

The Pillars of Prepping

3 minutes without air, 3 hours in a harsh environment (exposure), 3 days without water, 3 weeks without food.

Some will argue how many “pillars of prepping” there actually are. Some say 5, some 8. Community Prepper has come up with 10 topics that are of the greatest importance for survival, comfort and sustainability. After topics 1 and 2, they are in no particular order of importance.



1. Water

- a. I cannot reiterate enough the importance of clean drinking water. Remember the human body can only go 3 days without it. Organs begin to shut down, and you will die of severe dehydration. Dehydration, drinking contaminated water and dying of water born illness will be one of the biggest killers in a SHTF scenario.
- b. What can you do right now? Purchase bottled water from the store. Get enough for your family's needs. The rule is one gallon per day, per person. Have at a minimum 3 weeks of water stored in a cool, dark environment where temperature is stable. This means off the ground in a garage. Technically there is not expiration for bottled water so store it accordingly.
- c. For a family of 4, this equates to 84 gallons of clean drinking water.

2. Food

- a. Everyone should be storing 3 weeks of food, at minimum, in a working pantry. Remember a working pantry is a backup for the foods you would normally eat. This should be a place separate from your normal food storage that you continually shop from when you are out of a product in your normal food storage area. Making dinner and you just ran out of olive oil? Go to your working pantry for the one you have stored. Next time you go grocery shopping, replace the olive oil in your working pantry. This keeps your stock fresh by rotating throughout your food storage. Store what you eat, eat what you store.
- b. What can you right now? Create a list of the things you like to eat. Next time you go shopping ask yourself “how many times do I usually eat pasta in a month's time? Instead of buying one of that item, buy 4 or 5 or 6. Emergency food where you need to just add water is a great purchase right now as well (Ready Wise or Mountain House).
- c. Creating an inventory list of everything you have in your Working Panty will help once your pantry starts to get to a respectable size. 6 months is a great goal

3. Shelter/Clothing

- a. Structure can be your home, car, tent, bugout location or a shelter made from the elements. Bugging in is almost always your best option unless it becomes a safer option to leave your home (such as fire, gas leaks, chemical spills in your area, flooding or volcano). These are usually very temporary. Clothing could be the clothes in your closet or maybe, the clothing you have on your body at the time of an emergency. I usually dress in practical clothing to withstand most situations. You'll need proper shoes for walking, long pants, and your every day carry (the items you have on your person every day, all the time).
- b. What can you do right now? Prep your home for an emergency situation with food, water and window coverings if things get bad. Wood beams to secure doors, plywood to block out windows. Get a tent and know how to set it up if you need to camp or bug out. Make a go bag with proper equipment, food and clothing that you can grab at a moment's notice.

4. Fire

- a. An easy but important prep. You will need fire for lighting, to cook food, sterilize water and keep warm. It will also help in communication if the grid is down. Are you prepared if the power goes out? Can you make a fire to see in the dark, cook, sterilize and stay warm without power?
- b. What can you do right now? Be sure to have matches, lighters, firewood and fuels on hand. It's easy to acquire them in one trip to a grocery store. Also learn how to start a fire without anything but your hands (bushcraft skills).

5. Communication/Intel

- a. Cell phones, walkie-talkies, emergency radio (hand crank/batter/solar), Pen/Paper, chalk, spray paint, a hand-held mirror. Think about communication in multiple facets. Calling someone to let them know where you are or when you'll be home is easy. What if cell service is down? How will you communicate with your family if you need to bug out and you cannot reach them? You can leave a message in note form at your home, chalk or spray paint trees along your path to your agreed meet up location. Gathering intel is all important in emergencies. A Baofeng or emergency radio is a good option. Wars are won and lost on communication and intel.
- b. What can you do right now? Make a plan with your family about meeting locations if your home is destroyed or it becomes a safer option to bug out. Make a rendezvous point to where you will meet family if you are separated and how long you will wait there. Leave coded messages at locations that are highly visible and permanent (spray paint, carving wood etc)

6. Health/Fitness

- a. Being in good health & being in decent physical shape will give you greater odds when dealing with the hardships in an emergency. You may need to walk a great distance or do other manual labor that electricity makes easy. You may need to stay clean and properly dispose of trash/waste at your home in a burn bucket.
- b. What can you do right now? Stop putting off your next physical, dentist visit, losing those few extra pounds and be sure to purchase medicines you may need if the stores become looted. Walking for 20 minutes a day will help greatly for your physical health. Also, make an emergency medical bag with both OTC and prescription drugs.

7. Security

- a. Being able to defend yourself against the zombie apocalypse may become a necessary evil in emergency situations. When people become scared and desperate, they can become savage. You'll need to consider the security of your home, your family, your physical body and your possessions when the less prepared become desperate. Fortifying your home with proper locks, boarding up windows and securing other entry points may become necessary. Using defensive weapons like firearms will also become crucial. Protecting your body and home may require lethal or less than lethal force. Carry pepper spray, a knife, a firearm or other tools to protect you from harm. A firearm is the equalizer. A 90lb woman will be able to defend herself from a 250lb man if she has a firearm.
- b. What can you do right now? Get plywood to cover windows. Get 2x4's to secure entry ways. Prepare your home for a bug in situation where you may not leave for several weeks. Create a plan with your family about how you will guard your home if things become uncivilized. You'll need to sleep in shifts and keep a constant lookout to your surroundings. Purchase a firearm and ammunition if you haven't already. Most importantly, LEARN HOW TO USE YOUR FIREARM like its second nature.

8. Tools

- a. Screws, nails, tape, tarps, wood, tools, knives, pots, pans will all be in short supply if the grid goes down. Hardware stores will be looted just after grocery stores and pharmacies.
- b. Stocking up on these items can be lifesaving if you need to build or repair damages.
- c. What can you do right now? On your next visit to the store, pick up an extra box of nails and screws and other hardware. If you don't have a toolbox as of yet, make one with the basics like wrenches, screwdrivers, hammers, pliers and cutting tools. Get a box that can hold multiple kinds of hardware like a utility box or a tackle box that will allow you to separate these items by size and purpose.

9. Sanitation & Hygiene

- a. If the toilet stops flowing, if the shower no longer works, if the sink in your home becomes obsolete you will need to make arrangements to dispose of waste, clean yourself and wash dishes.
- b. A portable toilet is perfect for your business. A portable bucket style toilet from any camping store will be needed. You can line them with plastic trash bags and keep a special made lid that fits perfectly over the 5-gallon bucket. Burning your waste will be the best option to prevent disease from spreading. Get a metal bucket to act as your "Burn Bucket".
- c. A small tub or bucket for washing dishes is all you need.
- d. A hanging solar shower or a tub to wash yourself will work as well.
- e. What can you do right now? Purchase the toilet and several 5-gallon buckets at Walmart, Home Depot, Lowes etc. Keep your plastic bags from grocery shopping. Stock up on TP

10. Mobility

- a. Trekking by foot will greatly limit the distance you can travel from your home if cars become obsolete due to the gas supplies. Also, if you need to bug out, the roads will be gridlocked. A motorcycle or off-road vehicle will be your second-best option. Without any fuel, a bike or horse may become necessary. Walking in comfortable shoes and being in shape will be a major factor in your mobility.
- b. What can you do right now? Think about your abilities to travel by motorcycle, bicycle, horse or by foot in the area you live or where you'll need to go.