

10 Essentials For Surviving In The Wilderness At Night

You are convinced that it could never happen to you, don't you?

But there is no escaping the fact that you might be stuck out in the wilderness at night.

If you have no experience with camping, or have spent little time in the woods, this can be a frightening and dangerous experience.

Even if you are completely alone, knowing how to do these ten things can keep you safe and in good condition.

If you ever have to survive some sort of disaster and decide to stay in a wooded area, you will be much closer to being able to stay in this setting for weeks, or even months if needed.

Be Mentally and Emotionally Prepared

You emotional and mental preparedness for surviving in the wild should start before you find yourself in the woods and have to face the experience.

Remember, nature is not your enemy. The woods and its inhabitants usually kill or maim only in the course of trying to survive, defend themselves from predators, and raise their young. As long as you do not interfere, you can live comfortably in the woods regardless of the time of day.

If you are reading this and know nothing of living in or traveling through the wilderness, start learning from now.

Read articles, go camping with experienced groups of people, and do all you can to gather factual and accurate information on how to live in the woods and understand its inhabitants.

The more you know about living in these conditions, the less you will fear them. The less fear you have, the easier it will be to go about taking care of basic needs if you must stay in a wilderness setting at night.

Maintain Appropriate Body Temperature

As with any other place, temperatures are apt to drop at night. If you did not bring extra clothing, or the right kinds of clothes, you will need to find [some other way to keep warm](#). Here are a few things that can save you:

Plastic Bags

Always keep a construction grade plastic bag with you, it will be large enough to line with leaves or other insulating material to sleep in.

Remember to leave some room open even around your body so that sweat evaporates properly and air continues to circulate around your skin. In extreme cold temperatures, moisture near your skin can cause your core temperature to drop to dangerous levels.

Build a Fire

Learn how to build a fire safely and effectively, including how to build a fire in the rain. Pack a tea light, and remember to search for pine cones. Both will make excellent tinder material.

Don't forget to bring along a fire starter such as waterproof matches or some other type of fire starter that you feel

comfortable with.

Cover Yourself with Leaves

As long as the leaves aren't damp and are free of bugs, mold, and mildew, they will keep you warmer than not covering with anything at all.

Find and Purify Water to Stay Hydrated

Maybe you aren't lost, and still expect to arrive back in a populated area in a few hours. Even though you may not think much about water, it is still need it on hand and to stay hydrated all the time.

When you are stressed out, engaging in more intense physical activities, or dealing with increased temperature changes, your body will release more sweat, and also use more water for other vital processes.

So you need clean water on hand and use it when you are trying to survive in the wilderness especially if overnight. Ideally, you should be able to purify at least $\frac{1}{2}$ to one gallon of water for your overnight needs.

Here are some things you can keep with you as well as skills to develop:

- Know how to capture water from leaves, earth, and rainfall.
- Keep a long tube sock, bone char, some sand, and activated carbon in your travel gear at all times. You can use them to make a filter to remove chemical contaminants and debris from the water. It is also important to have some kind of vessel to boil the water in so that you can kill off any pathogens that may be in the water.

- There are also filtering water straws available that come with a complete water cleaning system. Just make sure you drink through the straws, and you will have clean water.
- Carry water purifying tablets. Be sure to always know the limitations of these tablets so that you can use other systems if needed.
- Learn how to make charcoal and bone char.
- Contrary to popular belief, boiling water alone will not produce clean water. It will only concentrate heavy metals and other poisons, making the water more dangerous to drink. If you are concerned about removing pathogens from the water, it is better to put the water in a clear plastic bottle and let it sit in the sun for a few hours. UV from the sun will kill the pathogens without causing water to evaporate.

Obtain Food

You might be too stressed to eat, but it have to know how to get food in the wilderness during the night hours. Since many animals are more active at night, you can try hunting them, or set traps.

If you happen to be near a pond, you can set traps for fish, or try to hunt for frogs.

When hunting at night, always be aware that the animals you are hunting may also be prey for another animal in the woods. That animal, in turn, may decide you are competition and hunt you instead.

Before you go into any wilderness setting, always know how the local food chain works so that you can steer clear of predators and still take the game you need for survival.

As with any other time of day, lichens, moss, berries, and fruit will still be available. Learn the Universal edibility

test, and practice using it so that you can avoid being poisoned.

If you decide to carry food with you, choose high calorie items that do not require heating. You can also bring along a few ready to eat meals that come with warming packets if you want a more complete meal. Even if you only have enough packets to last for two or three days, it will be enough until you are able to gather food on your own.

Shelter From Storms, Wind, and Other Bad Weather

Aside from being colder, you may also wind up dealing with rain, wind, or other weather elements that you will not want to be out in.

As long as you have a knife (or a sharp edge on a rock) branches, vines (or long stemmed plants), leaves available you can make a shelter that will keep you dry and warm.

Here are some other things you can try:

Look for a Cave

Caves offer plenty of protection, however they are also likely to be dens for bats, bears, and other animals that won't want you spending the night with them.

If you do decide to spend the night in a cave, make sure you check all passages and all areas of the cave to make sure you aren't taking up space in another animal's territory. This includes snakes, spiders, and other animals that can hide easily under rocks and in shaded areas that you might overlook.

Dig a Hole in the Ground

Dig a small hole or depression in the ground, and then put leaves over it. Try to build up the sides a bit to prevent rain from flowing in. This makeshift shelter will not last more than a few hours, but it will get you through the night.

Tree Trunk Protection

Look for a hollow in a tree trunk, or at the base of an uprooted tree. These areas will shelter you from the wind and rain, depending on the direction it is coming from.

As with caves, make sure there are no animals and insects already living there that might cause you problems. In this case, you would be looking for squirrels, raccoon, snakes, and biting insects known to live in or near rotting wood or in tree trunks.



17 BASIC WILDERNESS SURVIVAL SKILLS

Everyone Should Know

Finding & Purifying Water:

Boiling water is the easiest method to purify water. To clean out the sediments simply use a cloth or bag with some gravel and sand.



Finding Food:

Finding edible plants to eat might be the easiest way to get food into your body. It's important to know which plants are safe and which aren't because some are extremely toxic.



Navigating:

The Compass is an important tool to carry with you, if you don't have one you can create one or use the sun/stars to navigate your way out.



Knot Tying:

Being able to tie a knot is a super handy skill to have. You may need to repair something, build something, or hold something up.



Mental Attitude:

Mental attitude is essential for survival. Try and maintain calm. Take some deep breaths. Assess the situation. Believe in yourself. And get to work.



Basics of Food Preservation:

Always take the weather into consideration. If it's extremely windy, you want to set up behind some trees or boulders to help block the wind. If it's snowy, you may want to dig down into the snow to create some insulation.



Forecasting Weather:

Learning to forecast weather will give you enough time to take appropriate action. Clouds will give you a good cue to what the weather will be doing.



Basics of Clothing Repair:

Knowing a few basic sewing skills will help you sew and repair clothing, shelter and shoes. Allowing you to use these items for a longer time.



Staying Warm in Winter:

You can create a survival fire bed to keep you warm and provide a good night's sleep on a cold night.



Starting a Fire:

The simplest way to start a fire is with sticks. Three of the most common ways are the Hand Drill, Bow Drill and Fire Plow.



Building a Shelter:

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Basics of First Aid Treatment:

Some issues that you could come across are burns, scrapes, punctures, fractures, sprains, dehydration, stings, and infinitum.



Sending a Survival Signal:

A few different helpful signals are a whistle, a fire, smoke, a mirror, or a flashlight.



Locating a Good Campsite:

Always take the weather into consideration. If it's extremely windy, you want to set up behind some trees or boulders to help block the wind. If it's snowy, you may want to dig down into the snow to create some insulation.



Make your Own Rope:

You can use rope for repairs, for fishing, for snares, for lashing, for first aid use and for securing different things. There are a variety of ways to create rope. Some of them are: bark, sinew from animals (tendons), the hem of your pants, dogbane, milkweed plants and tall grasses



Basic Hunting Skills:

Knowing a few basic hunting skills will increase your odds of actually succeeding in obtaining some food.



Creating Hunting Tools and Weapons:

Hunting tools and weapons can come in handy in all sorts of situations related to food gathering, safety, construction, and destruction.



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Discourage Predatory Animals and Prevent Insect Bites

For the most part, if you know how to build a fire and can keep it going through the night, predatory animals will stay away from you.

On the other side the equation, many insects are drawn to light, and will gravitate to the fire. You will need to experiment to find the best distance from the fire to avoid falling outside its light, be close enough to stay warm, and still not be swarmed by insects (that will be killed off eventually by the flames).

Insofar as discouraging predatory animals, you will need to know which ones are usually in the area, and also how best to deter them if they appear. Some animals may run away if you yell, while others may decide to attack. A good understanding of animal psychology is essential.

In order to prevent insect bites at night, your best option will be to wear long sleeved shirts and pants. Make sure that all cuffs are sealed off with rubber bands and that the hems of your pants are also tucked into your socks.

To protect your face and neck from insect bites, take a wide brimmed hat and attach some fine webbed fabric over it. Let the fabric drape down to just below your neck, and then make sure it seals to your shirt. Do not put the fabric too close to your face or neck, or the insects will just find a way to bite through it.

Manage Hygiene and Sanitation

Even though you can washing your hands and face with wet wipes, it never hurts to carry a small bar of lye soap and some towels with you.

In particular, if you are spending the night in the woods because of a nuclear disaster, you will need the lye soap for washing off any dust or debris from your skin.

[Managing sanitation](#) is also very important because predators can find your urine and stool even if you bury them. Make sure you stay away from areas where water and food are likely to be found, as predators will check there first for prey.

Take Care of Routine and Emergency Medical Needs

Even if you don't have any injuries, or don't feel sick, it is still important to know what to do and have some tools on hand. Here are some things you should carry and skills you should learn:

- know the signs of food poisoning or allergy. Keep Benadryl with you and an epi pen. If you suspect you ate something poisonous, make sure you know how to vomit it back out if it is still in your stomach, or use activated charcoal to try and absorb it and move it out of your system.
- Always know how to make a tourniquet, splints, and wraps for joint support.
- Keep essential oils, herbs, and at least a week's supply of any medications you may be taking onhand. It also never hurts to know what plants in the woods might be useful for taking the place of your medications if the need arises.
- Know how to perform the Heimlich maneuver on yourself, just in case you are alone and swallow something the wrong way.
- Understand water safety and know how to build a flotation device so that you don't wind up drowning.

Be Able to Signal for Help

If you were traveling, got lost, and left travel plans, there is a chance searchers will be looking for you. Depending on the weather conditions, rescuers may or may not try to look for you at night. If you built a fire (use a triangle shape), knowing how to create a smoke signal may be of some help.

In addition, if you happen to hear a random chopper overhead, you can try to get their attention with the fire, a flashlight, red laser, or flares if you have them.

Remain Concealed if Needed

During a state of emergency or some kind of major social disruption, you may decide that you'd prefer to avoid the attention of rioters or anyone else that could hurt you. Under these circumstances, building a fire for any reasons is not likely to be an option.

By the same token, sheltering on the ground is also apt to be a problem. Try concealing yourself in a tree or some other location where people aren't likely to look. If you must stay on the ground, make it a point to cover yourself with leaves or stay in a bunch of brambles so that you are harder to see.

Here are some other things to consider:

- know how to stay perfectly quiet. People pursuing you may have dogs or other tracking animals trained to pick up on even the slightest sound that you make.
- Tracking animals can also pick up on your scent. Never pick a place to rest near where you have buried waste, eaten, or carried out some other task.
- Learn how to use backtracks and other tricks to ensure an animal following your scent cannot pick up your trail.
- People tracking you may also use thermal profile systems

or metal finders to locate you and anything you are carrying. It is very important to know how to break up your thermal profile. Try to avoid lumping all metal objects together in your camping gear, or carry as few metallic objects as possible to keep avoid being detected.

Much of surviving in the wilderness at night is about common sense. You will still need some basic tools such as a knife, fire starting gear, heavy plastic bags, and drinking water bottles to make things a bit easier.

As with anything else, even if you start off with a few tools that you know how to use, and then build on your skill and knowledge levels, it will be easier to spend a night in the wilderness, and come to enjoy the experience as many hikers and campers do.

*This article has been written by **Carmela Tyrell** for Survivopedia.*