

# Turn Your Cellar Into A Survival Shelter In 10 Steps

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Modern threats continue to evolve, so it isn't enough to simply store some food in your basement and hope that it will be enough to get you through the worst days of a disaster.

From nuclear contamination to massive epidemics caused by biowarfare agents, having a safe place to hide should be your primary concern. You might already have the best spot for this purpose, so you'll need to put in a good bit of effort to turn your cellar into a survival shelter.

While these below ground rooms have many advantages, they can make your survival worse if not prepared with modern threats in mind.

Keep reading to find out how to make it fit for your survival needs!

## Make Sure the Cellar is Sound



Before moving anything into the cellar or preparing it for survival needs, make sure that the basic structure is sound: the foundation is secure, and the ceiling and overhead structures will not give way.

Also, make sure the cellar is as free of dampness as possible.

Simply using Damp Rid or other moisture controllers may work for routine needs, but will not be of much help in a survival situation. You might spend weeks, or even months in the cellar, so you constantly need to try and manage dampness.

The cellar should also be [free of mold, mildew, algae](#), and other signs of unwanted microorganisms, as their presence show the cellar is not fit to live in on long term. Mold can release toxic spores into the air and create numerous health risks.

If the cellar is not sound, and costs too much to repair, you better start a new one by digging out an underground bunker, then consider adding a tunnel that goes from the basement to the bunker. Aside from being cheaper, an underground bunker system is also much easier to expand as you build up your stockpile and think of new things to be included in your survival plans.

### [How To Build a Small Bunker in Your Backyard with \\$400](#)

## Manage Air Quality

One of the most important, yet overlooked parts of preparing a basement for survival revolves around ensuring air quality. Make sure that the cellar is air tight, because any air leaks can pose a serious hazard from nuclear fallout as well as infectious diseases and toxic gasses.

Once you are sure that the cellar is airtight, make sure that you can purify the air and restore oxygen to it. Use certain houseplants as well as air purifiers that are designed to release oxygen into the air.

Remember, most medical [oxygen concentrators](#) will not actually produce oxygen. Instead, they take air in, and simply let out more oxygen than other elements. If there is not enough oxygen in the air to begin with, these concentrators will be virtually useless.

You can still try keeping a few oxygen cylinders in the cellar, however they will not last more than a few hours.

Managing air quality must also include removing other toxins from the air. This includes exhaust fumes and anything else that may come in from the outside.

[Activated carbon](#) filters will offer the best means for cleaning the air. Do not forget, however, these filters must be replaced often to ensure a clean air supply. You should know how to make your own activated carbon, or reuse spent carbon, and then develop your own air filters.

## Check Incoming Water Resource

Next to clean air, a reliable source of water is necessary. Don't rely only on municipal or well water access in your cellar if a major social collapse occurs.

If you have municipal water, see if you can dig even [a shallow well](#) in the basement or nearby, and use hand pumps to move the water into the cellar. These pumps can be made from PVC, or you can purchase a metal pump that can pull water from further depths.

Don't overlook the moisture already in the air, or any that may become available during living in the cellar. For example, as you can use fans and desiccants to concentrate water into a bucket, and then collect the evaporated water into a clean container.

You can also use a similar method to retrieve water from urine and any leftover water from cooking and washing. This is especially important if you have a small cellar and limited amounts of room for storing water or equipment that could be used to purify it.

## Stay Safe with Food Storage

Technically speaking, you can get by for several days without food, as long as you have safe water to drink. If you were [contaminated with nuclear radiation](#) or have some other injury to deal with, nutritious food is going to be very important, especially in the first few days after a major crisis occurs.

This is just one of many reasons why you should store at least 2 – 4 weeks of food in the cellar. If you are short on space, try to store away MREs or other meals that are nutrient dense and require very little in the way of preparation.

When it comes to food storage, think well ahead to a time when you'll begin putting your life back together, because once you emerge out of the cellar, there will be no food available.

Even if you are fortunate enough to find a safe place to hunt and fish, you'll still need to grow edibles for medicinal and food purposes. Store away a cache of heirloom seeds from as many plants as possible as well as instructions on how to grow them in conventional gardens, hydroponics arrangements, and indoors.

## Plan Your Food Production

Not so long ago, sheltering in place for about 2 weeks would get you through most disasters. Today, bioweapons, larger numbers of people, and other problems may mean that you will need to stay in the cellar much longer.

When room and funds are limited, your next best option is to secure the means of growing sufficient amounts of food in the basement itself.

Here are three ways to produce biomass:

### Sprouts

Basically you will be letting seeds from certain plants germinate, and then eat the sprouts when they are just a few days old. Choose plants that produce large numbers of seeds from a single plant (such as mustard), or large plants from a single seed (beans).

You will also need to be able to grow some plants to full maturity to produce enough seeds to consume. Since sprouts can produce several pounds of biomass from less than ¼ pound of seeds, it is well worth your while to explore this option.

### Insect farms

Hundreds of ants, crickets, grubs, and other insects can be raised easily in shoe boxes and other small habitats. They can also live on kitchen scraps, or just about anything else depending on the insect species.

If the thought of consuming insects is troublesome, bear in mind that you are probably consuming almost a pound of insects a year from conventional food sources without realizing it. Insects easily get caught up in food production and processing machinery and find their way into the food supply.

To get started with consuming insects, grind them up into flour or something else that removes the

visual effects of the insect it came from.

## Mushrooms

These fungi easily grow in dark, cool, damp places. You can purchase mushroom kits with pre-seeded spores, as well as learn how to cultivate successive generations from those kits. You will need to practice mushroom growing skills, as it can be a bit dangerous to handle the spores.

[Inexpensive, Easy to Build Cellar Will Protect Your Life and Supplies in the Next Crisis](#)

## Mind About Hygiene and Sanitation

One of the best additions you can make to your cellar is a composting toilet. This will make it possible to manage waste and recycle it for growing mushrooms or other edibles. Make sure that you research on the safety of these toilets, and how to manage them, because human waste carries many dangerous diseases and should be managed with care.

Make sure that you can wash clothes and keep your body as clean as possible while living in the cellar. Antibacterial wet wipes do not take up much room, so you should be able to store away enough of them to last for several months.

Insofar as washing clothes, you can use a 5-gallon bucket with a plunger agitator, or make a scrub bag with a washboard.

## Insulate for Temperature Control

If you made the cellar airtight, then temperature control shouldn't be very hard to do. Add extra insulation (sandbags work well and serve a second purpose of preventing bullet ricochets) to all the walls, floor, and ceiling, to help sound proof the cellar.

As the days and weeks go by, any people left above ground will be looking for food, water, and a safe shelter. If they hear sounds of life coming from your cellar, rest assured they will try to get in to see if there is anything of value. Never underestimate the determination or lack of integrity of panicking people that may form into loose bands of rioters or looters.

You will also need to prevent smoke or other signs of life from escaping out into the air around the cellar. Make sure that vents used for burning fuel are directed underground and in ways that they do not reach the surface near the cellar.

Unfortunately, this ventilation will be a necessary evil because you will already be in a closed space with a limited air supply. Even if you have carbon filters going around the clock to clean out toxins from the air, it may not be enough to keep up with fumes from burning various fuels. Try to see if you can use the heat from compost piles or other passive heating methods to heat the cellar.

Insofar as cooling, your quietest and safest options will revolve around 5-gallon bucket "air conditioners" and similar devices that require a minimal amount of electricity. You can also experiment with gravity fans or other devices that will run on mechanical energy instead of electricity.

## Prepare Multiple Exits

Right now, you may not care much that there is only one way in and out of the cellar, but it could be a disaster in a time of need, especially if the cellar door is easily visible to others. If the cellar door is located inside the house, looters and others that break in can also find it and trap you where you are. These are just a few reasons why you need at least one secret exit out of the basement.

Cost wise, this may be one of the more expensive elements of converting your basement into a survival shelter. Among other things, you may need to drill through the floor to reach ground that can be dug out for a tunnel.

You'll also need to fortify the tunnel so that the house doesn't collapse. Ideally, the tunnel should come up somewhere along the boundary of your property, or some other area where you can come up to ground level without being seen. Disguise the entrance with shrubs, noxious plants such as poison ivy, or something else that others will avoid at all cost.



Climbing Rose



Pyracantha



Bougainvillea

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## Defend Your Survival Cellar

No matter how hard you try, rioters or other bad people might discover your hiding place. You can use crossbows and develop zones of fire that will help you stave off attackers.

Depending on the size of the basement and the way it is set up, some guns types will be better than others. You'll need a weapon that has suitable stopping power without tearing up the walls or other items stored in the cellar.

There are also ways to build trip wire alarm systems that will let you know if someone above ground has gotten too close to your shelter, or you can use your secret exit to get to ground level, and then do what is needed to solve the problem.

## Don't Skip Power and Communications

While taking up refuge in your cellar, finding out what is going on in the rest of the world is crucial. Crank radios can be of use, as can foxhole radios and small battery powered devices.



Limit power needs and devices to units that require the least amount of voltage and have rechargeable batteries. You won't be able to use solar or wind power generation options, but don't overlook bicycle generators, magnetic engines, and other devices that can be used to recharge batteries.

In fact, if there is one appliance that you should buy for your cellar, I would recommend a bicycle generator. Aside from producing a reasonable amount of electricity, it will help you stay in shape. Within just a few days of being in the basement, you will need the exercise if you expect to remain in any semblance of good condition.

Depending on the nature of the disaster, you may or may not want to reach out to others around you. It would still be a good idea to keep some basic tools nearby for this purpose. Banging on metal pipes will easily draw attention to your area, as will smoke signals.

Finally, if you can get above ground and want to reach a specific person, think about using a bullroarer. Make sure the person you are trying to contact knows to listen for your signal, and how to interpret the sounds.

Even as I write this, news is emerging that North Korea may be just as likely to use bioweapons as nuclear warheads. There are also many other disasters, both natural and manmade that may require retreating to a hardened shelter. In this case, your cellar is the perfect place to modify for this purpose! Be smart when planning your actions to survive disasters that are about to come!



## US Nuclear Target Map. Do You Live In The Death Zone?

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