soda</li> <li>• 1/4 cup of castile soap</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of lemon, lime and/or orange essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>FABRIC FRESHENER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mattress freshener</li> <li>• Linen freshener</li> <li>• Toy and fabric cleanser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/4 cup of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>• 2 tablespoons vodka</li> <li>•</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 teaspoon lavender and/or chamomile essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>AIR FRESHENER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air freshener</li> <li>• Odor neutralizer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3/4 cup of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>• 2 tablespoons vodka</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 teaspoon lavender and/or chamomile essential oil</li> </ul>
<b>ANTI BACTERIAL SPRAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air freshener</li> <li>• Anti mold, mildew, fungi and bacteria treatment</li> <li>• Insect spray.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup of water (preferably distilled)</li> <li>•</li> <li>• 2 cups of white vinegar</li> <li>•</li> <li>• 1/4-1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and/or rosemary and lemon essential oil</li> </ul>

## KEEPING PESTS AWAY

Pests often transport bacteria, so you want to be sure that you won't be living with rodents and flies in an emergency. Besides, rodents will be the thieves of your stockpile, so getting rid of or preventing them is crucial. Mint, bay leaves, and peppermint oil are known to repel rodents, so place those around entry points to try to keep them away.

### ***Getting rid of rodents***

The old-fashioned spring-loaded traps will do the trick, but if you prefer a more humane way of ridding your house of rodents, you have some options. Devices such as the *Smart Mouse Trap* and similar keep your prisoner inside the box until you can release it (far away from your house). When setting up the trap, make sure to wear gloves as your scent will repel the rodents. They like nuts and grains, so peanut butter might be a good option to set inside the trap—and too much bait makes it easy for the rodent to eat some and not get caught, so use a pea-sized amount.

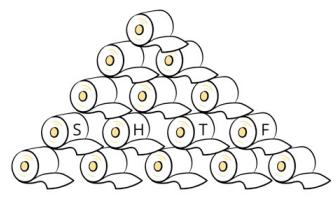
Another natural method would be to get a cat, which may cause a glitch in your SHTF plan unless you add cat food to the stockpile list.

### ***Insects and other creepy crawlies***

You can keep pests out with a homemade formula simply by using a soap spray containing water and two teaspoons of dishwashing liquid. This spray assists with removing insects, adding garlic cloves help deter mosquitoes, and *Borax* is an excellent addition to removing roaches and fleas.

Additionally, making light cleaning a part of your daily routine will assist with insect and fly control and deter rodents who like to help clean up your crumbs and leftovers.

As in all previous chapters, more tips, ideas, and links to checklists and reviewed products can be found at the [shtffundamentals.com](http://shtffundamentals.com) website.



## STEP 7: FINANCIAL PREP

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*"Circumstances can force your hand. So think ahead!"*

*- Robert A. Heinlein*

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Many of us were overwhelmed by the financial setback of the pandemic. Millions encountered job losses, unexpected funeral expenses, and inflation costs. Financial emergencies can literally happen to anyone at any time. While we can hope that a disaster never occurs, we can never be sure. This is why it is important to budget appropriately and do your best to prepare for anything uncertain and unexpected.

### FINANCIAL STATISTICS

- 40% of Americans have little to no planning for emergencies.
- 16% of Americans have emergency savings accounts.
- 55% of Americans are concerned by unplanned financial emergencies, according to *Northwestern Mutual*.
- 38% of Americans could not come up with \$500 in cash without selling something or taking out a loan (*SimplyWise*)

Many of us prepare for the physical aspect of prepping, including stockpiles and pantries. But, very little consideration is often afforded to the possible dips of economic hardships.

## **WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED AN ECONOMIC DIP**

This can be any life event that triggers financial loss or dips. These include bankruptcy or insolvency, unemployment, a change in commercial supply that causes hyperinflation, a natural disaster that forces the need for reparations and fixtures, job loss, last-minute emergency travels, or war which causes a multitude of intersectional economic collapses.

### **What is Financial Planning?**

While this skill has to be developed over time through discipline and dedication to planning, it is essential and immensely beneficial, even outside the scope of an emergency. We will always require the skill to organize our finances.

Financial planning is not what influencers make it out to be, where you speculate your life savings on NFTs or cryptocurrencies. It merely entails establishing a comprehensive list of income and expenditures to create a cushion for any financial fall.

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

"Our analysis shows that most families will be faced with a significant and possibly destabilizing unexpected expense at some point. It's critical for families to build emergency savings" says Clinton Key, a researcher for *The Pew Charitable Trusts*.

According to *Pew Trusts*, around 57% of Americans are not financially prepared for anything unexpected, with 33% of them not holding anything they would consider as savings. The Federal Reserve found that 47% of Americans are unable to pay a \$400 unexpected expense if it occurred. \$400 can sustain a week or two of groceries for a family or part of monthly rent for much of the world (although this figure has increased steadily since

the time of writing this book due to massive inflation). When faced with the realities of losing jobs or having an unexpected accident, bills still need to be paid, so having some security to provide financial relief is crucial.

## THE BASICS OF FINANCIAL PLANNING

### Establish Your Finances and Create a Budget

Before deep-diving into savings and investments - knowing your monthly expenditures is vital. How you decide to structure your plan is entirely up to you. We like to structure our finances on an *Excel* spreadsheet that we print and store in a file. This ensures that we always have a backup on our computer but can also have printed versions in files. You can find several spreadsheets online on stores like *Etsy*, or spiral-bound journals and planners from *Amazon* are also an excellent option.

Once you've established all your income sources, draft a list of estimated expenditures. Start by writing down any salary, return on investments (ROI), or remuneration you get each month. When we first did this, we were taken aback by our spending. You never quite fathom your shopping habits until you see the numbers and realize that the saying "the road to bankruptcy is paved with good deals" has more than an element of truth to it.

You can start by organizing your expenses from the most important (mortgage, rent, utilities, school fees, food, gas, and medical bills) to less important ones (*Hulu*, *Netflix*, and eating out). Once this has been established, you decide if you want to make any cuts to your list. For example, you might find that you do not need a particular membership or can reduce costs on excursions.

### The 50/30/20 Budget Rule

Senator Elizabeth Warren popularized the so-called "50/20/30 budget rule" (sometimes labeled "50-30-20") in her book, *All Your Worth: The Ultimate Lifetime Money Plan*. The basic rule is that after taxes, 50% of income should be spent on needs, 30% on wants, and 20% on savings. Knowing we all have different financial situations, not many of us are privileged with

being able to save 20% of our salary. However, saving \$1 is better than not saving one at all.

Financial planning does not mean that all fun is eradicated and that you have to live a life on a strict budget; it merely sets the parameters for fun. We have all been out with friends and knew our budget but still exceeded it. Applying wisdom using a card will save you in the long term.

## **Reduce Debt**

The big scary *d* - especially when SHTF!

Many live paycheck to paycheck and credit cards have become a solution for many financial problems. But unfortunately, the average household in the US has a credit card debt of at least \$8,000, not including student loan debt or mortgage loans. The average American is in \$92,727 debt, according to a 2020 *Experian* study. I am not sure about you, but that is quite a hefty sum of money.

Ignoring existing debt will not dissolve it. But, even if you take little steps to reduce it by slightly increasing your repayment or by reducing your spending - it helps! Try to avoid creating new debt and resolve to decrease existing ones first is what is needed.

## **Build an Emergency Fund**

An emergency fund can only be established if you have some sort of savings. Unfortunately, as mentioned, only around a third of Americans have savings on hand. When we do not have savings, we are trapped in a cycle of debt burden as we live paycheck to paycheck. Once you are able to build a savings of between 15-20% of your income, you can begin allocating it.

Many financial experts suggest that people should work towards keeping a fund that sustains 3 to 6 months of personal expenses. This might sound overwhelming - especially if it feels as though your current income barely allows you to make ends meet. That's okay. Prepping is about making progress, not obtaining all you need at once. Be patient and know that any progress, regardless of how small, gets you where you need to be. Sailors

don't become discouraged by rough seas as perseverance and preparation allow them to reach their destination. The same is possible for you.

## **Separate Savings from Spending Accounts**

Creating a separate bank account for savings has been, up until recently, considered a good plan. You can earn interest, and it is much safer than storing it in cash under your mattress. However, some accounts are notice accounts that set a limit, so you must inform the bank of your desire to withdraw the money before it can be done. This is an effective way to practice financial discipline but might not be the best if needed promptly. With that said, it is important to stay very aware of what is going on with the global situation - in these days of economic instability, many people have lost faith in financial institutions. They prefer the perks of the "under the mattress" storage option to the perceived security and minimal gains in interest offered by banks.

## Be Aware of Scams and Scammers

- Do not share any personal financial information with anyone outside your family, including the means by which you are saving.
- If you use a financial advisor, ensure they are reputable and well established within the financial sector. This includes not clicking on any links you receive via email or text and being cautious of fake links to websites - scammers have gotten pretty creative!
- Many financial scams include work-from-home opportunities, pyramid schemes, debt consolidation offers, or student loan repayments. Avoid any company or organization that promises these things without having a trustworthy online reputation.

## YOUR EMERGENCY FINANCIAL PREPPING STRATEGY

The most daunting part of financial preparation is getting down to the concepts of your plan. You must be able to face your financial State honestly and have the courage and discipline to modify your spending habits in order to build up a safety net for emergencies.

Be sure to pay all bills on time, including insurance, so that you are covered for accidents or break-ins. It is never too late to get started on prepping. Familiarizing yourself with your expenditures is vital to prep for the essentials you need and use. To become financially secure, plans must be in place.

There are several ways to become frugal while still meeting all your needs. If you have not already, start couponing and search for store specials as this is the best way to start bulk buying. As previously mentioned, it is vital to look around before purchasing. Different stores retail the same items at different prices, so it is always possible to find cheaper options.

Seriously consider what you *really* need. My mother would often say, "will a *Gucci* bag keep you warm in winter?" That is something that definitely stuck with me. A famous billionaire once said that before considering a

large purchase, consider if you can afford another. If you can't, then it is not worth splurging on. Of course, suppose your car has no bumper and barely drives, and it would be cheaper to buy a new one than have it fixed. In that case, that is a reasonable investment given the circumstances.

Look for alternate shopping spaces such as dollar stores, flea markets, or outlets where you can purchase things for half the price of the large retail stores. Take time to research the different shopping options before you go to avoid any unnecessary travel.

Know what you intend to purchase when you walk into a store. If you have no choice but to go into debt by using credit cards, check the repayment rate and debt forgiveness options available to you to avoid having any asset seized. Prioritizing your spending to meet your needs and sorting out wants or desires later is the best way to reduce your debt. This avoids sacrificing your savings or credit score to have a memorable summer. There are definitely cost-effective alternatives to enjoy life and its leisure activities.

As always - research is vital! Asking someone you know manages their finances well (if you do not have access to a financial advisor or feel uncomfortable doing so) will provide you with invaluable access to financial knowledge and wisdom.

Be sure to research any unemployment, disability, or poverty aids provided by your government and make the necessary trip to apply or gain more information if needed. Many know that this exists but might not be sure how to navigate towards it. Asking around or calling government financial relief services is the best way forward.

## **KEEP CASH ON HAND**

Cash is still king as much as bank accounts and cards provide safety for cash. It is one of the best assets and forms of payment and provides you with flexibility. It's essential to consider the ease with which you can withdraw cash from your financial institution when deciding whether or not to keep a stash at home. Do you live in a remote area or a distance from your bank? Cash on hand for emergency use may be a vital part of your preps.

Keeping some cash in your prep kit allows you access to supplies and food during a disaster when credit cards may not be usable. Families may elect to keep a few hundred in cash, dependent upon their needs, but more certainly wouldn't hurt.

When it comes to storage, make sure to have a locked safe or a well-hidden container you can hide it in to avoid theft. You might conceal this container or safe somewhere in your food stockpile. Wherever you choose to store it, be sure that it is out of the sight of others.

## Where to Stash Your Cash

As a prepper, coming up with good places to hide your cash is paramount - here are a few ideas I came across recently on my online travels through the prepper websites and *Facebook* groups:

- *In a Lettuce*: This one wins the first prize for ingenuity. That's right; you can purchase a money safe that looks like a head of lettuce with a secret flap at the bottom that you can slip your cash into. So unless the thief is looking to make a salad, they're unlikely to find your cash stash in the fridge drawer.
- *In Your Phone Case*: A great technique for when you need to store some emergency cash on the go is hiding it in your phone case. Of course, this isn't a good idea if you have a see-through case.
- *Inside Furniture or Doors*: This requires a bit more work than the lettuce and is more for the handymen and women amongst us who like a reason to get out the power tools. But it is highly effective once the work is done - just roll up your cash into a small metal tube, drill a hole that's just a bit larger than the tube and place it on the top rim of your door or another piece of furniture that you can access without too much trouble.
- *In the Backyard*: Roll up your cash into an empty pill bottle and stick it to the bottom of a large rock or flower pot with super glue. Dig a hole big enough to hide the pill bottle, and you have added value to your rock garden and foiled any passing thieves.

## STOCKPILE ESSENTIALS

After reading through chapter four, you should be well-versed in the essentials you should include in your stockpile. If all you can do is obtain a supply to last a week or two and some cash for emergencies, that is perfectly fine. Any preparations are better than none.

## BARTERING IN CRISES

During the pandemic, social media erupted with various prepping or emergency planning forums. Some *TikTok* accounts showed how neighbors shared supplies through a mailbox to avoid contact, while others started community pantries which allowed you to take according to your needs and give what you had in abundance.

If the anecdotes and photos were anything to go by, this seemed to work, at least under the vigilant observation of organizers and volunteers.

Bartering existed before cash became the norm and worked well for generations before us. If you have sixteen eggs but no bread, while your neighbor has four loaves of bread but no eggs, would it not be reasonable to exchange and have both needs met?

### What Essentials Are Best for Bartering?

- Food is an essential need for survival.
- Cooking supplies like pots and pans or miscellaneous cooking bowls and spoons.
- Canning supplies. Preserving food is essential, and in tricky times, many would be only too pleased to get their hands on a pressure canner or jars through bartering.
- Sanitation and hygiene supplies. When the pandemic was in the beginner stages, I remember how I was well-stocked with canned goods but minimal sanitation supplies. In discussion with a close neighbor, I found out they had more than enough toilet rolls (and possibly were the ones who emptied out *Target*). They were willing to offer some to us in exchange for a couple of cans of food.

- Drinking water.
- Fire, building, and maintenance tools.
- Any gardening supplies or tools.
- Power and light supplies.
- Fuel.

## **Things to Remember About Bartering**

Never offer up more than you live without. The entire bartering process comes down to negotiation, so it's best to practice this to avoid giving more than what is necessary or reasonable.

Always ensure that both parties benefit reasonably. For example, giving someone a car battery in exchange for three eggs might not be the most brilliant move.

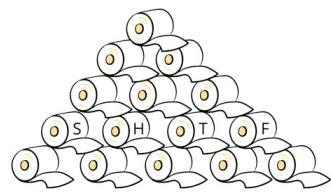
Do not offer up more information than necessary. When people are faced with a crisis, they will always put their needs above those of others. Do not mention secret stashes or the amount of food you have in your pantry. Do not barter with medicine, drugs, or alcohol, as it is more likely to attract the attention of undesirable people. Be sure that you never empty a resource when bartering.

Knowing your community and planning in advance will reduce the chance of a short supply on your end.

## **BE PREPARED, NOT SCARED**

If there is one takeaway from this chapter, it would be to always be financially prepared for the unknown. As much as we would like to assume a certain stability in the patterns of life, it is far more complex and unpredictable than we would like to admit. Find ways in which you can build savings by cutting out unnecessary spending and excursions and reducing your debt as much as possible. The worst scenario is where you are unable to afford medical needs, or a car replacement/repair, as both are vital to life and being able to navigate through it. Be sure to stockpile, regardless of how small it is, as it reduces additional stress and worries during any economic crisis or disaster. Planning ahead will give you time to

breathe before SHTF, and these days it is needed more than we can imagine.



## **STEP 8: ALL THINGS WAR RELATED: EVACUATION, BUGGING-IN AND TREATING RADIATION**

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*"Being prepared is huge, because it minimizes the impact of a disaster for you and loved ones you can help with planning."*

*- Thomas Kirsch, Professor and Director of the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health at the Uniformed Services University.*

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**N**othing is worse than being faced with anxiety, fear or forgetting important documentation when you are pressed for time and need to evacuate because of an emergency or disaster. Prepping reduces the stress that accompanies disasters and allows you to better focus your energy on actually escaping and not stalling by needing to pack a bag.

### **WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR HOUSEHOLD EVACUATION?**

From pandemics to natural disasters, there is a list of essentials that you should always have with you in your emergency bag.

## An emergency bag typically includes:

- Copies of papers like birth and marriage certificates; deeds to your house, medical reports, passports, social security cards, and insurance.
- Water.
- Flashlights and batteries.
- First-aid and medical supplies.
- A battery-operated radio with extra batteries.
- Sanitation and hygiene supplies.
- A change of clothing.
- A whistle to signal for help or use if you lose a family member nearby.
- Comfort items like toys and books for kids.
- Cash.
- The family pet.

Where you choose to leave this is entirely up to you. Many elect to stash it in the trunk of their car for a quick escape while leaving it near your front door also fits well in a sound evacuation plan.

## PREPPING YOUR FAMILY FOR EVACUATIONS

Anyone with young children knows just how challenging it can be to leave the house on time. But, when it comes to pressing emergencies requiring urgent reactions, every second is vital.

If you are given prior notice of an event that requires you to evacuate, try to prepare your yard before you leave. This includes moving toys inside or dismantling tree branches that could fly into or collapse onto your home. Then, shut off all your utilities and power.

If you live in a flood-prone area, you probably already know how helpful sandbags can be and are worth the investment. First, you can place a couple

of them against your front and back door to prevent water from coming in and serving as a barrier. Then you will need to secure and protect all windows by placing wooden pallets over them or at least closing the curtains and duct tape around them so that windblown debris can be somewhat halted.

It is crucial that you stay informed with emergency alerts while you prep your house before evacuating. If at any point mention is made that it is urgent to leave now, do just that! Leave with your emergency kits and family. Your life is more valuable than your home.

## **Method for Evacuation**

Depending on where you are - there is probably an emergency response in place within your community. You can contact local authorities to request evacuation routes and get advice on what to do next.

At home is where you will have to prepare the battlefield. Before doing so, you must ensure that you have a plan in place. Nothing is worse than becoming a scatterbrain during an emergency, and prepping alleviates this. You can decide who does what (depending on the crisis) and how an escape route would work. For example, you can suggest all your children get into the car and press the garage door open so that you and your partner (if applicable) can do a home safety prep before making a quick getaway with the car. Having your children wear a lanyard with emergency contact details is vital - especially if an unplanned split happens. Building upon this, it is essential that you decide how you will contact extended family during an emergency, especially if you have older family members living alone nearby.

For older children who have cellphones, you can have them share their location on safety applications or on *Find My iPhone* for *iOS* users.

While making plans, be aware of any special assistance required for family members, whether they are wheelchair-bound or have cognitive disabilities, as they will need additional support.

If you have pets, crating them for safety is important. This should be one of the first things done after tending to your children. You could place the crate in the trunk for safe keeping while doing any quick household preps.

### *For evacuating*

Always keep your gas tank full with an extra tank in the trunk. During a disaster, gas stations will either be closed due to outages or full of people trying to make an escape - so to reduce congestion and delay, you should always have your tank full. If you don't have a car, try to include arrangements for transportation in your plan with friends, family or community members.

Be sure to listen to the radio so you can follow local evacuation plans and instructions by your relevant municipality.

Where possible, establish a meeting place that is close to everyone but still in a safe zone for extended family. Once together, you can assign specific tasks for each adult, including checking social media for updates, setting up a safe shelter (if not provided by the local government), and assisting disabled members.

## **WHAT TO DO DURING A WAR?**

*Do It Now*, a government film containing wartime advice was released a few days after Britain joined the Second World War in September 1939. The guidance goes as follows:

*To do:*

- Follow government advice and what is said.
- Build an air raid shelter.
- Practice sensible fire safety.
- Keep gas masks at hand.
- Take cover during air raid sounds.
- Have a good heart.

*Not to do:*

- Listen to any rumors.
- Panic buy.

- Make unnecessary phone calls.
- Interfere with any governmental arrangements and policies.

Of course, many of these rules are no longer applicable as times have changed, but to the best of your ability, it is important to know how to protect yourself and your family. The point on the "to do" list, expanded on here by Nelson Mandela, is sound advice in or out of SHTF situations: "A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."

## **WHAT TO DO IF WAR BREAKS OUT IN YOUR COUNTRY; FLEE OR BUNKER?**

With the recent news of Russia invading Ukraine, many people have become aware of the possibility of a world war or even nuclear war. Many preppers have adjusted their prepping to include both these occurrences, as neither seems unlikely at present. We never know when the sh\*t might hit the fan, but by preparing for it, we will at least improve our chances of survival and help us and our loved ones to remain calm.

If need be, move to an area that is far removed from the fighting and only consume news from trusted sources so that you can make an informed decision about the way forward.

If you are an extreme prepper with a bunker, this is the moment you have been preparing for, and you will be well equipped to lie low from the attack. However, other preppers will be best off remaining in their basement or in a room with the least windows and taking refuge there until further instructions come from the local authorities.

Unless you aim to become a viral media sensation such as the Ukrainian great-grandmother who came to fame on *Twitter* and elsewhere recently by brandishing an AK-47 and undergoing civilian combat training, it is most unadvisable to get involved in military skirmishes unless you are tasked to do so by officials - even if you have your own weapons and training to do so - war is for soldiers, not citizens and this would *really* be asking for an extra dose of sh\*t to hit your fan.

Just like any other crisis, having your emergency food supply, medical kit, personal documents, and a means of evacuating quickly will bring you the

most significant advantage in dealing with these extreme cases of SHTF, which we all truly wish and hope never to experience.

## What is a Nuclear Attack?

A nuclear bomb can effortlessly wipe out entire towns and cities depending on its magnitude. The atomic bomb that struck Hiroshima was 15 kilotons, which burnt around 70% of buildings (13 square kilometers) and claimed 140,000 lives. The Tsar Bomb is the largest nuclear missile ever created, equivalent to about 3,333 Hiroshima bombs. This Russian "King of Bombs", also known as *Big Ivan*, is a Soviet thermonuclear bomb that was detonated as an experiment over Novaya Zemlya Island in the Arctic Ocean on October 30, 1961. It created the most powerful human-made explosion ever recorded, blasting about 2.5 miles (4 km) above the ground and producing a mushroom cloud over 37 miles (60 km) high. The detonation flash was observed some 620 miles (1,000 km) away, and the resulting damage was equally massive. It was estimated that heat from the blast would have caused third-degree burns up to 62 miles (100 km) distant.

## Nuclear Attacks 101

The most important thing to know about nuclear attacks is that they occur in two phases.

### *Stage 1: Direct*

When the bomb touches the ground and explodes, everything in its path is vaporized up to a particular radius. This forms a mushroom-like cloud. However, the damage is not restricted to this area; it can affect and harm you even hundreds of miles away from the blast. Five effects are caused by a nuclear bomb, including radiation, fire, shock waves, flash blindness, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP), all of which are deadly.

### *Stage 2: Fallout*

Fallout occurs in the first few hours after the detonation and is most dangerous when giving off the highest radiation levels. It takes time for the fallout to reach ground level, often more than 15 minutes for areas outside the immediate blast zones. Radioactive particles become airborne and fall to earth, looking like black rain or dust and continually producing radiation.

Any inhalation, whether direct or on your clothes, emits radiation which is very dangerous. However tempting it might be to brush off these particles, do not touch them directly as they can be lethal by becoming ingested or inhaled. This is how many people become sick and die even days after a nuclear attack.

The best thing you can do is stay inside your home if safe or seek alternate shelter, preferably made of brick or concrete. The best locations are underground or in larger buildings in the middle of the rooms, away from doors and windows. All surfaces, including windows and doors, should be covered properly to prevent particles from entering.

The following advice can be found on the government website *ready.gov*:

- Go to the basement or middle of the building.
- Stay away from the outer walls and roof.
- Try to maintain a distance of at least six feet between yourself and people who are not part of your household.
- If possible, wear a mask if you're sheltering with people who are not a part of your household.
- Children under two years old, people who have trouble breathing, and those who are unable to remove masks on their own should not wear them.

## **What Do You Need to Survive in a Nuclear Attack?**

A survival kit with supplies for three or more days specifically designed for nuclear attacks should include:

- Bottled water;
- Packaged foods;
- A change of clothes;
- Towels;
- A hazmat suit and mask (to cover the entire face and not just mouth and nose).
- A battery-operated or hand-crank radio;
- A flashlight and /or headlamp and batteries;
- soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol;

- disinfecting wipes;
- general household cleaning supplies that you can use to disinfect surfaces you touch regularly;
- potassium iodide (KI) supplements

## **What can potassium iodide or “nuke pills” do for you?**

Iodine can only be stored and absorbed in the thyroid. By taking FDA-approved potassium iodide before exposure to radioactive iodine, your thyroid will become saturated with safe, stable iodine. This will prevent your thyroid's absorbing any additional radioactive iodine until it is safely ingested and dispersed through the kidneys.

"Your thyroid, which produces hormones that regulate your body's metabolic rate, heart and digestive function, muscle control, and more, is the part of your body most sensitive to radioactive iodine," the *CDC* says.

## **What is the recommended dosage of potassium iodide (KI)?**

It is best to take KI within 3-4 hours of exposure. It can be ingested in liquid or pill form, and for ease of swallowing in the case of children, it can be crushed into a powder and added to milk or orange juice. Those at highest risk are infants, children, pregnant, and nursing mothers due to the potential for KI to suppress their thyroid function.

The recommended dosage will depend on the brand of KI and your proximity to the blast, as well as the duration of the fallout, so try to get precise advice from your local authorities, who may also distribute their own KI supplements. In general, the recommendation is to take two tablets a day, according to age and weight:

AGE	DOSAGE
<b>ADULTS OVER 18 YEARS</b>	2 tablets (whole or crushed) every day (130 mg)
<b>CHILDREN OVER 12 TO 18 YEARS WHO WEIGH AT LEAST 150 POUNDS</b>	2 tablets (whole or crushed) every day (130 mg)
<b>CHILDREN OVER 12 TO 18 YEARS WHO WEIGH LESS THAN 150 POUNDS</b>	1 tablet (whole or crushed) or 8 teaspoons every day (65 mg)
<b>CHILDREN OVER 3 YEARS TO 12 YEARS</b>	1 tablet (whole or crushed) or 8 teaspoons every day (65 mg)
<b>CHILDREN OVER 1 MONTH TO 3 YEARS</b>	4 teaspoons every day (32.5 mg)
<b>BABIES AT BIRTH TO 1 MONTH</b>	2 teaspoons every day (16.25 mg)

## Where to Seek Shelter

While many suggest shelter at least 30 minutes from the location of the attack, going as far as possible is naturally better. Many areas will lose power or generally be unsafe. In densely populated areas, military bases and power plants will be amidst the popular shelter-seeking spots, but it is best to stay away from these locations. Going to wastelands or sparsely populated areas gives you the best chance for survival because you are further away from the blast radius. This gives you ample time to go further away if another attack or safety concern occurs at the point of the original blast.

If you cannot leave for any reason, it does not mean that the current SHTF will kill you. Try to get into the basement or deepest underground part of your building, away from any doors and windows. If you have materials

like sandbags or wooden pallets, place them as barriers over the doors and windows.

If you get inside after a nuclear blast, take off all clothing and shower to reduce exposure, which will lessen the radiation effects.

Avoid staying in your car as it is not the best protection against nuclear fallout. Don't drive around in the minutes after the blast - stop safely and duck down within the vehicle. If you are outdoors when a detonation happens, take cover from the explosion behind anything that might offer protection. Lie face down to protect your face and any exposed skin from the heat and flying debris. If possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

After the first shock wave passes, get inside the nearest, best shelter for protection from potential fallout. You will have 10 minutes or more to seek shelter as soon as possible.

## **When is it Safe to Go Outside?**

Experts recommend waiting 48 hours before going outside. This is because radiation travels like air and can still harm you even hours after the blast. Remaining covered in a hazmat suit with gloves and mask or layering up and covering exposed skin is the best way to navigate through life after a nuclear attack.

## **Final Words**

Various model simulations of nuclear war scenarios using the Community Earth System Model have been made in recent decades. The most recent was staged in 2019.

In a 4,400 warhead/150 Tg soot nuclear war scenario, the following was predicted:

- China would see a reduction in food calories of 97.2 percent;
- France by 97.5 percent;
- Russia by 99.7 percent;
- the UK by 99.5 percent;
- the US by 98.9 percent.

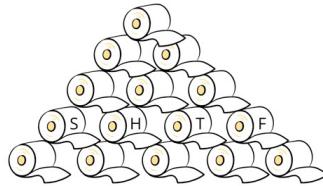
In all these countries, virtually everyone who survived the initial blasts would subsequently starve.

(*"Nuclear Winter Responses to Nuclear War Between the United States and Russia in the Whole Atmosphere Community Climate Model Version 4 and the Goddard Institute for Space Studies ModelE"*: AGU Publications)

The consequences of nuclear Armageddon led to a shared understanding and the following statement made by US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

This statement was reaffirmed as recently as January 2022 by Presidents Biden and Putin.

At the time of writing this chapter, as war rages in Ukraine, it remains as true now as it was then.



## STEP 9: ALL HANDS ON DECK: INTEGRATING YOUR FAMILY FOR PREPPING

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*"We are not preparing for the world we live in, we are preparing for the world we find ourselves in."*

— Michael Mabee

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**B**efore a ship can sail, the captain has to ensure everyone is on board and everything is as planned. The most challenging part of prepping might not be gathering resources or establishing a plan but rather convincing your family to get on board your "ship."

It is vital that you and your partner - if you have one - are on the same page about the extent to which you will take your prepping. It always helps to lead a team if you agree on your goals. Be sure to establish this before involving your children. Then, you can share the reasons behind prepping and truly open up the platform to communicate any concerns or plans that you might have. The next step is drafting a plan with your partner where finances and storage space can be considered.

Once you have established a consensus with your spouse, create an age-appropriate way to tell your children.

## TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

As parents, you understand that the household dynamic or culture will be shifting, and children are comforted by familiarity, so sharing plans without complicating things avoids a lot of stress that your children (and you) will encounter.

Children understand a lot more than they show. It would help if you introduced them to prepping without expecting them to hop onto the idea as quickly as adults. Luckily this is not an entirely unfamiliar survival skill that they are being taught.

We teach our children to avoid strangers and not to take something that is not theirs to take. These, although on a different scale, are a form of teaching survival instincts. Many parents I know have enrolled their children in karate or self-defense classes from a young age to be equipped with a means of protecting themselves.

Looking back to life in 2019, if anyone told me that people would be clearing shelves of Vitamin C, bottled water, and toilet paper, I would have probably thought they were absolutely crazy. We do not know what tomorrow holds, but we know what our prepping can do for the unknown, regardless of the situation at hand.

Many parents were pushed into corners when explaining to their children that school would be closed for a few weeks. So, how can we share the world's uncertainty with our children without causing additional stress?

Once again, doing it in an age-appropriate manner would be best. So whether you have to do a little skit with stuffed animals or just sit them down and discuss why the pantry is growing, find what works best for you.

## HOW TO GET YOUR CHILDREN INCLUDED AND INVOLVED IN PREPPING

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*"Children have an absorbent mind. They absorb knowledge from the environment without fatigue. [...] This is the moment in the life of man when we can do something*

*for the betterment of humanity and further brotherhood." - Maria Montessori*

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When it comes to emergencies and how you handle them, it is challenging to plan for them when children are involved. You want to keep them calm as possible while ensuring they are equipped to handle the preparedness plans that you have in place.

Talk to your children about emergency plans and make it enjoyable. Include video games, movies, and books about survivalist topics; answer them when they have questions. This allows for independent play and growth while directing them to their understanding. When it comes to planning, providing age-appropriate responsibilities in what your children are interested in or able to do will help them to feel more a part of the process.

For example, our four-year-old is a born retriever and loves fetching things. When we practice our family drills, he will often fetch the car keys or grab the cell phones from the counter and take them to the car. Despite being undersized and young, he can still pitch in and do something. Think about what will be best for your children; if they are older, you may want to have them choose their responsibilities from a list of roles. This makes them more willing and motivated to help out.

Create hobbies and interests for the family based on a prepping lifestyle. As Maria Montessori wrote, "Imitation is the tool given by nature to children to help them adapt to the particular place where they were born, and that enables them to adapt to the customs of their specific environment." The more we begin exposing our children to specific survivalist methods or introducing them to emergency prep-friendly hobbies, the more they will learn and start to adapt to a preparedness lifestyle.

## **GO CAMPING!**

Camping in itself offers the chance to experience the natural world and can encourage self-reliance by cooking and sleeping without the comforts of home. In addition, many fun outdoor activities allow children to learn and practice survivalist skills. For example, show how you can dehydrate food at home before going camping and then rehydrate the food for eating. What a great time to use and test any survival items you may have, such as water

filtration systems and solar-powered generators, and practice the basics of building a shelter and starting a fire. This is also an excellent time to teach children about fire safety, so they learn that hair should be tied back and clothing checked for safety before coming close to any fire.

Have your children pack and prepare their own emergency bag with minimal assistance. Apart from the necessary survival items such as water, snacks, whistles, and flashlights, have them include one or two toys or things unrelated to prepping. This gives them space to personalize their efforts without feeling like it is being pushed on them with little room for individualism.

## **PREP FOR FIRST AID WITH YOUR CHILDREN**

Keeping this as age appropriate as needed for younger children, might practice scenarios with toys where they get injured, explain various medical supplies to them and show them how to wrap a bandage or put on a bandaid. Once done, you can allow them to mirror your conduct and practice new skills (through various playdates without overloading them with too much information in one session). Using videos on first-aid training will assist greatly with learning skills for older children.

While prepping the pantry or doing food preservation, have your children sit in the kitchen - even if they are playing on their iPad or barely focusing - and talk through the stages of what you are doing. Don't assume they don't know or pick up on what is being done just because it appears they are not listening.

Including fitness and exercise in your family routine is just as crucial in helping to create overall well-being and superb health and can be practiced in any drills you do as a family.

While introducing your children to prepping, remind them they are safe and show them that security is in your hands. This allows children to be confident that you know what is best and are acting in accordance with all the knowledge, skills, and expert information you have gathered along your prepping journey.

## **Creating a Home Culture That Supports Preparedness**

Slowly but surely, subtle changes will begin to unfold in your household, and it's essential to check with family members and children to be sure that they are fine and adjusting well. Like any other change to a household dynamic, it becomes a lifestyle to be integrated into normal parts of family life, as this will begin to shape the new culture you are establishing within your home.

### **WHAT WILL BEGIN TO CHANGE?**

The content you consume and choose to share with your children. You want to avoid the doom and gloom of many *YouTube* channels or social media posts and only consume trustworthy material from reputable prepping sites and forums. Entertainment in your home might shift to watching more educational material showing how people have overcome all sorts of challenges and dire situations. Try to include activities that will promote and enhance self-reliance and independence, like organizing more outdoor activities and adventures or having gardening be part of your family activities over the weekend.

It is a wonderful idea to include basic survival concepts in the home language like "stop, drop and roll." As we have two young children, we have begun mirroring survival-type situations with our eldest. We have created this from the game known as *The Floor Is Lava*. If one of us touches the floor, which is fire, we then stop, drop and roll. This teaches our son that if he comes into contact with fire, the best survival method would be to stop, drop and roll. Of course, since he enjoys it so much, he often jumps into the lava just for fun - but what is important is that we have our children immersed in the same culture of preparedness we intend to achieve ourselves.

### **PRACTICE FAMILY DRILLS**

If you find it helpful to do evacuation methods or role-play an emergency situation where each family member gets a job to ensure the success of the

evacuation - that can be a great way to preview everyone's response in an emergency. In high school, it was common to have fire drills where sporadically, the fire siren would go off throughout the year, and we had to evacuate. We were trained in a way to remember to place our lives above our things, so often, seniors would be seen lined up with nothing more than their cellphones, but many juniors would look disheveled trying to stuff the last of their prized possessions into their open backpacks. It is excellent preparation for children to practice similar training at home so that they know where to go and how to respond in the most appropriate way if need be.

One of the scariest things about emergencies like fires or floods is that you have little or no control over their spread, so all you can do is be prepared to react to the danger. We have planned and prepared several escape routes as we know that fires won't just stop in the hallway and that it is essential always to have a backup plan. Maybe even an additional backup plan for your backup plan. You can never be too prepared for anything.

## **TEACH AWARENESS OF PREDATORS**

Introducing your children to the reality of threats is another vital aspect to bring into the family dynamic. This would be more in the sense of discussions about animals and predators. Nevertheless, you must monitor the screen time of your children. While we cannot wholly control what they consume, it does make it easy for predators to get hold of children if they have unmonitored social media accounts. So, you must support being away from the screen by introducing new, fun, and interactive activities at home where children can actively learn about real-life threats.

You can, for example, teach children what to do in a situation where they are being coerced to do something, or you can sign them up for self-defense classes. There is a plethora of information available online to help teach your children self-defense, which certainly helps the wallet, which we love. But, once again, doing this in an age-appropriate setting with tools that will enable learning is the best.

## **PLAN AHEAD FOR ALL SCENARIOS**

Robberies or burglaries happen more commonly than reported and are undoubtedly a stressful and traumatic experience for your entire family. As previously mentioned, there are affordable DIY alarm systems that you can invest in as well as including panic buttons in each bedroom. Making an effort to educate your children about break-ins and their response to them is crucial. For example, you could designate predetermined hiding spots for children and then practice by means of a drill or 'game' so that children feel less anxiety about it.

Having your children and family memorize phone numbers or addresses is another excellent skill to include in a prepping household.

You could have a lanyard with all these details for younger children and have them wear it constantly, even at home. There are different brands and designs that allow it to be comfortable and not irritate the skin, so finding one within your budget or preferences is simple as many online stores like *Etsy* and *Amazon* sell them, and remembering to make price comparisons helps you to get the best deal!

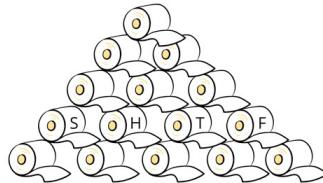
Children should be equipped with a prepped bag or kit containing water, flashlights with batteries, simple snacks, and an emergency whistle. These are lightweight items that almost any child should be able to carry in their backpack. Have them practice putting this backpack on in emergency drills before evacuating or keeping it in the car that will be used for an evacuation.

## **"BY FAILING TO PREPARE, WE PREPARE TO FAIL."**

One of the biggest mistakes many households make is the failure of everyone in the family to be fully on board. The wise words of Benjamin Franklin can not express it more clearly; "By failing to prepare, we prepare to fail." You cannot be the sole owner of all survival knowledge at home. You have to discuss it with your partner, including your children, so that no one else is helpless in an SHTF situation while delegating all the roles and responsibilities at the onset of a disaster or emergency. Every hand on deck

is vital. If this means that you have to adjust the way in which you share plans for preparedness or water them down somewhat, then do whatever it takes so that everyone has a consensus on what is happening in the household. As mentioned, children are more conscious of life than we think, and everyone is safer when they are in agreement and understand what to do and when to do it. Never take the burden of being the sole SHTF plan owner and controller, as this is not wise and probably won't result in the best outcome.

Something that took me a while to grasp and fully understand as I started getting into emergency preparedness was how it was not *just* about preparing for disasters. You will enjoy life and find it more enjoyable when you have plans that allow you to be self-reliant and independent, especially in an emergency. The desire to enjoy and thrive in life has to be greater than the possible fear of death. A mindset that allows you to think of prepping as a way of enjoying life will flow over to your children as they absorb the importance of learning survival skills without living in fear or anticipating danger.



## STEP 10: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUPPORT

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*"Macbeth: How does your patient, doctor?*

*Doctor: Not so sick, my lord, as she is troubled with thick-coming fancies that keep her from rest.*

*Macbeth: Cure her of that! Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, raze out the written troubles of the brain, and with some sweet oblivious antidote cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon her heart.*

*Doctor: Therein the patient must minister to himself."*

— William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

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**F**ear. The big *f* that drives many reckless and irrational decisions. It is easy to feel as though your entire life is turned upside down when the life you once knew as normal begins to dwindle away and is replaced by unprecedented disasters.

No matter how well you try to mask or pretend that emergency situations do not impact you, it still affects every single person to some degree. Everyone will experience psychological distress, although it might manifest or show itself differently.

Psychology research has provided statistics indicating that one in five has experienced war or conflict in the past ten years and suffers from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. In addition, the *World Health Organization* (WHO)

conducted a study on COVID-19 and its impact on mental health and found a 25% increase in anxiety and depression globally since the pandemic.

"The information we have now about the impact of COVID-19 on the world's mental health is just the tip of the iceberg," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

Several stress factors can trigger mental health disorders, including isolation accompanied by long-term crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The loss of family or friends, financial stressors due to loss of jobs, or having to use up hard-earned savings has caused much mental pain and suffering. Most countries offer support or resources for mental health, but what if, due to SHTF, you no longer have access to professional services? How can you then manage your stress in an emergency?

## **WHAT ARE NORMAL RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES?**

As mentioned, many people will encounter some form of psychological stress, including any of the following:

- Shock;
- Fear;
- Anger;
- Sadness;
- Shame;
- Memories that include reliving the experience or having unpleasant dreams about what might come;
- Difficulty falling asleep;
- Experiencing fatigue;
- Intrusive thoughts;
- Palpitations, trembling or sweating;
- Changes in bowel movements;
- Being more withdrawn from social settings;
- Low motivation and poor concentration;
- Increased use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs;
- Loss of interest in enjoyable activities.

Traumatic events or a change in schedule due to emergencies definitely disrupt your life. Mental health and emotional check-ins are vital for prepping your family before, during, and after any type of *SHTF* situation.

## **MANAGING STRESS IN AN EMERGENCY**

People with existing mental health disorders are obviously more vulnerable during emergencies than those without.

A recent article published by the *WHO* stated: "Stressful events such as violence and loss, as well as poverty, discrimination, overcrowding, and food and resource insecurity, are common in emergencies and can increase the risk of developing mental health conditions. People with severe mental disorders are particularly vulnerable."

Physical preparation is easy, but our minds are magnificent creations ultimately responsible for keeping us alive. If you lack the ability to deal and cope with stress and change, your mindset will stand in the way of overcoming danger. Stress has some positive aspects and actually helps to keep us alive, but an overwhelming amount of stress may lead to behavioral changes and decision-making mistakes. You have to become comfortable with being uncomfortable as you work towards having your anxiety become a motivating force towards self-preservation.

As preppers, we look for solutions to problems and prepare to be able to handle them as best possible. So, what practical things can we implement to help maintain a healthy mind and spirit during a crisis?

## **WHAT TO DO FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSES TO MENTAL HEALTH**

The first thing you need to realize in any disaster or emergency is that you are not alone, even if that might be the case physically.

There is an entire community of people who are also being impacted by the same disaster or emergency. It is invaluable to connect with others. Engage with the community and seek social support by connecting with friends and family, unless it is impossible to do so. Let your partner or spouse know

how you are doing so that support can be offered and given. Be sure to research any psychological first aid services in your area or online, as they often provide highly effective emotional and practical support to individuals experiencing distress. These are qualified individuals who can help you.

Keeping a journal allows you to express your thoughts and feelings and is a great way to help you cope with them. Start a gratitude section in your diary or journal and write down at least two things you are thankful for, regardless of size or magnitude. The past couple of years have taught me that there is always something to give thanks for, and a journal helps you concentrate on the positive moments of life. This, in turn, helps to have the positive strength needed to help navigate through uncertain times.

Using the *Five Minute Journal App* (created by award-winning author Tim Ferriss) consistently has kept me grounded and helped me find beauty in myself and daily life. On days when I thought I had nothing to look forward to, the journal has challenged me to take a break from the draining and tumultuous events of the past year, take my life into my own hands and think about what could make it great.

## **LIVE DAY TO DAY**

As a prepper, this could sound bizarre, but peace begins when you acknowledge that all you have done to sustain yourself and your family has been accomplished. Understanding that you have no control over an emergency allows you to live your life as best you

can, day by day, moment by moment. Avoid thinking too far into the future as that creates unnecessary additional stress. Vary your routine and try to implement something different in your day so it doesn't feel like you're living the same mundane life. You can get dressed, do a home workout, or try new recipes from your now well-stocked pantry.

Remove the thought of returning to what appeared to be normal. This removes attachment to the past and allows you to best steer your way through the new chapter of life unfolding ahead of you.

## **"THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING" - SOCRATES**

The famous Ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself" is inscribed in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and is the first of three maxims, the other two being "nothing to excess" and "surety brings to ruin," attributed to the Greek writer Pausanias. He suggests that we be aware of our limitations, hindrances, and what we can realistically achieve.

Socrates philosophized that we should try to gain insight into our nature and acquire wisdom that allows us to examine what we might not know (or want to know) about ourselves. This will assist you in providing a foundation to attain self-help. We *really* cannot change what we do not know and confront. By self-introspection, we are afforded answers to why we have certain character flaws or why we respond in a certain way. Simply put, this gives us the freedom to confront our weaknesses and work through and manage the challenges we might face.

## **TRY TO CONSISTENTLY LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY**

Studies have shown how gaining new knowledge and skills may give us a greater sense of hope and purpose in life. By learning new things and having new experiences, we start to feel more optimistic about the future. Setting goals, a feature closely linked to learning, can also significantly increase our sense of well-being. By working to achieve our goals, we gain a sense of purpose and the feeling that things are 'moving forward.'

Try to devote a small portion of each day to learning something new. I admire my partner because he is a life-long learner committed to improving his knowledge about the world that surrounds us. Gaining knowledge or insight about new topics or things boosts your confidence and skills in various areas of life. A great way to keep your mind and spirit in good shape is to download one of the many free language learning apps, such as my favorite, *Duolingo*, and start setting goals for continually advancing to the next level. Think of how satisfying it is to actually profit from a mental wellness method by being able to order *margaritas* in fluent Spanish on the next trip to Mexico.

## **CREATE TIME FOR THOSE LONG-ABANDONED PROJECTS AND HOBBIES**

One thing that helped keep spirits high in my home during lockdown involved trying new projects and crafts. Arts and crafts are more than just a fun pastime; they're genuinely healing and restorative and are actually very therapeutic. In fact, I read somewhere online about the healing benefits of crocheting (and knitting), and thanks to the lockdown in 2020, where I actually experienced having pockets of empty time on my hands for the first time since I can remember, I realized this rare moment had to be seized!

I told my Type-A personality that I did not have to be the best at it; I simply had to try. It took around three weeks to complete my first item, a somewhat bedraggled but colorful scarf. I was so proud of myself, and it lifted my mood considerably. Think about it! What is something that you have been putting off and now finally have time to do it? Even if you start small, you can still do much more than when you started. Maybe you can finally lift that dusty guitar off its wall hook, or perhaps "Marie Kondo," the crap out of that junk cupboard and out-of-sight cluttered corner that we both know has been bothering you since 2010.

## **PREPPING YOUR MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL RESOURCES**

As spiritual beings, it is essential to develop a healthy connection and relationship with spirituality. So whether you are seeking a church, a synagogue, or a yoga club - connect with your spiritual side. You can accomplish this by praying, reading scripture, connecting with God, seeking forgiveness, meditating, and practicing thankfulness in your daily routines.

Work on removing any addictions from your life, regardless of what they might be. The last thing you want is unhealthy coping mechanisms during a crisis. It is essential to enjoy life in its natural form and take up hobbies and creative or relaxing activities in the place of addictions. Channel your time and energy into positive things that will help you grow as an individual. And most importantly, try not to forget the wisdom of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his well-known saying; "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are *spiritual beings* having a human experience."

## **GOOD-QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS CAN HELP US TO LIVE LONGER AND HAPPIER LIVES**

Create a healthy and functional family life and culture. You can do this by minimizing screen time and being intentional about connecting with your family through dinners or movie nights. If you are married or have a partner, be sure to maximize the health of your relationship by investing quality time in open communication and spending time alone.

Improve the relationships that you already have with friends, family, and neighbors. I only recently learned the importance of community, and I think without a good friend or family member, it would be immensely difficult to have and practice mental well-being.

As parents, we often spend so much time focusing on our children's needs that we tend to neglect our own. I'm not saying that we should offer them any less attention or support, but merely that we should offer the same grace, love, and support to ourselves and our partners. Inviting friends over for a cookout or joining local communities is the best way that you can strengthen the relationships around you.

Building upon the importance of relationships, it is essential that every single person you have in your life or circle of friends is beneficial to you and the growth you are going through. Unfortunately, there are many people who will plant weeds in your garden, and then you are left having to tend to them.

If there is one small piece of advice I want my children to realize from an early age, it is not to be afraid of removing toxic people from your life. As you grow older, you recognize the importance of being around people who sustain our energy and don't cause or chase after chaos and negativity. Peace is more important than anything else. Any person who pushes you toward a version of yourself that you ran from is not worth "a seat at your table."

## **BE NURTURED BY NATURE**

Where possible, spend time outside enjoying nature. It is so healing to change your scenery and get some fresh air. Even if you just sit on your porch and read a book, it will do much more for your emotional well-being than you think.

According to the *American Psychological Association*, "a stroll through a city park to a day spent hiking in the wilderness, exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders and even upticks in empathy and cooperation."

Spend as much time out in nature as possible, and be conscious of appreciating the life and beauty that surrounds you. Visit the local museums or botanical gardens to fill your life with God's creation and the beauty of life that many of us have missed so severely during harsh lockdowns.

## **SLEEP AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED**

Get enough sleep. As I write this, I'm speaking to myself as well. Often, after the kids have fallen asleep at night, I catch myself running around doing laundry, the dishes, and reconstructing the lounge from its daily modern art installation of toys, but this could also be prime time for mental wellness in which I could choose to spend winding down, meditating, reading and preparing for a restful sleep despite the crazy day I had. Sleep impacts every area of your life and mental well-being, so prioritizing it is essential. Getting at least seven hours of quality sleep consistently is vital. Even better is carting yourself off to bed for the magical regenerative rest that occurs from around 9 or 10 p.m., in which cortisol levels and deep sleep are at their highest.

## **JUST ABOUT EVERY TELEVISION SHOW, FROM COMEDIES TO DRAMA TO REALITY TV AND THE NEWS, IS NEGATIVE.**

Avoid watching television that spews nothing but news of doom and gloom. While it is necessary to stay informed, much of the news is filled with propaganda, so you must try to seek out alternative media platforms from

reputable and objective sources. This in itself is one of the most significant challenges we currently face, and the ability to create a "fear filter" in which to sift through all the information (from both mainstream as well as alternative news streams) plays a vital role in staying balanced and sane in these crazy times.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, my thoughts drifted to building bunkers and running off to the wilderness to try my hand at off-grid living as I constantly consumed unhealthy content online and focused on fear-based ideas for prepping. This was certainly not healthy or conducive to a robust immune system or a stable mindset.

### **'LIKE' IT OR NOT, SOCIAL MEDIA CAN CAUSE ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND OTHER HEALTH CHALLENGES.**

Avoid falling down the deep dark rabbit hole of never-ending seasons on *Netflix*, *Hulu*, and the overwhelming distractions of our social media platforms. What you consume becomes a significant part of who you are as an individual. You must become conscious of what you consume and do with your free time because this becomes part of your subconscious thoughts. I remember scrolling through *TikTok* one evening and stumbling across a seemingly sad video with a great quote on it, which caught my eye; it made me wake up to the fact that my entire *For Your Page* (FYP) was filled with depressing content of this nature and that I began thinking, "wow, I *really* resonate with this." Without knowing it, what I was consuming had become part of who I had established myself to be. Because I tied my thoughts to what I watched, it became part of who I was starting to identify myself as.

### **PRACTICE MINDFULNESS**

The same mind that can create happiness in life is the same that can take a life. The mind is incredibly powerful. Practising mindfulness and walking meditations can turn everyday actions into wonderful tools for self-awareness and stress reduction. The majority of us walk for the sole

purpose of getting from one place to another. But we can train ourselves to move with self-awareness wherever we walk; whether tidying our home or roaming the aisles of a supermarket, we can choose to breathe and feel grounded and nourished with every step we take upon this magical planet.

Listening to soundtracks that help put your mind at ease is a great way to access deep levels of relaxation and inner peace instantly. One of my favorite Apps for this is *Headspace*, whose mission statement is "to improve the health and happiness of the world." It claims to reduce stress by 14% in just ten days, but there are many other free versions and *Youtube* channels offering similar services and audio tracks with meditation instructions and mantras that are a welcome break from the incessant chatter and negative self-talk in minds that have been allowed to run rampant. Even just tuning into an uplifting playlist on *Spotify* or some other music collection works wonders to shift your mood from ornery to good-tempered in a jiffy.

## **CREATE YOUR OWN PREPPERS MANTRA**

Establish a survival mindset (or mantra) based on life-affirming statements such as:

- "I am healthy."
- "My family is safe."
- "I can overcome these challenges with ease and inner strength."
- "I will live a long and happy life."
- "I feel at peace knowing I have prepared all I possibly can."
- "I am ready for the sh\*t that's about to hit the fan."

During emergencies and disasters, 90% of your survival depends on your mental reaction to harm and distress. Of course, staying calm sounds much easier said than done; a dire situation is enough to drive anyone into panic mode, but remaining calm despite the undesirable circumstances will give you a much greater possibility of surviving.

Acting practically and rationally will reduce fear and assist you with creating and following decisions that have positive results. You must

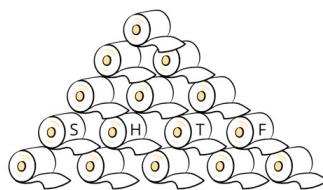
continuously remind yourself to adapt to the cards you are dealt, regardless of how bad they might be.

I remember planning to follow a particular birthing plan, but when I arrived at the hospital, circumstances took a different turn, and my entire plan was changed. I had to be flexible and adapt so that I could reap a greater reward, that being motherhood. We have to remain capable of being adaptable to change in order to reap survival and healthy thriving as our reward.

Choose to ignore doom and gloom news, and mentally prepare yourself for tenacity. When you build a mindset grounded on perseverance, you will be psychologically tough enough to handle an array of unprecedented and scary situations. The less pressure you place on yourself to be perfect, the better you can adapt to the problem at hand and be capable of turning things around for the better.

The best decision you can make is not to give in to hopelessness. We have all overcome mountains that we thought we never would, which is why clinging to hope is crucial. Tomorrow will be different from today. The hope of a new tomorrow that starts fresh and with new possibilities helps you to recognize that, although you have little to no control over change, despite everything, you can get through it. Taking life day by day and step by step will bring you more peace than trying to follow a spreadsheet forecast of the next ten years. Clinging to fear will only remove your focus and could even immobilize you.

Stay in touch with trusted friends and family and talk to them openly about your fears. While this does not remove the fear itself, it can help to break down the situation into more digestible portions and give you a new perspective. Storms cannot last forever, and neither can SHTF disasters.



## SO, WHAT NOW?

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*"Remember: When disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed."*

*—Steven Cyros*

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Well... you have your stockpile, supplies, and bunkers (if desired), and you have implemented plans and drills to help you cope with whatever might come. Know that you are and have done your very best to prepare for the uncertainties ahead. All that anyone can do is prepare, adapt and overcome. We – you and I, are more potent than we allow ourselves to believe. Generations have survived before us; some of them lived through catastrophes we could never imagine enduring. Yet we, as humans, have adapted and learned to handle the shi\*t, which inevitably continues to hit the fan in all colors, shapes, and sizes. Regardless of what is to come, my stockpile is ready. Is yours?

Emergencies create a wide variety of hazards in one's life. Natural disasters, war, economic failures, and tragedies are unavoidable and can occur at any time. The after-effects of these can sometimes last longer than the crisis itself. Supply chain breakdowns leading to food shortages, damage to your personal property or home, and financial disruptions are just a few of the consequences that can arise. The only thing that you can control is your level of preparedness. Often there is insufficient time to prepare and pack

bags when an emergency strikes, so preparing beforehand is clearly preferable to running around in the heat of the moment.

The Homeland Security and Emergency Management of Minnesota maintain that "There are *real* benefits to being prepared. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire and where to seek shelter during a tornado. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to care for their basic medical needs. People also can *reduce* the impact of disasters (flood proofing, elevating a home or moving a home out of harm's way, and securing items that could shake loose in an earthquake) and sometimes avoid the danger completely."

So, as citizens, parents, siblings, or grandparents, the best thing we can use to arm ourselves with safety is knowledge of emergency preparedness.

### **Who Can Assist During Disasters:**

Depending on the severity and type of emergency, many organizations, shelters, and emergency services are available to you. These include local government agencies, disaster shelters, animal shelters, and food banks.

From knowing emergency numbers to staying informed about disasters and building a stockpile, you are building up your ways to negate the possibilities of SHTF.

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"Remember, if you depend on everyone else to take care of you, you're leaving the most important person out. Don't wait to make a plan. Know yourself, know your situation, and be prepared to save your own life." - *Jerzell Black*

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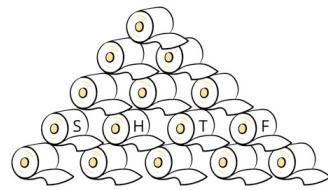
## **THE END OF SHTF**

I know I promised to provide no doom and gloom. Still, the reality is that having effective preparedness makes a vast difference between life and death. The number of people who find prepping bizarre or insane is constantly decreasing as the reality of the crisis, food shortages, and

ongoing war escalates by the day. Considering the worst-case scenarios and having a means of escaping provides the room to breathe that we will need to circumvent bad times. While we might not know precisely what tomorrow will bring, be confident that today we are busy prepping and preparing for true peace of mind.

Your savvy suburban survivalist mom,

*“Preppa Emma”*, E. Crawford



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Full-time cook, cleaner, butler, and educator to three avid mini-preppers, "Preppa Emma" as she is known in her various prepping communities, manages to find time to write, hike the wilderness and dehydrate any vegetable or fruit that comes her way. The garden and the goats are the next mission.

Having lived through some memorable off-grid crises and natural disasters, including the tornado that ripped through Georgia in the first quarter of 2021, which put her prepping skills to the test, her new motto became to be prepared for any and all SHTF scenarios and in researching and compiling this book, she hopes to share her passion for prepping with all who read it.

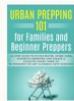
She resides in her prepper-friendly house in Texas with her partner, children, an overly boisterous labradoodle, and a well-stocked pantry.



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Do another prepper a favor and leave a review talking about the information you found, what you liked about the book, and how it helped you... even if it is just a sentence or two! I always read my reviews, and take note of all feedback for my future blogs and books. Thanks so much, and good luck with your prepping!

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# URBAN PREPPING 101

## for Families and Beginner Preppers

10-STEP GUIDE TO FILTER WATER, STORE FOOD,  
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DISASTER-READY HOME TO  
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SHTF FUNDAMENTALS