

How to survive in the wild - The Ultimate Survival Guide

Whether you're lost or you're an airplane crash survivor, your car broke down in the middle of nowhere, or if someone kidnapped you and you find yourself in the middle of a vast wilderness, that doesn't matter. What matters is that you have to survive! The following advice will help get you out of your current conundrum, surviving the wild and back home in good health. We recommend that you print this out and take it with you whenever you venture out into the wild, whether it's just for a hike or any other adventure where they could be of use.

1. Calm down

Ok, so you've got a problem. But there's no time to panic. The first thing you have to do is calm down and start thinking about how to get out of this mess. Every situation has its solution and you have to figure yours out. As long as you're not in immediate danger, find a way to calm yourself down (calming technique). Breathe slowly and deeply until you're calm.

"People who act in panic make short-sighted decisions. If you're able to see the situation logically (objectively) while in a calm state, you'll make well thought out decisions and rapidly increase your chance of survival." (Radiotimes)

3. If you have a cellphone

If you have a working cellphone and have signal, call 911 or 112 for help. First responders can locate by tracking your phone signal, or you can give them your GPS coordinates. If you don't have signal, try to send a text message to a known number with a description of the situation and your approximate location. If your battery is getting low, turn off your phone and only turn it for a few minutes at a time to see if you have a signal.

5. Shelter

If you're unsure how long you'll be in the wild for, shelter is your top priority. In any case it's imperative that you stay warm and dry. There are a few ways to build a shelter. If you don't have a tent, a tarp, or anything that would make building a shelter easier, try to use one of these basic tactics for finding shelter.

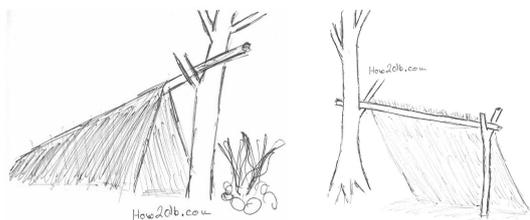
Cave, cliffs

Look around to see if there are any cliffs or perhaps a cave that could serve as shelter. Always think about your own safety, make sure there isn't a chance of rock falls, floods, and the like. Be careful in areas with high incidences of bears and other large predators - they like to use caves for their own "beds".

If you're able to find a cave or an overhanging cliff under which you can escape the rain, be sure to protect yourself from the wind on all four sides. Branches, tree stumps, leaves and pine needles are great for this.

A Shelter Made Out of Branches

If you have branches, twigs, leaves, pine needles or any other woody material available around you, you can build a shelter rather quickly. On the pictures below you can see a few ideas on how to build a shelter out of branches.



Snow Shelters

If you find yourself in a snowy terrain, the construction of your shelter is a bit more complicated, but definitely not impossible. You can either build an igloo from blocks of snow or dig a hole in the snow and cover it with branches and pine needles. Another possibility would be using snow covered trees to your advantage. Pick a tree with low branches and dig out the snow below them. The branches will work as a natural roof. Don't forget to leave a hole for ventilation!



2. Take a look around

You're calm now and your brain is starting to work (again). That's good. Now, look around to see whether you're in any sort of immediate danger - animals, your environment, weather, the temperature, and in an extreme case other humans. If you're not in immediate danger, get to work. Now it's time to find out what you're up against. Check your pockets, empty your backpack, and take a good look around. Do you have a knife in your backpack? Great! Do you have a lighter or a firestarter? Awesome! There may be a few other things that may come in handy from your arsenal. Your shoelaces can help you start a fire or to tie up a shelter. A piece of wire could be used as a saw. A condom can be used as a water container. A paper clip can be used as a compass...

Lay out all your things and only take what you can carry and what can help you survive and potentially be rescued.

4. Warmth

The biggest killer in the wild aren't the animals or hunger but hypothermia. If you're not sure where you are, or if you're far from civilization, you'll most likely have to camp for some time. Time to act fast! In the shortest amount of time possible, it's imperative that you build yourself a shelter and start a fire. It could start raining at any moment and hypothermia sets in quick. Shelter and warmth are very important, even in warm weather environments like rainforests and deserts. Even in these places, the temperature can quickly drop below freezing.

6. Fire

As soon as you're done building your shelter, it's time to start a fire. A fire is the second most important thing that you have to take care of. It'll provide you with warmth, protection from wildlife, and with it you'll be able to boil water that you can use for drinking and eating. If you don't have a lighter nor a fire starter, there are a few other tactics you can use that will help you start a fire.

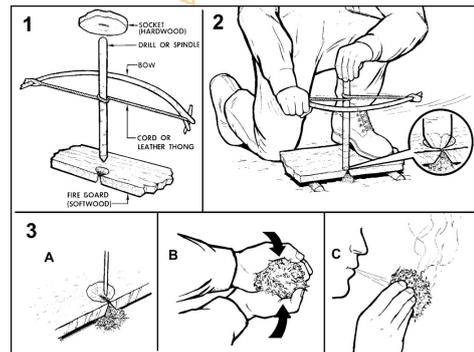
Friction and the Bow

If you've got a rope or shoelaces, make yourself a simple bow. You'll also need a spindle, a platform which you can drill into and a pressure plate (socket). All of the pieces should be dry but even wet wood can be used though it'll take longer. Then you'll need to get some material to start the fire - thin twigs, dry leaves, etc. The last and most important part is to get a dry clump of something like grass, moss, or anything that's sufficiently soft and dry, so that you're able to get the fire embers lit by blowing on them.

- Make a hole in the friction plate either with a knife or a rock.
- Put a fresh leaf or tree sap in the upper part of the friction plate to decrease the amount of friction.
- Make another hole in the friction plate through which the burnt up coals will make their exit.
- Attach the spindle to the bow and place it in the hole in the friction plate.
- Start to lightly move it in a drilling motion. The speed isn't as important as persistence. As you continue to slowly drill, tiny embers will fall through your exit hole, once this hole is full, increase both the force and velocity behind your motion.
- Once you have enough embers, they'll start to smoke. Continue your drilling motion while you still have enough energy but don't let your "drill" get out of the hole.
- Once the embers are sufficiently lit, stop and watch them for a while. Try not to move the friction plate, so as not to lose any of them. You can add a bit of oxygen to the mix by lightly blowing some air or simply by waving your hand over them.
- If the ember is still lightly burning and smoking, it's strong enough to be moved onto the dry foliage
- Take the ember and move it over to the dry foliage and try to lightly blow on it. If it works and the foliage catches on fire, put it on the ground and slowly start adding twigs, and more leaves until you have a stable fire

Fire Plough

The fire plough is a way to start a fire by rubbing a handle on a piece of wood. Rub a handle made out of hardwood against a base made of a softer wood. In order to use this method correctly, cut out a straight base of equal depth into your base and dull points on the handle. Rubbing the handle against the base will cause it to tear out tiny pieces of wood fibers from it, and as you apply more pressure these fibers will catch on fire.



7. Water

You can survive without water at most for 3 days, though the effects of dehydration will be apparent within hours without it. Symptoms of dehydration include fatigue, headache, vertigo, muscle cramps and finally a loss of consciousness and death. If you're not in danger of hypothermia, water is your next priority.

Rain Water

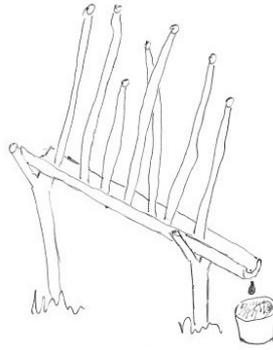
Rain water is always safe to drink with the exception of highly polluted areas. However, you can drink the water even in these areas if there's no other alternative.

Observe Nature

The ants need water to survive as well. If you find an ant trail up a tree, look at where it leads. It's possible that wherever it goes to has a hidden reservoir of water. If you're in an area with wildlife or birds, there'll definitely be water in the area! All you have to do now is find it.

Extracting Water from Plants and Trees

The roots and branches of many trees contain water. Cut a low hanging branch or the roots and observe whether or not water starts to trickle out. Lianas, plants with vines, and generally soft and flexible trees and bushes are particularly good reservoirs of water. Watch out for poisonous plants and tress though! If you're uncertain whether a plant is poisonous, err on the side of caution. Always taste a little bit of the water first, if it doesn't smell and is tasteless, it should be ok to drink. If you find trees or branches that contain water, you can build a basic tool to collect it.



Collect the Morning Dew

In areas without trees, you can get water from the dew on the grass. One of the easiest way to collect it, is to take a rag or a bunch of grass and tie it around your ankles and walk around a grassy area before sunrise. After the stroll, you'll squeeze out the water into any container. Many people have saved their lives using this method.

Salt Water

You can get drinking water even out of salt water. You'll have to boil it first and place any sort of textile above the vessel and it will collect the steam. Once it is saturated with water, squeeze it out into another container and you can drink it.

9. Your Rescue

While water, fire, food and shelter are key steps to survival, your goal is to rescue yourself. There's a few ways to call for help.

Finding a Way

Find higher ground - a hill, mountain, trees. Climb up and look for signs of civilization. If you find something, you know which way to head. If you have anything metal, build a compass. You can use a pin, a hairpin, a wire or the hour hand on your watch. Brush one end of one of these against your clothes to give it a magnetic charge and then place it on a leaf above a water source. It'll point north. If you find a creek or a river, head downstream, in most places around the world you'll eventually find people there

Ways of Signaling For Help

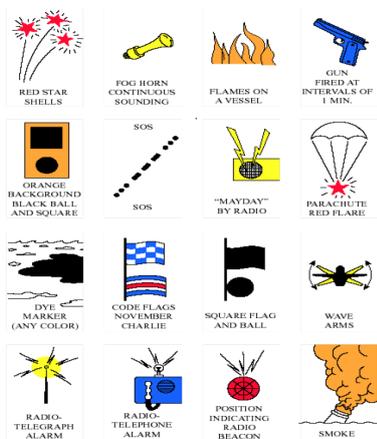
- **Fire** - this is the basic way to signal. Start a fire at night on the higher ground. During the day, add some wet leaves or grass to it to produce thicker smoke.

- **Sound** - scream for help, whistle, make a whistle. Let them know you're there from time to time, maybe someone will hear you.

- **Mirrors** - if you have a mirror or anything that would reflect sunlight, you can get the attention of planes or boats this way.

- **Ground-to-air signals** - build a cross or an SOS symbol out of rocks or stumps so that it's easily visible from the air. This should be done on a clearing. This is another way to get the attention of passing planes.

- **Ground signals** - if you're headed somewhere, let people know which way you're heading. Make arrows out of rocks or inscribe them into trees that point in the direction where you're going. You can also use coals, chalk, or anything that will be visible.



8. Food

If you've got water, warmth and shelter covered you can survive in the wild for several weeks. Now it's time to look around for food. Food will provide you with energy. While searching for food you have to become an opportunist. Keep an eye out and anytime it's possible to scavenge something or hunt something, take advantage of it. The basic sources of food are:

Animals

Meat is the best way to replenish your energy. It'll provide you with both a source of protein and vitamins. If you're in an area with animals, try to construct a few basic traps - ground snares, spring snares, one way tunnels,...

You can also make basic hunting weapons like a bow, a javelin or a harpoon. If you don't have a knife, find a sharp rock and find a way to attach it to the end of a branch - you'll be able to build a basic javelin or axe this way. Look up into the treetops and see if you can spot a nest with eggs in it.

Plants

Plants and their fruits are also a very nutritious. If you're not 100% sure if a plant or its fruit is edible, don't risk it! If you don't have any food sources around, you can assess its edibility by using this method.



UNIVERSAL EDIBILITY TEST by How2db.com

- 1** Test only one part of a potential food plant at a time.
- 2** Separate the plant into its basic components -leaves, stems, roots, buds, and flowers.
- 3** Smell the food for strong or acid odors. Remember, smell alone does not indicate a plant is edible or inedible.
- 4** Do not eat for 8 hours before starting the test.
- 5** During the 8 hours you abstain from eating, test for contact poisoning by placing a piece of the plant part you are testing on the inside of your elbow or wrist. Usually 15 minutes is enough time to allow for a reaction.
- 6** During the test period, take nothing by mouth except purified water and the plant part you are testing.
- 7** Select a small portion of a single part and prepare it the way you plan to eat it.
- 8** Before placing the prepared plant part in your mouth, touch a small portion (a pinch) to the outer surface of your lip to test for burning or itching.
- 9** If after 3 minutes there is no reaction on your lip, place the plant part on your tongue, holding it there for 15 minutes.
- 10** If there is no reaction, thoroughly chew a pinch and hold it in your mouth for 15 minutes. Do not swallow.
- 11** If no burning, itching, numbing, stinging, or other irritation occurs during the 15 minutes. swallow the food.
- 12** Wait 8 hours. If any ill effects occur during this period, induce vomiting and drink a lot of water.
- 13** If no ill effects occur, eat 0.25 cup of the same plant part prepared the same way. Wait another 8 hours. If no ill effects occur, the plant part as prepared is safe for eating.

How2db.com

<https://how2db.com/sports/outdoor/how-to-tell-if-a-wild-plant-is-edible>

Insects

Another source of food are insects. There are many different types of edible insects. Try to find these:

- **Ants** - try to get as many of them together and cook them for around 6 minutes. This will neutralize the acid in their bodies. It's possible to eat them raw as well, just make sure they're dead.

- **Termites** - put as many of them together and fry them

- **Lavae** - Yes, it's disgusting but it can save your life. You'll find them in rotten trees, under bark, or under rocks. You can eat them raw, but it's better to bake them. Fry or bake them until crispy.

- **Leaf insects** - as their name implies, you'll find them under old leaves or under rocks. They need to be cooked through.

- **Worms** - in an emergency you can eat them raw but we recommend you cook them.

- **Bed bugs** - put them in boiling water for 10 minutes

- **Scorpions** - Kill them first and cut off the stinger. Bake them on a bonfire or roast them on coals.

- **Snails** - let them go hungry for a day and then cook them through or fry them.

The majority of insects and caterpillars are edible. Try to avoid the ones that are very brightly colored, fuzzy or ones that emit strong odors. If you're unsure, use the edibility test. If it's possible, always thoroughly cook everything.

Mushrooms

Mushrooms are a great source of food. However, never consume any that you're not 100% sure about.

These are basic ways to save yourself in case you're in the wild without a way to call for help. Use common sense, be an opportunist, and try to stay alive and well. Don't take unnecessary risks. We wish you a safe passage back home and good luck out there!