

Best 15 Ways To Become Self-Sufficient

2017-07-09 07:50:16 By Theresa Crouse

Here at SVP, we talk quite a bit about self-sufficiency, but if you're living in a tiny apartment and making very little money, or even if you're a CEO at a big company and are stuck living in the city because of your job, it can seem like an impossible task.

The thing is – self-sufficiency is a frame of mind. It's right there. All you have to do is reach for it. That's the first step to regaining self-sufficiency.

There are two types of people: those who are happy letting somebody else run the show and those who like to run the show. That's a bit simplistic, but it's close enough. If you're reading this, you're probably the latter, and you won't have any problem putting in the effort to make yourself self-sufficient.

We've talked about how to become self-sufficient in broad strokes but we've never really approached it from the beginning. We've never discussed how to change your state of mind from dependent to independent, and that's really the most important step of all.

Most people have this hugely vague idea of what it means to be self-sufficient. You probably picture the guy on the Alaska show that lives in a hut, kills his own food with a homemade bow and arrow, and camps under boughs of pine trees when he's stuck away from his hut. Yeah, that's pretty much extreme self-sufficiency.

Relax – swimming naked across a semi-frozen river in 5 degree weather didn't even come close to making this list! Settle in, pick a few steps that sound good, and get started. Anything you do will put you closer to being self-sufficient than you are now.

[Discover the golden days' practice for getting all you can eat food without buying from the supermarket!](#)

Learn to Grow Food

There's more than one reason to grow plants. Sure, you're going to get delicious herbs, fruits, or vegetables out of the process, but that's not the biggest benefit – knowledge is. That's going to be a theme throughout this article, because knowledge is what will separate those of us who can from those who can't. We'll know what to do and they won't.

So, start a few plants. You don't have to go whole-hog right off the bat. If you don't have much space, grow some herbs and maybe a few [container plants](#), then move up to trying some upside-down plants after you get the hang of that. You'll learn how to grow your own food and even if you can't do it on a large scale now, you'll know how to if you ever need to, and can grow the skill as your situation changes.

Learn how to Save Seeds

After you've got your plants growing, learn how to collect and preserve the seeds. After all, they're there and there's no need to waste them. It's important for you to start with heirloom seeds because

they're the only ones that grow true every year. We've written about that [here](#).

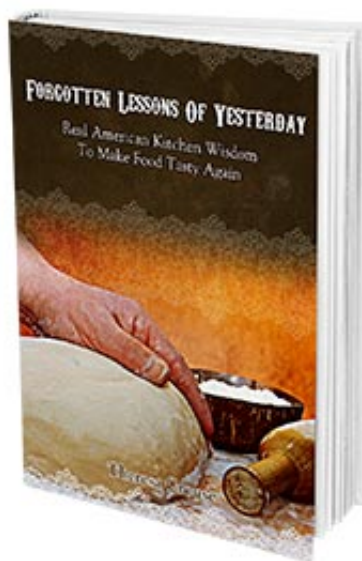
Saving your seeds now serves two purposes. First, in the short-term and assuming no SHTF scenarios occur, you won't have to pay for seeds next season. Second, you'll know the process, which will be critical if a SHTF situation ever arises. And if it happens between now and next year, you have seeds!

Learn to Cook and Eat at Home

Big deal, here. You may be a candidate for the Next Food Network Star, or you may have trouble boiling water, but there's always more you can learn, especially about using good equipment. I admit to being partial to one piece in particular – a [Dutch oven](#). That's because I can use it at home to make an amazing roast, or I can take it camping and make biscuits, stew, or seriously just about anything else, baked, stewed, or brewed.

That's just one suggestion, though. The idea is to get used to cooking your own food, for two main purposes. First and foremost, if you don't know how to cook, and how to tell if your food is spoiled, you're never going to be self-sufficient, and if SHTF, you may actually not survive. Starvation or food poisoning will get you.

Second, cooking at home is more nutritious, much less expensive, and super satisfactory, especially if you're cooking for yourself.



Click Here To Find Out!

**One Thing You Can Do
Now To Terminate Your
Store-Bought Food
Dependency**

Learn to Preserve Food

You don't have to have a full-blown garden to make a big batch of spaghetti sauce, salsa, or soup and can what you have left over. As a matter of fact, you're serving a few purposes by doing that – you're stockpiling food in case of emergency, you're learning how to preserve food, and you're stocking your pantry in case you're lazy one night and want something homemade but don't want to invest the time in it.

Learn how to dehydrate, too. After all, who doesn't love jerky? It's the perfect snack just because it's delicious, but also if you want something you can take with you camping, or to have a quick protein

boost after a workout or to get you through that afternoon slump.

Learn how to Compost

You can buy small compost buckets that fit right under your kitchen sink, and let me tell you, it's great for your plants! You don't have to have a huge pile in a ginormous back yard to do this, and if something happens, you'll already know how to do it and will be able to transfer the skill to a larger pile.

COMPOSTING

What You'll Need

1 Part Green + 3 Parts Brown + Water

GREENS

fruits
vegetables
food scraps
weeds
used coffee grounds
manure
corn husks
grass clippings



BROWNS

twigs
leaves
shredded paper
egg cartons
coffee filters
cardboard scraps
wood chips



WATER



AVOID

fats
oils
grease
sauces
grease-stained napkins
meat
fish
dairy products
chemically treated wood
diseased plants

pesticides
herbicides
glossy paper
photo paper
poop
walnuts (shells too)



What It'll Look Like

OUTDOORS

tumbler bin
shovel
watering bucket
shady
at least 3 ft x 3 ft



INDOORS

small bin
lid or cover
tray
thick layer of soil
shredded paper layer
small holes on bottom & sides
alternating layers of greens and browns
small spade to mix the pile once a week



Stop Wasting

This is huge step toward getting into the self-sufficient state of mind. How much food do you think you throw away in a month? Or how many half-full sodas or juices do you pick up around the house? Stop it. You're throwing valuable money down the drain. Estimate how much you're going to use and don't buy extra, and don't impulse-buy. Eat before you go to the store so that you aren't tempted to buy everything that looks good and stick to your list.

Collect Rainwater

This is a simple thing to do and can be done even with a pail on the balcony. Even if you're only collecting enough to water your plants, it's getting you in that frugal, thinking-outside-the-box way that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Learn to Make Your Own Cheese, Butter, or Ice Cream

Have you ever had homemade ice cream? If not, you've been deprived of a glorious treat. We used to make it when I was a kid. Mom would make it, then the kids would take turns cranking the bucket. And oh-my-goodness was it amazing! You can also [make butter](#) in a jar, and you can make several different kinds of [cheeses](#) in no time at all. And you'll have the skill if you need it.

Use a Clothesline

This is probably the easiest step to take toward self-sufficiency. I have to admit that I'm not a fan of line-dried towels, but there's no reason that you can't hang your jeans and t-shirts to dry. And you'll save quite a bit on your electric bill, too. After all, even a few bucks saved is a few bucks, right?

Be Thrifty

This doesn't mean be cheap, but it does mean to watch your pennies. Check sales catalogues, use coupons if you'd like, and don't spend money that you don't have. It's always good to have a rainy-day fund rather than a huge barrel of debt. Also, fix things instead of throwing them away if you can, and cut off your old jeans for cute shorts this year instead of blowing money you may not have on new ones. There are a million ways to save money; again, it's all about building the mindset.

Reuse and repurpose everything that you can. Turn that old sweater into a pillow case. Use the cottage cheese tubs as planters. Look at something and imagine what you can turn it into. That's a self-sufficient way to think.

Get out of Debt, then Avoid It

You'll never be self-sufficient if you're in debt to your eyeballs. Develop a plan to get out of debt as much as possible, then live within your means to stay that way.

Make Your own Soap and Hygiene Products

This is a fun project that I've written about elsewhere. The upsides to making your own soap,

[toothpaste](#), lotions, and deodorant is that you know what's in your products, you know how to make them if you ever have to, and you aren't dependent on the store for it.

Learn CPR and First Aid

There are many classes taught, but the Red Cross offers the most common classes. You'll learn how to carry people, make splints, treat wounds, and perform resuscitation. This is never a bad skill to have, survival or not. Heck, there could be a car wreck or a kid in the neighborhood could wreck his skateboard. You'll know how to handle the scene.

Overcome Addictions

Nothing says dependent like, well, dependency. Smoking and chewing are the two biggest ones that pop into my head, but there's a huge opioid crisis in our country right now, too. Kick what habits you can on your own, and get help for the others. If SHTF, or if you ever want to be able to live a completely self-sufficient life, you're never going to be able to do it if you have an addiction.

Get Healthy

And the final step on the list – get healthy. Eat right, exercise, meditate. A healthy mind and body are required to be self-sufficient. By treating your body well, you'll be better prepared to survive in an emergency, and you may also be able to get off of many of the medications that you're currently on, such as blood pressure meds, insulin, or even pain meds. If you lose weight and have strong muscles, many of your problems will go away.

So, what's the take-away? Self-sufficiency is, first and foremost, a state of mind. Once you learn how to think like somebody used to solving their own problems, you'll become a person who can solve your own problems. It's as easy (or as difficult) as that.

If you have any other tips to becoming self-sufficient, please share them with us in the comments section below. Also, check out my book, [Forgotten Lessons of Yesterday](#), to get more information and instructions on many of the skills that we've just discussed as well as recipes.

This article has been written by Theresa Crouse for Survivopedia.

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