

# How to save money on your survival gear

Over the past ten years, I've managed to gather a lot of survival gear and various items that I consider useful for my survival preps. However, I, like many other good folks out there, often get caught up in the culture of consumerism. We often believe that we need the newest and most badass gear because only so will we be successful in our quest for survival.

Sometimes we wrongfully associate the latest equipment with progress and success, and we believe it will help us achieve our goals faster and with greater ease. However, this mindset is often too costly to bear in the long run, and we have to realize that we don't need to throw a lot of money on things that we most probably don't need in the first place.

Last year I took a step back and looked at the things I managed to amass over time, and I realized that I'm far from being a frugal person like my parents and grandparents used to be. Growing up, my family didn't have a lot of money, and they had to be resourceful and make the most of what they had.

Reflecting on these experiences, I began to question the notion that success and happiness are tied to material possessions, even in the prepping world. Those that have fewer possessions and a limited budget aren't at much of a disadvantage. In fact, they usually are able to live a self-reliant and fulfilling life, using their ingenuity and resourcefulness to overcome various challenges and achieve their goals.

I can say that looking back at my family's history was a wake-up call for me, and it helped me reevaluate my priorities and values. I realized that our obsession with the latest and

newest items, regardless of their use in our daily lives, is a symptom of a modern disease created by a culture that values consumerism and materialism over frugality and resourcefulness.

I decided it was time to find a cure for this disease, and I eventually learned and figured out that I didn't need the latest and most specialized gear to be successful. I can live perfectly fine and make do with what I already have.

Now don't get me wrong, I do occasionally buy the gear and stuff I need, but I've learned to be frugal when it comes to my prepping acquisitions.

## **Learn from our ancestors**

When I was younger, I had trouble understanding why my parents and grandparents were holding on to pretty much everything, and they collected all sorts of items that, in my eyes, were nothing but junk. In today's terms, they would be labeled as hoarders, but back then holding on to things wasn't a mental disease as it is classified today and was mainly a way of surviving scarcity and being resourceful.

Their homes were cluttered with things that I considered useless, and I couldn't understand why they didn't just get rid of them. However, with the passing of time, I've learned from their stories how life put them to the test and how they were forced to make do with the limited resources they had. In fact, back then, waste was not waste until it could no longer be reused. They would look at certain items and figure out the potential in those items and establish how they can be reused or repurposed so that they don't end up in the trash can.

In contrast, my generation and the younger generations tend to emphasize minimalism, and they are educated (or, better said, programmed) to declutter their lives. We are now encouraged to throw out things that are not reusable, and the whole idea of

reusing and repurposing is frowned upon since it keeps you from buying and consuming more products.

People are quick to get rid of stuff, and they fail to see the value of the things they send to the landfill. However, I have come to realize that there is value in holding onto items that may seem useless at first glance, and to my surprise, more and more people realize the same thing. With a little creativity and resourcefulness, many items can be repurposed or reused in unexpected ways.

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in repurposing items among young people thanks to the DIY movement and crafting arts. Others are motivated by environmental concerns and a desire to reduce their carbon footprint. And lastly, there are those that reuse and repurpose, driven by economic reasons. It seems that with shortages and high prices for many goods, those living paycheck to paycheck are forced to embrace this mindset and make do with what they have to save money.



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## Do you really need it?

Before you decide to purchase the new gear, you should always ask yourself the only question that influences your buying decision: "Do I really need it?"

This simple question will enforce an auto-examination process of your current needs, and if you manage to control your impulses, it will help you avoid unnecessary expenses. It's rather easy to fall in love with the mirage and excitement of

the latest and greatest gadgets nowadays because new things are constantly popping up on the market. However, taking a step back to assess whether you truly need something can save you money in the long run.

Do you think that hunters and foragers back in the day used to go into the woods with new clothes and gear to have a fruitful outing? No, all they needed was their basic gear and clothing, and they didn't need camo patterns and all sorts of gadgets like those that so many people use today. Similarly, going hiking used to be a simple affair, without the need for GPS devices, Gore-tex fabrics, and all sorts of walking aids. I believe we can learn from our ancestors, and we should reconsider what is really necessary to bring along or acquire to be able to enjoy our favorite activities.

Always think about your individual needs and leave preferences aside when making purchasing decisions. If you need a new survival knife, look at the blade, the material it is made from, and other factors that will influence the utility of the knife. You will probably like a knife with an epoxy handle with a honeycomb pattern, but do you really need it? Does it bring extra value to the knife, or is it just a design feature that will satisfy your impulsive needs?

Ultimately, taking the time to evaluate your needs before making a purchase can help you save money and make more thoughtful decisions. By focusing on what you truly need, you can ensure that your purchases align with your values and priorities.

## **Finding new bargains**

If you are new to the prepping world and if you have decided you need to prepare for a certain disaster scenario, you will notice that there are a lot of things to consider, and you will oftentimes be intimidated by the costs associated with this "lifestyle". However, there are ways to save money and

make things easier for yourself and, at the same time, keep the spouse happy. There are all sorts of bargains out there, and you just need to find them.

But before you jump right into it, there are a few things you need to acknowledge and follow to the letter. If you do so, not only will you put your hard earned money to good use, but you will also save some for later purchases.

First of all, don't cut corners when you don't have to, and remember that quality is key in certain areas. For example, buying tools and machinery is one such area in which you need to pay attention because buying cheap or broken not only it's a waste of money, but it can also lead to injuries and failure to function when you need them the most.

Second, always haggle and never settle on the price you see unless you desperately need that item. While in some shops it may be difficult to haggle, you need to remember that there is no loss in trying, and if you don't manage to get the price you want, perhaps you can wait for the sale periods and use your budget wisely. When it comes to garage sales and other such locations, haggling is the only way to go, and you need to put in the effort to get a good deal.

And lastly, shop around. Most people, regardless of what they intend on purchasing, will often settle on the first "offer" they see since it seems it's exactly what they need, and they don't have the time or patience to look around. I can tell you from experience that the item you need may be cheaper elsewhere, and you're not missing out if you shop around.

## Trading

Take advantage of social media and the internet to find trading groups if you need to get new/old stuff for your preps. There are various forums or social media groups where you can post stuff for trade and ask for the stuff you need in

return. I've used Facebook groups and Craigslist for this purpose successfully, and I always check these online resources when I need to get something, regardless if it's for my prepping needs or other purposes.

If you want to trade your stuff and get a good deal, keep in mind that there's a learning curve to it, and you need to be careful when doing so; otherwise, you end up being screwed. I've often traded stuff and given some extra cash for the items I needed, but I made sure it was worth it. Once again, haggling is the way to go, and you need to be realistic about your expectations and requests.

## **Buy used**

Buying used is a great way to save money on items that are otherwise expensive. For me personally, this is oftentimes the golden rule when buying stuff that is considered expensive. For example, so far in my life, I've only once bought a new car, and it was mostly because my wife convinced me to do so. Yeah, you guessed it, it was her car. All my cars were bought used, and I consider my purchases to be smart financial decisions. You can find a good deal regardless if you buy a car, a firearm, or a home theater system, and personally, when it comes to other "cheaper" items, I'm not afraid to buy used or "open box" items, even if they may have a few cosmetic blemishes.

When it comes to firearms, this is an area where buying used can be a smart decision. I often look for used name-brand guns, and so far, luck worked in my favor. However, with firearms, it's always important to prioritize reliability and quality over appearance. When I'm in doubt, I ask for opinions, and I have a close friend, somewhat of a firearms expert, who is always eager and willing to help. Sometimes I get discouraged by scratches and wear signs, but he always manages to look past these small "defects" and point me in the

right direction.

## Garage sale treasures

Garage sales are and will remain my preferred shopping destination since I often find useful items at affordable prices. And I'm not talking here about clothes or toys for my daughter or my nephews, but rather about gear and items that can be used for my activities or daily needs. With a little time and patience, you can find some real gems.

My preferred money-saving methods are finding items that can be resorted or items that serve multiple purposes. For example, I had a phase in which I was mainly looking for and buying used cast iron cookware that I would, later on, restore and sell or gift to friends and families on various occasions. A great find was a collapsible bucket that I use for carrying water or the edibles I gather during my outings which can also be used as a cooking pot because it's made from fire-resistant silicone/rubber.

Another great find at garage sales is camping equipment, and I, for one, manage to get my fill, sort of speak, when it comes to such gear. If you enjoy spending time in the great outdoors, look for tents, sleeping bags, and backpacks since you can find great items for a fraction of the cost. Some items may have signs of wear and tear, but even so, they will be serviceable for years to come. The golden rule when it comes to buying camping gear is to carefully inspect zippers and seams to make sure they are still in good condition.

## Buy the "trash"!

Some people will give away stuff that can be fixed, reused, or repurposed with ease. These folks will often post on various social media groups asking for help to get rid of their "trash". If you think you can reuse their trash, you can help them get rid of it, and you will make two people happy.

The problem with getting the stuff given or thrown away is that you need to be able to figure out if you can reuse it. In most cases doing so requires some repairing, and without the proper skills, you will just end up changing the storage room for the item you've got. Perhaps you know people that can fix the item, or you could repurpose it without spending too much time or money on it.

I've had good luck with other people's trash, and I've made some good "purchases". My father called me one day and told me that his neighbor died recently, and his children are "cleaning" the house and selling everything he's got. I came by and looked at the items they put up for sale and the ones they were throwing away and got a grill and a busted hydraulic log splitter that I later fixed. My wife, however, scored big that day because she got canning jars and various kitchen utensils for free and also a lot of vinyl records she later sold on eBay.

## **A final word**

Being frugal is now more important than ever since the rising costs of products and services seem neverending. If you are a prepper or survivalist, this mindset should be the norm because some of your family's budget is going towards your preps, and there's no room for mistakes when money is tight.

As you've seen in this article, there are still ways to be frugal. If you start shopping around and if you manage to get rid of the habit of buying on impulse, you can find deals and discounts on the stuff you need that will serve you well for years to come. By adopting a frugal mindset now, you'll be better prepared to "make do" in the event of an emergency or crisis.





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