

The Prepping Secret...



**TOP
SECRET**

**...Nobody Talks
About!**

The Prepping “Secret” Nobody Talks About:

You Were Already 90% Prepared for an Emergency, You Just Didn’t Know It!

Since I’ve begun “preparedness journey” several years ago, I’ve learned more than I ever thought possible and I’ve spent a few dollars on my road to being better prepared too. When I first got into it, I happily purchased anything that had the words “survival,” “emergency,” or “preparedness” tattooed on the label. Boy, was that a dumb strategy most of the time! I just didn’t know any better.

What I’ve come to realize since then is that much of these seemingly necessary supplies are not always the best options for your survival and, equally important, many of the household items we keep for non-emergency preparedness purposes will serve us quite well if we ever needed them to.

Having said that, I’m still a huge proponent of including a wide assortment of preparedness-related survival items in your gear, but that’s not what this eBook is about. Rather, the focus will be on recognizing the potential for many common household items to serve us during an emergency situation.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not expecting you to survive TEOTWAWKI with these recommendations whatsoever. What I am suggesting, however, is that you could very well survive for many days or weeks with just a bit of knowledge purely on the supplies you’re likely to have at home. And all without spending a dime on anything you wouldn’t otherwise spend money on. Doesn’t that sound good?

Now, there are some very specific needs that, if you don't have them, you're in trouble. Food and life-saving prescription medications come to mind. Granted, you may be able to survive for weeks without any food but I wouldn't want to try it. More critically, some prescription medications are a must. And, no, I'm not talking about your Viagra pills! If there is ONE item that cannot be fabricated from at home supplies, its life-saving prescription medications. Please work toward getting at least a few weeks of your vital medications stockpiled ASAP.

In essence, this eBook's purpose is to show that the vast majority of families have the potential for being much more prepared than society gives them credit for. That includes you! In fact, this eBook isn't about explaining exactly how to do most anything. It's really about showing you that many things possible. Well over 100 links are provided to online resources that better explain the “how to” aspect of whatever I am discussing. I highly encourage you to use them.

Finally, I understand the need to have more stuff, practice often, and learn critical skills when it comes to being truly preparedness. I also recognize the need for disaster action plans, priority lists, and budgets. That's why this eBook is about 90% of the solution. The other 10% is the difficult part. In my opinion, this isn't something that should be tracked on a linear scale. Rather, an exponential curve is more appropriate, with the last 10% being all the extra work we put in—think of a hockey stick with the end pointing up and you'll grasp what I mean.

DISCLAIMER: Some of this information can potentially be dangerous, even deadly... attempt at your own risk! As such, you should always seek appropriate medical/legal/professional/expert advice whenever possible. Therefore, I accept NO liability whatsoever for your use or misuse of this information.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	4
Water Considerations	5
Water Sources	5
Water Treatment	6
Water Storage.....	8
Final Thoughts on Water Safety	9
Food Considerations	10
Food Longevity	10
Food Procurement.....	13
Health Considerations	14
Medical Issues.....	14
Sanitation and Hygiene	16
Warmth and Cooling Considerations.....	19
Warmth.....	19
Cooling.....	20
Lighting Considerations.....	22
Power and Fuel Considerations	24
Home Security and Personal Defense Considerations.....	26
Home Security.....	26
Personal Defense.....	26
Fire and Stove Considerations	28
Fire Starting.....	28
Stoves	29
Conclusions.....	32

Water Considerations

Among your first considerations will be water in most emergency situations. If there is no running water then you need to take action quick! Specifically, you'll need to have the ability to procure, treat, and store water on your own.

Water Sources

Regrettably, there aren't many readily available sources of never-ending water just lying around most homes unless, of course, you're fortunate enough to live next to a stream or lake.

The Obvious Sources

Since most of us do not live near such a plentiful source of water, we need to scrounge for it. While it may be that you keep a case or two of water around, usually the first place to look is in your hot water heater. In most cases that equates to 30-50 or more gallons of clean water; you may need to filter the water as mentioned above when draining it from the water heater drain valve due to sediment buildup, but it should otherwise be safe to consume.

In addition, your home's water pipes should contain at least a few gallons of water. Open an uppermost faucet (be sure to catch the water that comes out) and then drain the water in your pipes from the lowest faucet into a large bucket. This water should also be clean to consume.

Another often touted source of water would be the water from inside your toilet water reservoir, NOT the toilet bowl! Water in the bowl should be considered "black" water in that it is not fit for human contact.

There are other possible sources, including water from a pool or hot tub, fish aquarium, and waterbed (do people still own those?) as well.

Rainwater

I would also encourage you to setup some form rainwater catch too (assuming it’s legal to do so where you live, of course). There are plenty of ideas along these lines, from a simple Kiddie pool to lining trash barrels or a truck bed with plastic to a permanent diversion of [rainwater from your gutters](#) [Video]. Heck, you could even turn an [umbrella upside down](#) [Video] if you had to. Get creative. Why not string up a tarp between two trees and funnel water into a trash barrel?

Do understand that any collected water (from whatever source) should NOT be considered safe to drink without some form of disinfection. Last, understand what [greywater](#) [Video] is and how it differs from black water.

Water Treatment

You need to think about water treatment in two distinct phases: filtration and purification/disinfection. Water filtration is about removing particulates suspected in water (which may also allow pathogens to hitch a ride) whereas purification is about killing or deactivating said pathogens from doing harm to you once consumed.

Filtration Ideas

Water filtration can be accomplished—to one degree or another—with nearly anything that is water permeable but doesn’t easily allow solids to pass through. Examples from around the house include coffee filters, clean cotton t-shirts, a pillow case, window screen material, even nylons. There are other possibilities,

just look around. Now, don't think that just because you filtered dirty water through something one or two times that it's safe to drink, far from it.

Boiling

There are a variety of methods that will help you accomplish this goal around the house. Boiling water is the most recommended one, and for good reason. It's fairly effective against most pathogens. Unfortunately, it's very fuel consuming and may not be an option.

Bleach

[Bleach](#) (5%-6% sodium hypochlorite) would typically be the next recommended disinfection idea. Since most people have bleach in their homes this is a good option. The only caveat is that bleach used to disinfect water for human consumption must NOT contain any additives, scents, or anything else... plain old 5.25% bleach is what you want. You also want to be sure you dose correctly so write it down. The generally accepted dosage is 1/8 teaspoon of 5.25% bleach to one gallon of water. You may want to re-dose if the water doesn't smell like chlorine or the water is not very clear; the only caution is that you don't want to overdo it because sodium hypochlorite is a chemical and can be dangerous to consume not dosed properly.

Using the Sun

Another useful idea is [solar water disinfection](#) (SODIS). The beauty of this method is that it uses the power of the sun's UV rays to render pathogens harmless. The best part is that you can now purposely save those 2-liter soda bottles (clear ones only) that would otherwise be thrown in the garbage or recycled.

Pool Shock

For those that own pools or hot tubs (you're also very lucky to have a huge source of water) you could use [pool shock](#) (calcium hypochlorite, NOT sodium hypochlorite) in a similar manner as you would bleach; pound for pound, pool shock will treat many gallons more than liquid bleach. Just be sure to read the storage warnings and dose it properly too. Here's how to use [pool shock](#) [Video].

More Ideas

There are other homemade [emergency water filter](#) (and a [video](#)) ideas that may prove useful if you have the supplies around. You may also be interested in building a [biosand water filter](#) [Video] as well.

Overall, most methods outlined above are not safe for consumption when used alone. You need to practice both filtration and, more importantly, purification.

Water Storage

Now that you understand how to treat water as well as how to procure it, where are you going to put it all? While the best place to put water is in an approved water barrel, you could use anything from trash barrels lined with clean garbage bags to stopping up your bathtub and even bowls and cups.

Yes, if it gets that serious (actually, that desperate) you will be filling every possible container you have in your kitchen if the opportunity presents itself.

Look around for ANYTHING that would hold water. It could be plastic drawers that once held kids toys, end table drawers lined with garbage bags, a cooler (if not

being used to keep food cold), a Kiddie pool, and so on. If it can hold water it's fair game!

Final Thoughts on Water Safety

I want to be 100% clear about your water safety. Even if water looks clear, was collected on your own properly, or even from a nearby stream or lake that you know well, you simply cannot assume water is safe until you've made it so.

You really must treat your water as best as you can if it didn't come out of your faucet. And, while the methods I've outlined above (boiling and bleach) will work in most cases I would still strongly encourage you to purchase an actual off-grid water treatment option such as a [British Berkefeld Big Berkey](#) system. A system like this will filter many thousands of gallons of water and ensure it is safe to consume. I know that's not what this eBook is supposed to be about but water really is that important.

Food Considerations

Besides water, food will probably be your next biggest concern. In any disaster where the power fails the first thought on most people’s mind is “how long until my food spoils?” That’s normal. Happily, there are actions that can be taken to prolong food life.

Food Longevity

Keeping your food viable for as long as possible is a worthy goal. Here’s what to do about it.

The Refrigerator

The refrigerator and freezer are always a concern when the power goes out. Fortunately, most modern refrigerators are quite efficient and well insulated. To increase their efficient, a simple trick is to wrap several thick blankets around it in order to increase the dead airspace between the cold food inside and the warmer air outside. This idea works quite well and could extend the life of the refrigerated food inside for days.

Another option is to strategically eat freezer perishables and then move refrigerated perishables from the refrigerator to the freezer. Typically, meat and dairy products are most susceptible to higher temperatures. It’s also worthwhile to know precisely what foods may be just fine at room temperatures (such as condiments but excluding mayonnaise) as well as [what foods may spoil](#) [PDF file] or be suspect.

Coolers and 2-Liter Bottles

Utilizing a well-insulated cooler is another option. If you have an available source of ice then this strategy could work for several days. Of course, it may just be

better to place the ice in the freezer and refrigerator instead. An option I've used for years is to store 2-liter soda bottles filled with water (about 80-90% full) and placed in the freezer. Now you have a huge block of ice and clean water to drink if need be. Keep several of these in the freezer at all times and you'll be able to use them for just such an emergency. FYI, dry ice can be used to keep freezer foods viable as well both in the freezer and in a cooler.

Is it Safe to Eat?

Not sure if your freezer food is safe? It's easy to find out. Simply fill a small Ziploc bag with a few ice cubes. If they completely melt then you know the inside temperature reached above 32 degrees Fahrenheit; if there's still some ice, even a little bit, then the temperature has gone above freezing.

Considering a Deep Freezer?

Get a chest freezer instead of an upright freezer for the simple fact a chest freezer door opens from the top which, because cold air sinks, tends to allow the cold temperatures to stay inside the chest freezer whereas an upright freezer is more likely to let cold air out.

Live in a Dry Climate?

Consider a [clay pot-in-pot fridge](#). If you have two clay pots of slightly different sizes (such as planter pots), a little bit of sand and some water to spare, then you may be able to significantly reduce the temperature of foods stored within the inner pot due to the evaporative cooling effect. This phenomenon, by the way, is why such an idea won't work in a humid climate because evaporation is more difficult to achieve if there's already moisture in the air. FYI, this is also known as a zeer pot.

Have Eggs?

Consider [storing eggs without refrigeration](#); there are a variety of methods. People do it all the time. I’ve even seen videos of people documenting their experiments with storing eggs long term. You can also tell if an egg is bad if it floats in a bowl of cold, unsalted water. If it sinks to the bottom it should be fine to eat. There is some grey area here but, in general, this is a good rule of thumb.

What Else Can You Do?

Another thought is to build a mini root cellar of sorts. I’ve seen people build a [root cellar from 55-gallon drums](#) [Video] but you could substitute a large trash barrel instead. This idea takes advantage of the natural cooling found just below the earth’s topsoil. Depending on your local climate you may find that you can keep a constant temperature of below 60 degrees. While it’s not as cool as your refrigerator (which typically stays below 40 degrees) it’s certainly better than 90+ degrees with respect to your food longevity. I should point out that this suggestion won’t help your meat and dairy products but it could be worthwhile for fruits and vegetables.

Canning, Dehydrating, Smoking

You might think that canning, dehydrating, or smoking foods is an option here. For some people it may be but if you don’t have the resources and knowledge beforehand then it’s really not an option for you. Really, the best course of action if you have exhausted the above recommendations is to eat as much as you can! Invite the neighbors over for a smorgasbord... by that time they’re probably hungry as well and quite appreciative.

Food Procurement

Regrettably, we haven't yet figured out how to make food appear from thin air. You still have to grow it, hunt it, or store it. As a result, most families are going to be in trouble if they don't have food stored or a garden already flourishing.

These Will Be Difficult

And, while there are many possibilities with respect to food procurement from hunting to fishing to trapping wild game, odds are that you either know how to do these things or you don't and you either have the requisite equipment or you don't. Moreover, while an assortment of interesting traps can be fashioned from a variety of household objects, the odds that an average family will be near a river, lake, or other wilderness location in order to take advantage of them is not very high. As such, I won't include any links for such activities.

What Can You Do?

If you can procure garden seeds then you could practice [container vegetable gardening](#) using planter pots. That said, it's not like you're going to be harvesting food in just a few days; it takes months in most cases. A much faster option would be [sprouting](#). If you keep any grains around for long term storage then sprouting may be a great idea, especially to supplement vitamin needs.

You could also learn to make [famine chow](#), [hard tack](#), [beef pemmican](#), and homemade [energy bars](#) [PDF file], to name a few ideas. There are, in fact, quite a few "how to make [fill in the blank]" [references here](#) that may prove useful to you.

Health Considerations

Medical Issues

Medical issues are significantly more difficult to deal with if you don't have the proper supplies, equipment, and most importantly, training. Work to acquire the proper training, reference materials, and medical supplies that you may need now... before they're needed. In most cases, these supplies won't go bad and will find a use someday. If you had to, though, here are a few things you can do at home.

Dehydration

If a family member were to become severely dehydrated (such as from diarrhea) then you'll want to know how to get fluids back in their body. Besides keeping supplies such as Gatorade or Pedialyte, you could make an [oral rehydration solution](#) or [this instructable here](#). It's simple and effective. While there are other recipes, the most basic recipe is 4.25 cups water (1 liter), 6 teaspoons of sugar, and ½ teaspoon of salt.

Wound Treatment

Another major concern would be trauma dressings. While gauze pads and pressure dressing are probably the best option if available, there are other alternatives if need be. In fact, [this post on Sterile vs. Clean](#) brought up an interesting comparison of sterile gauze, panty liners, sanitary feminine napkins, and diapers. Anyway, realize that, in a pinch, items like feminine pads and even clean linens would work as an emergency wound dressing. Tampons, in particular, [have many potential uses](#) in an emergency and are highly recommended to keep on-hand. You should also

know [how to tell how bad a wound is](#) and [how to tell the difference between artery and vein bleeding](#).

Sprains, Strains and More

Sprains, strains, and even fractures or breaks could also be a problem post-disaster. While an appropriate sling or cast would be best, you can make-shift slings using items such as linens or a bandana, whereas limbs can be immobilized in an assortment of ways (depending on what needs a splint) using sturdy sticks and anything to keep it from moving, such as tape. Be aware, however, that you can do more harm than good in some cases.

In addition, here's how to:

- [make a finger splint](#) [Video];
- [treat a jammed finger](#);
- [fix a dislocated shoulder](#);
- [make an icepack using isopropyl alcohol](#);
- [make an icepack using dawn dishwashing liquid](#).

Natural Remedies

You should also understand how to use natural remedies for medical concerns. While the scope of such a discussion is not intended for this eBook, realize that there are many things you can do. For example, many people swear that [honey is a very effective antibacterial ointment](#), among other uses. [Apple Cider Vinegar](#) is also touted as having a variety of uses as well. [Baking soda](#) is another. I've even seen claims that an [egg membrane can be used to stop bleeding](#); can't say I've ever tried it but I will remember that idea!

Lost Your Glasses?

Learn to [make pinhole glasses](#) [Video] in a pinch. It’s not 20/20 eyesight but definitely better than not being able to see at all. ☺

Ticks

In a disaster, you may find yourself outside a lot more often and, as a result, get a few nasty ticks. Here’s [how to remove them safely](#).

Other Things to Know

Other potentially useful information to know include:

- how to [care for wounds when the medical system has collapsed](#);
- how to [pack a wound](#);
- how to [perform a nerve block](#);
- how to [improvise butterfly stitches](#);
- how to [get something out of your eye](#) [Video];
- how to [lance a boil](#);
- how to [drain an abscess](#).

More Stuff

If you want to get a little more “out there” here are articles on how to make [Dakin’s antiseptic solution](#) [PDF file] and how to make an [emergency gas mask](#) from a 2-liter soda bottle. Cant’ say I’ve tried either one but it is interesting to know.

Sanitation and Hygiene

Proper sanitation will be a huge concern in any long term emergency scenario in large part because running water may not be available and also because people

won't know what to do about basic bathroom needs. Following are several actions you can take to better prepare your family.

Human Waste

First, learn how to [dispose of human waste properly](#) (and [another article here](#)). Here's how to [make a portable backyard privy](#) [Video] and a [5-gallon porta-potty](#). Properly dealing with urine and, more critically, fecal matter is a must. They are huge causes of disease. Statistics from third world countries continue to confirm this. Also understand that toilet paper will be missed but here's how to [survive without toilet paper](#) if you had to.

Hand Cleanliness

In addition, you'll want to know how to wash your hands. Keeping your hands clean is vital to minimizing disease transmission. You would be astonished if you ever realized how often you touch your face with your hands in a single day and how dirty your hands really are!

Fortunately, your body is usually healthy enough to combat any bugs but that may not be the case when you're stressed, undernourished, tired, and possible vitamin deficient as well. It's really important! Anyway, this idea uses a [2-liter soda bottle to wash hands](#), which not only reduces water usage but minimizes the spread of disease.

Dishes

Cleaning dishes, cups, pots and pans, and utensils will be a problem too as they are also significant disease transmission sources. Learn how to use the [3-step method to clean your dishes](#) [Video] as it is quite effective when water is scarce. If you're

expecting to campfire cook then perhaps understanding how to [use wood ash to clean pots and pans](#) would be useful too.

Laundry

Laundry may be another concern. While I’m not overly concerned that you keep up with the laundry (you probably have plenty of clothes you can wear) it may be useful to know how to make your own [homemade laundry soap](#) [Video], make a [laundry washboard](#), and a [clothes wringer from buckets](#) [PDF file]. I’ve done all of these and it will work to some extent. At the very least the laundry soap will save you plenty of money over long periods of time.

Personal Hygiene

Let’s not forget about personal hygiene. While making your own soap is a bit difficult, you can [make dry shampoo](#), [make toothpaste](#) (and other oral care products), [clean your teeth without a toothbrush](#) [Video], and even [build a camp shower from a 2-liter bottle](#). Of course, you probably already have enough soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toothbrushes to see your family thorough for weeks.

More to Know

Last, know how to make an assortment of [homemade multi-purpose cleaners](#), [natural pest control](#), and even how to [clean the house TEOTWAWKI style](#).

Warmth and Cooling Considerations

Warmth

Cold winters will be a miserable time, even deadly, if you're unable to keep you and your family warm. Realizing the principles of body heat loss is probably the most important thing you can do in this area. A close second is to understand the transfer of heat to and from your home.

Personal Heat

For starters, you should begin with maximizing your own body heat by understanding how to:

- [dress in layers](#);
- make a [survival sleeping blanket](#) or [emergency blanket robe](#);
- make [hand warmers](#) and [winter mitts](#) [PDF file];
- make a [tyvek sleeping bag bivvy](#).

Realize that keeping your head warm matters a lot; even a simple t-shirt covering your head is better than nothing. Extremities should not be ignored but your core is the most important part of your body to keep warm at all times.

Also realize that your body needs foods to keep the internal heater going so it's important to eat regularly. Last, physical activity helps to keep your body warm but can cause serious hypothermic problems if you work up a sweat.

Home Heat

With regards to your home (or whatever area you're trying to keep warm), you may want to know how to make:

- [solar heat collector](#) (and [another article here](#) and [here](#));
- [solar water heater](#);
- [candle heater](#);
- [rocket stove mass heater](#);
- [emergency car heater](#) [Video].

(These projects do take time so get started before you actually need them.)

Additionally, it doesn't hurt to know how to reduce the amount of space you're required to keep warm in your home (even pitching a tent inside a room is better than nothing). Likewise, recognizing major sources of heat loss (it's the windows and doors) will help you combat heat loss. Even realizing that heat rises is useful.

Hot Water

As mentioned previously, hot water would be really nice to have during a disaster. Instead of making a [solar batch water heater](#) [Video] or something similar, you could still use the power of the sun to heat your water by getting a bit more creative.

For instance, have you ever noticed how hot a garden hose can get when lying outside in the sun? It can get very hot indeed. Harness this power by coiling a garden hose (like a snake coils its body) inside a shallow makeshift solar oven and you'll have nearly instant—ok, not quite instant—hot water. Sure, it will be hot water in small batches but you can definitely expand on the idea.

Cooling

There are a variety of ideas to keep your home cooler without air conditioning, from strategically opening windows to take advantage of a draft to [heat blocking](#)

[curtains](#) and awnings (you can makeshift them). I once wrote a post on [Brainstorming Extreme Methods to Keep Cool](#); not sure if any of my ideas were worthwhile but I tried.

You should also avoid performing any activities that would increase heat inside your house such as cooking food or boiling water. This would also increase the humidity levels and make the heat "feel" worse too.

There are also many DIY ideas to keep cool, including:

- [natural air conditioning](#);
- a [mini solar air conditioner](#) using a pc fan;
- building an [evaporative air conditioner](#);
- how to make a [heat exchanger air conditioner](#);
- [adapting a cooler](#) (and [another here](#));
- and even how to [use the sun for cooling](#).

Like many of the home heating ideas, these will require some effort and time so get started if they interest you.

Lighting Considerations

We're very accustomed to having an assortment of lights around our homes, even if it's something as seemingly innocuous as a backlit clock display. If you'll recall any recent power outage that occurred at night you should have also realized how dark it was inside your home. Not only is this a bit scary (especially for children) but you could stub your toes, hit your shins, or even fall and really injure yourself. As such, it's important to have lighting in our homes.

Obvious Sources

The first, and most obvious, source of emergency light would be any flashlights or lanterns you have around the home. Hopefully you keep one or two around for this very purpose.

Another potential source of light would be any candles you have (yes, ladies, the scented ones are ok); tea light are quite useful here too. Even birthday candles would suffice. Normally, I'm not a huge fan of candles for emergency preparedness due to their associated fire hazard risk (from being knocked over by pets or children, for example). That said, they are a source of light; just be diligent with them and think safety first at all times.

Patio Lights

Many homes also have patio solar lights these days. Consider brining them inside at night and place them in strategic locations (such as hallways or bedrooms) which will provide enough lighting in order to avoid tripping over the furniture. During the day return them outside to keep them charged up.

Stuff That Burns

If you want to get creative, consider making an [oil lamp](#), [olive oil candles](#), or [Crisco lamp](#). It is possible and relatively easy to do as well. Other things burn too, such as isopropyl alcohol. Getting creative and making an [emergency car heater](#) [Video] would not only produce some heat but light as well. You'll want to contain any of these makeshift lights properly and be even more careful than with candles. Whatever you choose to do, understand that you are dealing with fuel sources (oils and alcohols) albeit unconventional ones, which can cause an out of control house fire quick! Keep them well contained and well supervised.

Other Thoughts

Here's an [article on how to turn a bottle of Mountain Dew](#), hydrogen peroxide, and baking soda into a glow in the dark light. I might have to try this just for fun one day.

Last, did you know that you can even turn your kid's crayons into a candle? They are wax, after all. I've done it just for kicks and it works... just don't tell your kids where all their crayons went. 😊

Power and Fuel Considerations

Power and fuel sources are going to be very difficult to come by if you haven't stockpiled them already; however, there are a few things you can do to help you through.

First Things First

You really need to think about rationing any power and fuel source. And by rationing I mean RATIONING! That is, don't just let your emergency flashlights and lanterns stay on willy-nilly and don't allow your radios to blare away without a purpose (such as listening to emergency broadcasts). Without the ability to replenish or recharge these power sources you need to make them last as long as possible.

Batteries

Batteries seem to disappear quickly around most homes. The good news is that you're likely to have an assortment of batteries in "hidden" places like television remotes (as well as other remove) and especially in kids toys. I can't tell you how many batteries my kids' toys have consumed and continue to do so. Start with reclaiming these batteries for use in critical items such as flashlights and radios. FYI, it is possible to [use patio solar lights to recharge batteries](#) but it takes a long time and may be highly disappointing if this is your only option for recharging batteries.

Gasoline

Gasoline will be the other major sacred power source. Raid lawn equipment and all of your vehicles for as much gasoline as you can, then ration, ration, ration!

The good news is that you can use your vehicles as a power source. This is especially useful for DC (12-volt) devices. In addition, you can connect an inverter to your car battery to power some small AC equipment but, obviously, this requires you to have an inverter to begin with; it may also require you to idle your car, which will use gasoline at about ½ to 1 gallon per hour. Oh, and you'll need gas to run your car too. ☺

Other Information

You might also be interested to know:

- how to [run AC tools on batteries directly without an inverter](#);
- how to [use one less battery](#);
- how to [build a faraday cage](#) (from cardboard boxes and foil) and [video](#).

Home Security and Personal Defense Considerations

The ability to properly defend your home and family may be a huge concern after any major disaster. Regrettably, this will be next to impossible considering the design of most homes and subdivisions these days. For apartment and city dwellers this could be even more difficult. To make matters worse, without an assortment of firearms (and the requisite training and practice) you’re literally fighting a losing battle. That said, I do include a few ideas below.

Home Security

Rather than recreating a resource I already have, I would encourage you to read another eBook of mine, *Home Security and SHTF Defense: How to Protect Your Home and Family*, which is free to [Subscribers](#). I can’t say it’s the definitive text but is a good start.

If you’re not interested in reading my other eBook then you really need to do some research on how to harden your home. This includes doors, windows, the perimeter, even “dirty” tricks you can use. I’m not saying you should booby-trap your home, not at all. But there are things you can do if you’re willing to get creative. I’ll leave it at that.

Personal Defense

Like I mentioned at the start of this section, you just can’t beat firearms when it comes to personal defense. Barring procurement of a battery of firearms (and possibly even other self defense items such as pepper spray or stun guns) you’re not complete defenseless at home.

Fairly Obvious Choices

A simple kitchen butcher knife can certainly be deadly. I know I wouldn't want to be stabbed with one! Even a large Maglite flashlight will knock a person out.

Other obvious weapons might include golf clubs, a baseball bat, a tire iron, a fire extinguisher, and rocks. Garden tools (garden hoe, rake, shovel) have been weapons for centuries by peasants.

Other Ideas

In addition to the above, it is possible to fashion an assortment of weapons, such as a [baton](#) [Video] and even spears from a broom handle, for example. Axes, hammers, crowbars, wrenches, and screwdrivers may prove useful too.

Other not so obvious ideas could include metal piping, beer bottles, bricks, a bicycle chain, walking cane, broken glass, padlock in a sock or pillow case, rolling pin, and a pool cue. I'm sure you can come up with a few others on your own. A bit of creativity goes a long way here.

Not Recommended But Possible

Although I'm not suggesting you do so, chemical sprays such as wasp spray would pose a nasty surprise to any intruder.

Fire and Stove Considerations

Fire Starting

The ability to start a fire has been critical to human survival for millennia. You should probably have an idea of how to do so. Lighters and matches are the easiest methods for sure, but you can start a fire with items such as a magnifying glass, soda can and, believe it or not, water and even ice! This [article discusses all of the above](#). It couldn't hurt to know how [to make a firebed](#) [Video] or how to [build a fire](#) [Video] either.

Stuff to Know About Fire Starting

The ability to start a fire easily and sustain it is equally important. Know that many common household items may catch and sustain a fire. Normally, this is a bad thing but could prove useful to know if actually needed. Regardless, here's how to make an assortment of fire-starting supplies:

- [fire starting wafers with paraffin wax](#) [Video];
- [a feather stick](#) [Video] or fuzz stick;
- [homemade wetfire tinder](#) (it's cotton balls and Vaseline);
- [charcloth](#) [Video];
- an [egg carton, dryer lint, and wax](#) (cotton balls or swabs could be used instead of dryer lint);
- [shave your own kindling](#);
- [a twisted newspaper fire starter](#);
- [9-volt battery and steel wool](#) [Video];
- [salvaging a rear project television lens](#) (to act as a Fresnel lens) for fire starting. Fear not, this idea won't work with your 60" plasma television, so it's safe... for now. ☺

More Considerations

There are some tried and true methods to fire starting, such as the bow drill, fire plow, and pump fire drill, but I wouldn't consider these as they're a lot of work.

Stoves

The ability to cook food and boil water to make it safe to consume has been a basic human need ever since we figured out how to harness fire. Boiling hot water for bathing or dishes is a nice perk too.

Why You Cannot Rely on Your Grill Alone

While it may be that you already have a good BBQ grill or charcoal grill and even extra fuel to use it, the fact is that many of these stove designs are highly inefficient when it comes to boiling a simple pot of water. In addition, it may be that you do not have enough fuel (propane or charcoal) to see you through any significant emergency. As such, you'll want an alternative stove that can use wood as a fuel source. Keep the grill for doing what it's designed to do: cook, not boil.

Stove Ideas

Here are a few makeshift stove ideas to get you started:

- [Dryer lint and wax stove](#) (pocket stove);
- [Cardboard box oven](#) (for use with charcoal);
- [Emergency cardboard stove](#) [Video];
- [Mini Alcohol Stove](#) (using soda cans);
- [Rocket stove](#) and [16 brick rocket stove](#) [Video] and [another here](#) [Video];
- [Oven inside a solar oven](#) [Video];
- [Hobo stove](#) (using #10 can) [Video].

No-Fuel Methods

There are also methods of cooking that do not require something flammable, including solar ovens and slow cookers. Solar ovens are very useful for a variety of reason, including not only for cooking but for boiling—or at least pasteurizing—water too. I’ve made a solar oven out of household scraps for less than \$5 and the only reason it cost me anything was because I wanted to purchase a \$5 oven thermometer. Without the thermometer this oven required little more than two cardboard boxes, shredded paper (as insulation), plastic wrap (to cover the opening), an old windshield sunscreen (to reflect sunlight), and black spray paint.

Solar Ovens

There are plenty of [solar oven plans](#) online and videos too. So long as you understand the principles behind a solar oven you could build one fairly easily. Now, you will find that foods take longer to cook (due to lower temperatures than a conventional oven) and heating water will take hours but it is a free source of energy.

Thermal Retention

In addition, you should realize that the way we typically cook foods is not always necessary to finish the job. For example, reconstituting a batch of rice and cooking pasta can be done by first bringing the food to a boil and then placing it in something highly insulating. Doing so will allow the food to continue to cook, albeit slowly. The benefit is that this strategy will drastically cut down on the amount of fuel necessary for cooking a variety of foods. A [wonder box cooker](#) (and [another article here](#)) or [thermos cooking](#) [PDF file] are what you’re looking for.

Campfire Cooking

It may also be that you're interested in campfire cooking. If you've never started a campfire you'll find it is a lot of work and, in fact, is more art than science.

Regardless, here's how to:

- [build a campfire](#) [Video];
- [make a fire pit](#) [Video];
- [campfire pit baking](#) [Video];
- [cook on a log](#);
- this Wikipedia [article discusses several outdoor cooking techniques](#) as well, including boiling, roasting, grilling, frying, baking, Dutch ovens, steaming, and more.

Conclusions

Hopefully this eBook has opened your eyes and even made prepping a bit less daunting and definitely less expensive. That isn't to say there aren't plenty of very useful emergency supplies that can—and should—be accumulated to better prepare your family. There are definitely plenty of items to purchase as my wallet continues to find out. 😊

Regardless, perhaps you've seen some of the aforementioned ideas before, perhaps not. Remember that the purpose of this eBook was to show you what could be accomplished solely with common resources from a typical home.

It goes without saying that not every family will have all of the supplies, skills, or even the desire needed to accomplish all of the tasks outlined. That's ok. Simply recognizing what is possible is the hardest part.

Of course, it really does help to have tried any of the aforementioned ideas that you may want to use in an actual emergency. It's far better to iron out the little hiccups now when you don't need the ideas to work rather than when you actually do. So, if any of what I've pointed out sounds good to you, get to working on them now!

Good luck with your preparations and keep at it. You'll have your family better prepared before you know it.