

How Not To Die If You're Lost In The Woods

Imagine this: you are enjoying your camping, hunting or even skiing trip, and then you get lost.

While it rarely happens, getting lost in the woods is deadly. Many of the stories we hear are of people that were found, which means that tracing your way back is challenging. The worst part is that most cell phones don't pick up signals during such moments. So, how do you survive such turmoil?



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1. Stay put

The funny thing is that sometimes people think they are lost while they aren't. The confusion results from panicking. Whether you are

stranded in a barren desert, dense jungle or a snowy mountain, stay where you

are. There is a chance that you are only a few meters from your original path.

However, when you start walking around, you get lost further in the thicket.

Rather than walking several miles more in-depth into the wilderness, try

getting assistance from where you are standing.

2. Use the STOP method

Now that you are staying put, the next step is to remember the STOP mnemonic for survival. It stands for:

Stop – Find a

place to sit and take long, deep breaths. Calm down and avoid panic because it is your biggest enemy.

Think – Figure

out what you know about the location and situation. As you were travelling, were there twists and turns? Did you pass by a place where there were other people? Even the smallest bit of information is helpful.

Observe – Do you

have a compass or a map? Is there any way of figuring out your location? Can you see any landmarks or footprints? At this point, your best bet is to find any clue that can lead you to your first pathway.

Plan – Consider

all your options and select one. You may continue on the path or turn back to your initial trail.

If you are confused and can't figure out which path you should follow, here are additional tips for you:

3. Take an inventory of your resources

Know what you have and how you can use it. Don't take anything you packed for granted because you might need it. For

instance, what snacks or foods do you have and how long can they last you? Check your first aid kit and know if you carried any medication and bandages. In case you are sick or injured, the package will help you get through the distress.

4. Make a shelter

The weather conditions of the place where you get lost will determine whether you will build a shelter or not. If they are harsh, such as rainy, scorching or snowy, you ought to make a temporary place to protect yourself from these elements. That is why it is advisable to have a pocket knife [handy in your belt](#). Use it to cut some shrubs that you can use to support the tent. In case you didn't bring a tent, look for any materials in your surroundings that you can use. If animals are a concern, climb on a tree. Try getting halfway up peaks because cold air resides below valleys and winds are strongest there.

5. Be on the lookout for signs of people

After pitching your shelter or as you travel through the woods, be observant. Scan the area periodically for any signs of human activity. Check for cut tree stamps, food wrappers, water bottles, old campsites, or any other litter. In case you find any proof,

look around and trace the direction they followed. You might be close to a trail that will lead you out, or a hunting camp that will provide emergency shelter.

6. Stay hydrated

Even the strongest, healthiest or fittest person cannot last more than three days without taking water. Therefore, ensuring that you have enough water should be a priority. If you packed enough for the trip, you would be safe. In case you are stranded for prolonged periods, you may have to look for a source of drinking water in the woods. However, don't drink snow or ice.

9 SIGNS

THAT YOU'RE NOT DRINKING

Enough Water

- Your eyes feel dry
- Your urine is dark yellow or brown in color
- Your skin doesn't bounce back
- Your muscles are cramping
- You have headaches or experience disorientation
- You feel tired, confused, or angry
- You have dry skin
- You aren't sweating
- You experience constipation
- You lack energy

7. Build a fire

You don't have to go through Girl or Boy Scout training to know how to start a fire. All you ought to do is to research online and practice. Remember that fire is both a friend and an enemy. Therefore, be keen on starting a decent fire that won't spread through the forest. If you have pieces of paper, use it for kindling the flames alongside some dry twigs. Use matches to start the fire or anything else that causes massive friction. Then, add some green matter to produce a dense, white smoke that will draw attention.

8. Stick to open space if possible

Trailing through a free country increases your chances of locating civilization. Such terrains usually result from logging or farming, which puts you closer to other people. Also, being in the open makes it easier for you to be spotted by low-flying aircraft. Ensure that you have something to signal for help, such as brightly colored clothes or a shiny mirror. In case an open plane spots you, and the pilot is unable to land, they can radio your position. So, stay put, and if you must move, leave some branches to trail your movement.

9. Stay warm

Hypothermia is one of your biggest enemies when you are [lost](#)

[in the wild](#). Summer months are no exception because even then, the temperatures drop considerably when the sun goes down. Stay alert for any numbness or tingling in your limbs. When packing for an outdoor trip, bring heavy clothing. Building a fire, as explained earlier, will also help in keeping you warm.

Getting lost in the wilderness is not a fun experience, but you can avoid it. Be prepared with everything before heading out for a hike, hunting, camping or any other outdoor activity. Regardless of how long you are planning to stay out, pack all the essential items because anything could go wrong. At the minimum, bring a pocket knife, handheld GPS, blanket, map, compass, first aid kit, and enough water and food.



Discover The 8 Pillars of Special Forces Wilderness Survival by Special Forces Veteran Brian Morris

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