

This Is How To Use Styrofoam For Survival

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When confronted with a survival situation, you will have to make the most of what's available for getting through the day. Styrofoam is one of these items.

Today's article is about Styrofoam, which may come handy in a variety of scenarios, being a versatile and useful material especially when you're strapped for resources.

To start with the basics, let's define our terms: Styrofoam is basically a commercial term/a trademark brand for expanded polystyrene, which is often used for building food containers and all sorts of housing insulation.

Styrofoam is also common as cushioning material in packaging, for making disposable dishes/coffee cups, for building coolers and things of that nature, due to its excellent insulating properties. Styrofoam is very lightweight and buoyant, as it's made from 98 percent air.

Styrofoam for Starting Fire

Considering the holy trinity of survival in any imaginable scenario, i.e. water, food and shelter, let's see how/where Styrofoam comes into play. Starting with shelter, one of the most important things related to outdoors survival is the ability of making fire. Fire keeps you warm and keeps predators away and that's kind of important in my book.

Fire is also essential when it comes to purifying water and for cooking your food, thus being able to make a fire in a SHTF situation is crucial in this writer's opinion.

Check out the following video that will make you think twice before throwing Styrofoam in the garbage bin instead of transforming it into something resembling home-made napalm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btv91iODyz4>

Video first seen on [Marcel's Workshop](#).

The general idea is that mixing gasoline with Styrofoam you'll get a sticky substance that burns slowly which makes for an awesome fire starter. Just imagine you'll have to make a fire in an outdoors emergency situation and all you have for combustible is damp wood/cardboard, it's windy and you're cold and tired, you got the picture.

The Styrofoam fire starter is a must-have item for your bug out bag or your survival kit as it's dirt cheap and highly efficient. This home-made napalm will transform you into a modern Prometheus in two shakes of a lamb's tail.

Styrofoam for Insulation

Now, if you remember that Styrofoam makes for an awesome insulating material, how about using it for protecting you from extreme cold weather?

To upgrade your clothes with Styrofoam for surviving in harsh climates is relatively easy and it doesn't require mad sawing skills or special tools. All you have to do is to gather a few pieces of Styrofoam, a sharp tool (a knife will do), very large shirts/pants, Velcro strips and a can of urethane glue.

The idea is to use the Styrofoam for filling your mittens, lining your parka etc. by trim fitting your clothes/shoes with pieces of Styrofoam. This procedure is simple and highly effective, but remember: for best results, the Styrofoam must be worn next to your skin.

You can also make knee pads/bun pads from Styrofoam in case you want to sit/kneel on snow or ice for extended periods of time.

Basically, using Styrofoam you can live comfortably when confronted with extremely low temperatures and even if you'll look fat, at least you'll be warm and you'll live to fight another day. And that's the name of the game when it comes to survival, doesn't it?

Also, speaking of [insulation](#), you can build yourself an improvised shelter in a very cold environment, something like a cardboard shelter to preserve your body heat. A tight and well insulated shelter will use your body heat for warming it up and for best results, you should use Styrofoam due to its excellent insulating properties.

For example, you can take a big cardboard box, like a refrigerator box or a big screen TV box or whatever is available for improvising an outside shelter, wrapped in plastic sheet on the outside to keep the moisture away and insulated on the inside with Styrofoam. You can use duct tape or glue for fixing the Styrofoam plates on the cardboard.

Styrofoam for Boiling Water

I bet you never thought about boiling water using a Styrofoam cup, did you? Well, it's doable. Check out the video below and you'll see how.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AADnzTFtPn8>

Video first seen on [Zack Of All Trades](#).

Even if most people can't believe you can achieve that, the trick is to let your fire burn down into a nice bed of coals. The next step is to put your water-filled Styrofoam cup on the coal bed, not on the open flame, that's all there is to it.

[Boiling water](#) is the best thing to do if you want to get rid of bacteria and microbes, hence here goes another survival use of Styrofoam.

Styrofoam for Lifesaving Jackets

Styrofoam pellets can be transformed into improvised life jackets (you just fill a bag with the stuff and hang on to it) or you can even build a life raft from Styrofoam planks, as it's highly buoyant. Here's a video about DIYing a cool Styrofoam life jacket for emergencies using basic/readily available materials and tools, like wrapping film, stockings and blocks of Styrofoam.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQkW7khhOAg>

Video first seen on [waqashassanansari](#).

And here's another video about homemade rafts using Styrofoam, with the frames welded together and the Styrofoam taped onto the respective frames, making for an excellent survival raft which holds the water impeccably.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jfxKQGD97U>

Video first seen on [RedneckInnovation](#).

Styrofoam for Casting Metal

Another interesting and potentially survival-related feature of Styrofoam is to use it for casting purposes. Check out this video and learn how to use Styrofoam for casting metal in an emergency. The possibilities are endless.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tH-PaNugz9w>

Video first seen on [Grant Thompson - "The King of Random"](#).

This technique is called lost foam casting and it can be used for building any number of basic tools or even (stabbing) weapons, provided you have the ingredients, i.e. aluminum, sand and enough Styrofoam.

Now, let's see about a couple of not-so-dramatic uses for Styrofoam.

For example, you can use a small piece of the respective stuff to hold small nails into place instead of using your fingers for that, thus avoiding bashing your thumb/forefinger.

If you're in a SHTF situation, hands are very important and you'll have to remain functional 100%, right? So, use a small piece of Styrofoam [for steadying the nail against the wall](#) instead of your fingers and live to fight another day!

Also, you may use Styrofoam peanuts for buffering sharp objects like awls inside your tool box, thus avoiding injury and staying healthy in an emergency situation.



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I hope the article helped. If you have any other ideas or questions, feel free to comment in the dedicated section below.

This article has been written by Chris Black for [Survivopedia](#).

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