5 Survival Tools That Kill You If Used Wrong

There are many different tools out there that people recommend including in your survival kit because they're multi-purpose, but one of the primary rules of survival is to use common sense. Of course you could build a house with popsicle sticks but really, is that the best tool to use? And is that a realistic way to use popsicle sticks?

Today, we're going to bust a few myths about "multi-purpose" tools that aren't all that they're cracked up to be in the hopes that you'll view your prepping realistically.

1. Newspaper as a Weapon?

We've read how to make a bludgeoning weapon out of newspaper but we put it to the test and it's just not worth the effort when there are many easier, more effective tools to use as a weapon. We do believe that newspaper is a great multi-purpose stockpile item, but a rock would be a better weapon that a homemade newspaper hammer.

2. GPS Technology

Though GPS systems are great tools in a short-term, localized emergency, they may not get you far in a broader suvival situation for a variety of reasons. First, they depend upon towers or satellites and there's no guarantee that those will be working. Also, they depend upon batteries, which are difficult to store en masse.

You'd be much better off learning how to use a compass and a map. Draw out maps of your area, noting water spots, hiding areas, meeting spots, and other important places. Use distances based upon your method of travel and make sure that everyone in your family has a copy of the maps and a compass in their bug-out bags.

3. Large Supplies of Hot Weapons and Ammo

Unless you're an avid shooter and are completely comfortable using your large variety of weapons, storing a large variety of handguns and long guns may be a waste of valuable space and money.

We do believe that you should have a ready, adequate (determined by what you're prepping for) supply of weapons but we recommend that the average person choose one or two handguns and two or three long guns and practice with those until you're completely proficient.

If possible (and it is!) choose weapons that use the same ammo so that you don't have to stockpile numerous types. We also highly recommend that most people have other weapons on hand that don't depend upon bullets, because no matter how much ammo you stockpile for your guns, it's still going to be a finite supply. On that note, it's also a good idea to learn

how to reload your shells. Pepper spray is also extremely handy for those who may not be comfortable with a gun.

4. Matches

Matches, even waterproof matches, are an inefficient choice for fire-starting. Have a few as backup but don't depend upon them for your primary source of fire.

They can get wet, you often have to use more than one because they go out, and they take up a ton of space compared to a magnesium stick or even a lighter.

We recommend having both. Even better, add a 5-in-1 survival whistle to your supplies; it will have the whiste, a fire starter, a compass, and a durable (non-glass) signal mirror too.

5. "Survival" Knives

Please don't get us wrong here – a good knife is one of your primary, must-have survival tools. However, Rambo got it all wrong when he chose the thick-bladed, hollow-handled monstrosity that he used in the movies. First, the strength of a knife comes from the "tang" – how far it extends into the handle. Obviously, if the handle is hollow, the tang is short, making the blade weaker.

Also, if you have your sewing kit, fish hooks, matches, and compass in the handle of you knife, what happens when you drop it or lose it? That's right – you also lose all your other goodies.

Go for a knife with a smooth (non-serrated) blade that's got a full tang, a 6-10-inch blade that's 3/14-1/4 inch thick. Stainless or carbon steels are probably your best choices.

Use Your Head!

When you’re putting together your stockpile or your bug-out bags, use your head. Multi-use items should certainly be included; that’s just common sense. However, packing enough aluminum foil to make your cups with is just ridiculous. Can you do it? Well sure, but it’s incredibly impractical. Cups are already created, so why not just have a foldable cup?

If you’re going to survive, you’re going to need to have a healthy dose of intelligence and common sense. That includes using your ingenuity and making impromptu tools out of uncommon objects. Still, there’s no need to reinvent the wheel if you actually have a wheel!

Do you have any stories to relate about silly uses of objects in the name of survival preparedness? If so, share them with us in the comments section below.

*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for Survivopedia.*